



Drive Up Standards

NEWSLETTER

Connecting School Bus & Transit Workers From Coast to Coast

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TEAMSTERS WIN CONTRACT IN SANTA ROSA!

On Oct. 15, 2016, Teamster bus drivers and monitors at Durham School Services in Santa Rosa County, Fla. voted overwhelmingly, 85-1, in favor of their first agreement with the company. Durham dragged its feet for over three years, going to extraordinary measures after the workers voted to become Teamsters. In June 2016, Durham was finally forced to recognize the workers' choice to form a union, when the second highest court in the country ruled in favor of the NLRB. The court ordered Durham to recognize the union election results and bargain with the workers.

"This contract means a major improvement in quality of life for me and my family," said Kim McLaughlin, a 9-year driver at Durham and a bus driver for more than 20 years. "After three years of fighting Durham to respect our right to a union, we finally have our rights protected by a legally binding union contract and a due process procedure so the company cannot arbitrarily discriminate against us. I am proud to be a Durham driver with Teamster power on my side."

This agreement contains an average wage increase of 20 percent for drivers, adds four paid holidays by the third year of the contract and a ratification bonus and commits the company to 75 percent coverage for health care costs for members and their families.

Union justice has prevailed in Santa Rosa!

TEAMSTERS MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH FIRST STUDENT

By Colonel Adam L. Rocke, United States Army



The Teamsters Military Assistance Program (TMAP) and First Group have joined together to create job opportunities for soldiers and their families. Through this effort, veterans and their family members will be fast-tracked through the application and training process for careers at First Group, the nation's largest school bus and transit company.

Service members and their families have served our nation. Programs like the TMAP and First Group partnership will give them an opportunity to continue to serve our children. Helping service members obtain good jobs is a win-win for everyone. The men and women who make up our military families are exactly the kind of heroes that we all should want caring for our students.

Soldier for Life thanks the Teamsters and First Group for their commitment to opening doors for our soldiers and their families as they transition into civilian sector careers. The Army fully supports life changing efforts to provide training and job opportunities to our Soldiers and their Families.

More information on the Teamsters Military Assistance Program is available at www.teamster.org/tmap.

The dissemination of information about the Teamsters Military Assistance Program and First Group is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Army or this office of the non-Federal entities listed in this message.

The Teamsters "Drive Up Standards" newsletter is by and for school bus drivers, monitors and mechanics. This newsletter is published quarterly in print and online at www.driveupstandards.org.



Proud Teamsters In The Community And Across The Country

By Phyllis Pepper, Local 777

I am a steward with First Student in South Holland, Ill., and a proud member of Local 777. I feel blessed to be able to give back to the students and the communities served by the Teamsters. In March 2016, myself and other members of Local 777 helped deliver water to the residents of Flint, Mich., who are suffering from a drinking water crisis due to lead contamination. Despite freezing temperatures in May, we held a picnic with the Unity Project, who is working to build a more positive community in the city of Chicago.

When the new school year came along, we had a management change at our yard. They shared our vision for giving back and participated in our activities. On October 24, 2016, everyone at our yard wore pink in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We are currently conducting a toy and canned food drive with the Unity Project for the community and we will be attending a Christmas party for the Unity Project on December 16, 2016.

Many people think of the holiday season as a wonderful time to receive gifts. But the joy of giving gifts can be even greater. No matter what time of year it is, there is happiness and satisfaction to be found when you are doing something positive for your students, your family and your community.



School Bus Safety Week: A Driver's Perspective



By Nicole Gatling, Local 653

I am a steward at my bus yard, a driver for First Student and a 14-year member of Local 653 in South Easton, Mass. School bus safety is in our culture as drivers, community members and proud residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In October, we celebrated school bus safety week at the yards and in the communities we serve south of Boston. Below is a brief rundown of the events that took place.

In Massachusetts, it is mandatory that drivers who wish to maintain their Commercial Driver's License take a minimum of eight safety classes per year. The classes feature lectures from other drivers about various topics on school bus safety. This year, I've heard lessons on making sure to account for children running around near the school bus during pick up and drop off, navigating wet leaves in the fall and snow and slick surface concerns for winter driving.

It was great to see so many drivers not only in attendance at the meetings, but leading the discussions as well. We vowed to keep safety at the top of our priority list as drivers when we go back to our schools to share what we've learned with our students and fellow staff members. It is wonderful to see so much solidarity from our union brothers and sisters on this issue. Safe buses and safe students strengthen communities across the country!

Learning And Growing With The Teamsters

By Claire Clarke, International Transport Workers Federation

I am a Senior Section Assistant with the International Transport Workers Federation, a global federation of more than 700 transport trade unions and 4.5 million workers, headquartered in London, England. I am grateful for the recent opportunity to tour the United States and meet Teamsters school bus and transit members. I've learned all about the school bus industry in the United States and how the Teamsters have worked tirelessly to drive up standards in the school bus industry.

