

"I am honored to represent my co-workers." SEIU Stewards on the job...

"Being a worksite steward is vitally important and I am honored to represent my co-workers. It is an elected position in our worksite, and workers expect their concerns, both as a group and as individuals, to be brought to management's attention.



When I approach management with my shop steward hat on, they also respect that role and listen to what I have to say. Many issues have been resolved when it is presented that I am here as the shop steward.

I take notes at fact-finding meetings, and all joking and cavalier attitudes stop and it becomes serious and often brief. With a strong union behind you, an individual has a chance at being heard and making a difference in the workplace.

We have a contract and rights under that contract. It is a good feeling to know you have helped people to improve their daily lives."

Yvonne Smith is a caseworker in North Bend who advocates for seniors and people with disabilities.

If you are interested in becoming a steward or finding out more about what it means to be a steward, please contact your organizer.

"Trying to understand everything in the contract can be tough.



I'm not a lawyer and some things have tricky interpretations.

But when a co-worker needs my help as a steward, I've always gotten great advice from my organizer and SEIU's research department. It's not a solo effort - we face each case as a team."

Larry Bulling coordinates and organizes information at Oregon State University in Corvallis.

"Being a steward is a terribly important job and we need more people to step up. At ODOT we have a lot of crews and each crew of four or more people should have their own steward.

It's important for workers to have somebody at the worksite to keep an eye on workers' best interests so we get what we have coming to us - not only in benefits and pay, but also that our contractual rights are protected.



This is something that needs to be done. I encourage more people to get involved in our union as stewards."

Kurtis Kinder is a Chief Steward for ODOT in Meacham and works to keep roads safe.

"Homecare is kind of unique in that we're still developing our steward structure. We officially became stewards this time last year. A steward is somebody to be in your corner to make sure your rights are protected. For me, it is a great place to be.



It's important to know the rules on contract rights because that's where our power is as workers. When we started educating members on the new contract, we realized that many were not getting mileage they were entitled to. In response, we filed a group county-wide grievance that we are still in the middle of. But the County changed its practice immediately and is now following the contract and giving mileage to homecare workers."

Erin McIntosh is an in-home care provider from Independence.

"I've been a steward for less than a year, but it is so rewarding! The best thing is being able to help people stand up, confront their fear of management, and get what they believe in and what they deserve."



Kathy Lucas is a Certified Nurse's Aide who cares for seniors and people with disabilities at a nursing home in Hood River.

"Stewards have many roles to play - assist members, file grievances when management fails to comply with the contract, and pass information to members. Stewards need to know about the grievance process and "just cause" but they can always go to the chief steward or their organizer for guidance. Sometimes mid-level managers go beyond what the contract allows them to do. Some managers believe they have power beyond the scope of their job. It's the steward's job to draw the line and point out to management when they cross the line. When managers fail to comply with the contract, as a steward we need to roll up the contract and hit them on the nose with it."



Rod Christiansen works at Marion County as a Juvenile Probation officer, helping troubled kids get the best chance they can.

District 2: Notice of Nominations & Elections

Secretary (1 position) / Treasurer (1 position)

Nominations Close at 5:00 PM on Tuesday, January 31, 2006

For a nomination form, call 503-581-1505/1-800-452-2146 ext 150. Nominations for these offices will close at 5 p.m. January 31, 2006. The Election will be conducted by mail at the same time as the District Director and Assistant District Director elections. Please see the General Council election timelines on the calendar on the outside flap.

District Secretary responsibilities: Keep minutes of District and Executive Committee meetings and forward copies to HQ. **District Treasurer** responsibilities: Maintain financial records, be responsible for all requests for disbursement of District funds, report the financial status of the District at each meeting and assist in preparation of the annual budget.

"For me, serving on our Board means bringing all types of union members together in our struggle to achieve something great."

by Bart Lewis. Bart works at the University of Oregon with students and parents on student billings and processes scholarships from academic departments

BEING INVOLVED STATEWIDE IS REWARDING

I have always enjoyed taking part in statewide activities, and that was the main reason I decided to run for District Director and a seat on the Board of Directors. I also wanted to get the members in my district involved in the "big picture", and have them participate in statewide activities.

My first statewide experience was in 1997, when I went to the "Great March" at the State Capitol, during an unforgettable strike that captured so much media attention. A few years later I joined CAPE, and participated in statewide activities, such as lobby days, experiencing once again the power members have when they come together in a common effort.

I also served as a bargaining delegate on the Oregon University System bargaining team. The long hours, hard work and travel were all worth it because of what we accomplished and the lasting friendships we made.

And last, but not least, was the incredible experience of representing Local 503 as a delegate to the SEIU International Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2000. It was a chance to spend time with other 503 members, to develop ideas for our local, and to share them with SEIU members from around the country. That was where we voted to approve the *New Strength Unity* program, which

helped bring about a major renewal of labor activism. In short, what has excited me the most are union activities that bring all types of union members together in the struggle to achieve something great. It is where the big picture really comes into focus. That is why I wanted to be on the Board. And why I feel a sense of excitement before every Board meeting.

BOARD WORK REAFFIRMS MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

I am proud of the thoughtful discussions we had over adoption of the *Unite to Win* campaign. As a result, we are playing a key role in revitalizing the labor movement. I am also proud of the work our Board is doing to encourage member leadership development, such as the highly successful Leadership Academy. We have also had a key role in bringing homecare workers into our leadership, and there are some exciting plans for including child care providers in the near future.

Another Board effort that stands out for me is our support of CAPE and the political department. As a result, Local 503 has increased the political awareness of our members, and made us a strong and respected participant in Oregon politics.

Of course there have been some difficult challenges. One in particular is the issue of restructuring the Board of Directors. A previous Board Restructure Committee developed a proposal that

the 2002-2004 Board rejected. The Board subsequently took a lot of heat over this, which led to the formation of our current Board Restructure Committee, which will report back to the 2006 General Council, rather than the Board. In the long run I think this turned out great, because it reaffirms that we are a member-run union, with some great member activists.

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www.seiu503.org

Supreme Court victory for custodians

Grant Walter loved his job as head custodian at Capital Hill Elementary School. He'd been working with the Portland Public School District for 17 1/2 years when they laid off all custodial staff in 2002 - outsourcing 340 jobs to a private contractor. SEIU Local 503 and our lawyer, Jim Coon, took the case to the Supreme Court. On October 13, the Court ruled in our favor in a split decision. This unique law only applies to custodians in the Portland School District, but this is a sweet victory for the men and women who kept schools safe and clean for our kids.



"I never lost the feeling that this was a just battle and we'd win. I knew if the legal decision was based on the law - on what is right - we'd win."

Grant Walter is a former custodian at Portland Public Schools.

Advocates warn that some seniors may get lost in the 'dual eligibles' often... Cracks undermine bridge work... Seniors, advocates fight... SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday January 28

WORKING FAMILIES CONFERENCE

Join us in Portland as we kick off our big campaign for Election Year 2006!

9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

DoubleTree Hotel at 1000 NE Multnomah St. Portland, 97232 (next to the Lloyd Center)

To register contact Bonnie Jones in our Portland office at 503-408-4090, ext 470