

# An Encouraging Start on the Way to a Better, More Meaningful Union

Leslie Frane, Executive Director



The members of our Board of Directors and many of our staff members spent two days in Welches last year trying to get to the core of what SEIU 503 should be about.

We called it a visioning process. That may sound warm and fuzzy, but our quest was quite the contrary. We set out to produce a solid, functional strategic plan with meaningful, attainable goals that will make this a more effective, responsive union for our existing members and those we hope will join us in the years ahead. Instead of fine tuning our last strategic plan, we started our visioning process by focusing on where we want to be in five years and working backwards from there.

Time will tell how well we have succeeded, but based on early feedback,

I am optimistic. Our Board approved the plan unanimously in March. The plan sets out an overarching vision, stressing our Union's role in enhancing members' ability to improve the quality of the services we provide. It focuses on how we can increase members' engagement in the union and its activities, including streamlining how we represent members and how we communicate. Also, it explores new ways that we can increase our strength by organizing unorganized workers, and by using our political muscle to win universal health care, a fairer taxation system and more responsive government.

But what excites members who read the plan is that it goes well beyond ticking off a wish list of apple pie aspirations. It quickly becomes a recipe for baking that pie with a fairly specific set of instructive steps that can get us from here to there.

Then it becomes even more detailed, outlining 12 new initiatives we are committed to undertaking in the next five years.

Not all of these initiatives will roll out exactly as we describe. Some depend in part on matters we do not completely control. Others require fundamental change in how we do things now. But we are already laying the groundwork for several new ventures, including a pilot project seeking to encourage more member engagement on our university campuses by exploring new ways for workers to relate to each other, their jobs, and the union.

It is only a start, but it's an encouraging one. If you'd like a copy of the strategic plan, please drop me a line at union headquarters or email me at [franel@opeuseiu.org](mailto:franel@opeuseiu.org).

## The Vision

*SEIU Local 503 becomes the leading force for opportunity, meaningful jobs, quality services and better living standards (such as health care and retirement) for all working people—public sector and private sector.*

*SEIU Local 503 member involvement and activism is the fundamental source of our achievement. We will build on our tradition of democratic decision making within our union. Our members recognize the union as a meaningful part of their lives.*

*Our union will grow in publicly funded services and health care. Every worker will be able to join a union without fear. We will extend collective bargaining to workers who now have no legal right to form a union.*

*Our political strength will win universal health care and comprehensive tax reform that restores fairness and raises the necessary funds to pay for our communities' infrastructure and service needs.*



Members and staffers in breakout sessions at SEIU 503 Visioning Retreat in Welches last year.