Thanks to funding from the Steve Edwards Memorial Fund, a fund set up in the memory of former Teamster advisor to the global school bus campaign and Unite senior activist

Steve Edwards, I have been able to travel the country to see the Teamster school bus campaign in action. I was able to make house calls in the Chicago area, see the effects of a historic agreement in Santa Rosa and tour the IBT to see how headquarters functions.

I've met some amazing, dedicated Teamster members on this trip and I have gained a wealth of knowledge. It is heartening to know that union members are standing in solidarity internationally against some of the worst practices by employers. As I travel back to England, I am more motivated than ever to continue fighting for working people around the world. Solidarity!

ORGANIZING ROUNDUP

First Student Drivers In Connecticut Vote To Join Local 493

(STONINGTON, Conn.) – Drivers at a First Student yard in Stonington, Conn. voted overwhelmingly to join the International Brotherhood of Teamsters on Wednesday, October 12, 2016. More than 86 percent of the voting drivers chose the Teamsters union.

The 26 workers in the bargaining unit will become members of Local 493 in Uncasville, Conn., which already represents several First Student yards in the state of Connecticut.

"This win is a testament to the incredible resilience these workers have demonstrated," said Tom Schlink, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 493. "They've fought through a lot of obstacles, but they never lost sight of the fact that the Teamsters have driven up standards in the school bus industry. We have tremendous union density here in Connecticut and that has bettered working conditions for school bus workers in our state. Our new members will join our brothers and sisters who have empowered themselves with a union."

"I'm thrilled to be joining such a special group," said Andrea Clark, a 4-year driver at First Student. "The Teamsters have a proven track record of raising wages and improving benefits in the school bus industry. By voting to join the union, we've taken a positive step toward doing the same thing."

Teamsters Local 653 Organizes Mechanics, Achieves First Contract For Drivers And Monitors

(SOUTH EASTON, Mass.) – Workers in the South Easton area have organized and ratified a first contract at two separate bus companies with the assistance of Local 653.

On Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2016, school bus mechanics at First Student voted to join Local 653 in South Easton, Mass. There are seven workers in the bargaining unit. This victory comes on the heels of 56 drivers and monitors at Lucini Bus Lines voting to ratify their first contract following an organizing victory in May 2016 at the Bridgewater, Mass., transit company. The new agreement contains increases in wages, guaranteed hours

and paid holidays.

"Organizing with the Teamsters and ratifying this contract has changed my professional life," said Melanie Cataldo, a driver with Lucini. "We're going to get improved safety rules in a legally binding document and will be able to have seniority rights respected when it comes to bidding for routes. I'm very grateful that we decided to unite for better working conditions."

"Workers in eastern Massachusetts and nationwide are benefitting from Teamster power," said Tim Brown, Vice President of Local 653. "Workers at Lucini and First Student will now have improvements in writing that drive up standards for the entire transit industry."

"Congratulations to our new members for sticking together and taking a positive step forward by joining Teamsters Local 653," said Brian McElhinney, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 653. "Special thanks to the leadership of Joint Council 10 under Sean O'Brien and the Local 653 Executive Board for all of their hard work and assistance in these organizing campaigns."

ORGANIZING ROUNDUP

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Local 653 Organizes Mini-Bus Workers

(SOUTH EASTON, Mass.) – Drivers and monitors for Middleborough School District have organized with the Teamsters.

Some 22 mini-bus workers who transport students with special needs for the school district voted to join the Teamsters last week. The employees wanted stronger representation and bargaining rights, as well as better benefits and hours.

“I’d like to extend a warm welcome to our new members. They are taking a positive step forward by working with Teamsters Local 653,” said Brian McElhinney, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 653. “Special thanks again go to the

leadership of Joint Council 10 under Sean O’Brien and the Local 653 Executive Board for all of their hard work and assistance in these campaigns. They’ve made a tremendous difference for working families in Massachusetts.”

First Student Drivers And Monitors Vote To Join Local 313

(TACOMA, Wash.) – On Sept. 29, 2016, drivers and monitors at First Student in Steilacoom, Wash. voted unanimously to join the Teamsters. The 21 drivers and monitors in the bargaining unit will become members of Local 313.

The workers filed for the union election with the National Labor Relations Board on Sept. 20, 2016 and the

results were certified on Oct. 12, 2016. The drivers and monitors will immediately be entitled to reap the benefits of the existing, industry-leading, First Student National Master Agreement.

“Organizing is the life blood of our union and we’re thrilled to welcome these new members to the brotherhood,” said John Emrick, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 313. “We look forward to representing workers at First Student with the pride and professionalism exemplified by our union.”

Negotiations for a local supplemental agreement, which includes wages and other benefits, will begin soon.



How do we keep our union growing strong? By building political power, one member at a time, at every Teamster local union across North America.

Interested in joining DRIVE?
Talk to your local union.

Have a question or story idea? Email us at driveupstandards1@gmail.com

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