Local 12911-11 Ratifies First Contract

Members of Local 12911-11 last week ratified a first contract that raises wages, maintains benefits and greatly improves working conditions.

The 12 members work in the nutrition and dietary departments at Hy-Lond Health Care Center in Modesto, Calif., a long-term elder care facility.

Local 12911 President Robert Easter said that one of the biggest concerns going into bargaining was the company’s desire to cap workers’ hours at 30-32 per week. The new contract maintains the 40-hour work week and standardizes other benefits and working conditions that were previously haphazard.

“They didn’t have any rules. The rules were whatever the company wanted them to be. The contract makes their jobs more sound,” Easter said.

The new agreement also includes a substantial raise in wages that is effective retroactively to January.

The workers were originally part of Local 12911-09, the unit that covers roughly 100 workers at Hy-Lond that ratified their first contract in January 2017. In April, Hy-Lond outsourced the nutrition and dietary jobs to Sodexo, necessitating a new unit and new negotiations.

Easter said they were able to time the expiration of the two contracts so that the two units can support each other in bargaining, even if they aren’t covered by the same agreement.

“The workers came out of this better than they were—much better,” Easter said.

“Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the negotiating committee, this process went quickly and smoothly,” said District 12 Director Bob LaVenture. “This contract is the result of everyone pulling in the same direction.”

How Today’s Unions Help Working People

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) this week released a comprehensive report on unionization in the United States. It examines wages, working conditions, union density and the ways in which unions impact the political landscape and greater communities.

One of the striking features of today’s unions is their diversity. Two-thirds of unionized workers are women and/or racial minorities, and more than half have at least an associate’s degree. There are unionized workers in nearly every industry, with the most union-dense being education and health care.

The report concludes by calling for stronger labor laws and higher unionization rates as a remedy for the lingering problems with the economy, namely wage stagnation and still growing economic inequality.

To read the full report, click here.

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