

Legacy's Unity Center Workers Win Union Vote

Over 95 percent of voters unionize with the Oregon Nurses Association

Mental and behavioral health professionals at Legacy's Unity Center for Behavioral Health—Portland's psychiatric emergency hospital—overwhelmingly won their union election August 23. Following months of organizing, more than 95 percent of voters chose to unionize with the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) to raise patient care standards, improve staffing and safety, gain a voice in health care decisions, and ensure equitable pay for frontline mental health workers.

The 62 crisis intervention specialists, counselors, therapists, and social workers at Unity Center are the latest group in the Legacy Health system to unionize with ONA, joining nearly 700 ONA-represented nurses at Unity Center, Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center in Gresham, and Legacy Silverton Medical Center.

"Supporting people experiencing a mental health crisis in a compassionate, caring way is



Workers chose to unionize with ONA to improve patient care, staffing, and safety at Portland's psychiatric emergency hospital. Photo courtesy: The Oregon Nurses Association.

more than just a job. A union will help us advocate for and provide the highest quality patient care by ensuring we are part of the decision-making process," said Holly Friesz, a crisis intervention specialist at Unity Center. "Unionizing will allow us to bargain for better working conditions in order to improve patient care."

Legacy's Unity Center is a 24-hour behavioral and mental health services center offering inpatient mental health treatment and psychiatric emergency services. Despite numerous challenges ranging from short staffing; an increase in patients; a longstanding lack of beds, services and investment in mental and behavioral health at the state

and health system levels; and the ongoing effects of COVID-19, mental and behavioral health professionals at Unity Center have provided high-quality, trauma-informed, multidisciplinary psychiatric treatment to Oregon's most vulnerable adults and adolescents since 2017.

The group will advocate for better patient-to-worker ratios

to allow more Oregonians in crisis to receive comprehensive mental, behavioral and addiction care. Frontline mental health care professionals look forward to helping turn the page at Unity Center and holding Legacy's leadership accountable to professional health care standards in order to improve outcomes for Oregonians in crisis.



Calendar Art Contest winners celebrated at the Oregon State Fair Calendar Art Contest Reception. (Photo courtesy of Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation)

Portland Student's Art Celebrated

Local Student Calendar Contest Winner

Portland fourth grade student Claire Chou of Findley Elementary was selected as one of thirteen winners in a statewide annual Calendar Art Contest sponsored by Oregon Agriculture in the Class-

room (AITC). Claire's artwork was selected among 1,722 entries submitted to the contest showcasing Oregon's diverse agricultural and natural resource commodities.

This year, artwork was submitted by students kindergarten through sixth grade across the state in public, private, charter, and homeschool education systems featuring Oregon agriculture and natural resources. The entries received celebrated Oregon's di-

verse agriculture with artwork depicting a wide variety of Oregon's 220 agricultural commodities. Claire's artwork featured apples and apple products with a Mt. Hood landscape and can be viewed on the September page of the calendar. In describing the artwork, Claire said, "I drew different varieties of apples and their possible products because they are delicious and nutritious."

Claire also said "I also drew bees around apple flowers because bees are important and work hard to pollinate apple trees. Apples were brought to Oregon by Henderson Luelling in 1847 and now are ranked #20 on the list of top agricultural products in Oregon."

"The calendar contest is a great project for teachers and students to cultivate creativity while celebrating agriculture's beauty and bountiful lessons," said Brittany Capell, AITC's Education Programs Coordinator. Each month in the calendar features one of the winning student's art and each day of the year have a fact about agriculture.

The thirteen students selected to be featured in our 2023-2024 calendar received a \$50 award and certificate to commemorate this honor. The winning artwork is displayed on the AITC's website. Calendars are free to Oregon teachers, and can be ordered for just \$4 on oregonaitc.org/shop.

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