

West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Union Messenger

“A Union of Professionals”

WSTU January Calendar

1/9-571 EB Mtg. - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
 1/9-571 HOR Mtg.-Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
 1/9-AFT Convention delegate nominations due
 1/9-AFT PSRP Conference applications due to 571

Union Messenger

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 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Jonathan Pazol, Financial Secretary
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 Tom Smith, IFT Field Service Director
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Retiree Corner: “Children UP”

by *Charlie Laliberte*

In 2007 a small group of retired teachers from York Community High School and one from Oak Park/River Forest High School formed a small charity called “Children UP.” The purpose of the group is to help children in Uganda receive a high school education. Children UP is a small organization and presently only has 10 students in the program, but they are changing lives one child at a time.



Charlie Laliberte with children from Ugandan village.

In Uganda, primary school is free through Grade 7 and high school is grades 8 through 13 (Based on the European system, Grades 12 and 13 would be part of super high school.) Most parents are subsistence farmers and cannot afford to send their students to boarding schools as costs are estimated at \$1,000 per year.

Children UP chooses the highest achieving students based on their Grade 7 exit exams; then Children UP representatives visit the primary schools and their families to verify financial need as well as

the students’ work ethic. Additionally, there is a policy that balances the number of girls to boys to comply with Ugandan culture, as the boys are often favored when it comes to advanced education.

Children UP has three Ugandan mentors who make regular visits to the schools and the homes, and they provide regular reports on each of the children.

One wonderful success story is that of our first student, Nancy Akumu, who graduated from university last year. Her degree is in forestry. Being entrepreneurial, Nancy has started her own company to fight climate change by organizing a small group of people to plant and care for trees. She was able to get a grant from another international organization to help. Nancy has also been asked to do environmental impact studies for two roadways being built to Tanzania. Nancy Akumu is paying it forward by taking on the financial responsibility of sending four of her relatives to attend primary and secondary school.

For more information about Children UP please visit: www.childrenup.org



“Children UP” students and their mentors.

Time to Take Time

The holidays are approaching and many of us are shopping, sharing with family and friends, partying, cooking and baking, wrapping presents, volunteering, attending church services, and trying to keep our students on task, all before the bell rings and winter break begins.

During this really busy time of year, shouldn't we take a little time for ourselves?

What better way to spend some time relaxing than to sit in front of the computer and check out valuable information from the following websites:

www.ilga.gov/legislation or www.weareonillinois.org

By the time you receive this *Union Messenger* issue, SB 512, THE pension altering bill, may have been called. Assuming

SB 512 was NOT voted during this one-day session, expect the drama to continue into the spring legislative session. The unions are collaborating to find an end to the state's controversy over high pension debt.

www.ift-aft.org and www.wstu571.org

Have a child finishing his/her senior year of high school or a college student majoring in education? At least eight scholarships are available from AFT, IFT, CFL, and CTU. Some applications are due as early as December 3, so review these websites now.

<http://www.unionplus.org/union-plus-benefits> or <http://www.aft.org/benefits>

Let your fingers do the walking for flowers, gift certificates, pet services, AT&T wireless entertainment, Dell electronics, Goodyear, health club discounts, and

more.

www.wstu571.org

Take your family and/or friends to one of the many holiday movies. Scroll to the bottom of the home page, print the WSTU order form, and mail it along with a check to obtain reduced admission movie tickets to AMC/Loews and Marcus Theatres.

However you celebrate, the officers and staff wish you a wonderful holiday season and look forward to working with you in 2012.

In unity,



Local 571 President

Happy Holidays!

Legal Limits

by Jane Russell

Teachers new to their districts heard from attorney Steve Yokich from the labor law firm of Cornfield and Feldman on October 25, 2011, at the Local 571 Legal Limits Seminar. Yokich covered professional conduct, DCFS obligations, adhering to district policies, confidentiality issues, internet and technology issues, and tenure and layoffs. In discussing the public act of Senate Bill 7 regarding layoff and recall, Yokich described the law as a dramatic revision of this process which seemed unfair. His advice was to "stay out of this process" and to "do your job and do it well."

If you have questions or concerns about any of the above topics, please contact your building representative and/or council president for additional information.



Attorney Yokich answers questions from a probationary teacher.

Local 571 2011 Legislative Breakfast

by Bonnie Saracco

President Jane Russell presided over Local 571's sixth Legislative Breakfast on Saturday, October 22, 2011, at the Doubletree Hotel in Oak Brook. She welcomed our members and guests who came to hear state officials and legislators present their views on Illinois's most pressing educational and legislative issues.

Secretary of State Jesse White (D), a lifelong IFT member, reported accomplishments from his office, including enacting motor vehicle legislation which improves traffic safety and continuing to successfully work for increased organ donations.

Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka (R) said that she respects teachers and supports collective bargaining. She encouraged us to continue to contact our legislators and stressed the importance of our participation in the negotiations regarding our pensions.

Topinka also said that it is unfair that, while teachers have always met their pension obligations, many people want them to "take the rap for budget problems," and they are now being "scapegoated because it is easy." She said that the state "has no clue" about solving the pension funding crisis, other than continuing to "kick the can down the road for someone else to worry about." Topinka proposes combining the state's treasurer and comptroller offices, which she estimates would save Illinois \$12 million a year.

Chicago Teachers Union President Karen Lewis presented a scathing indictment of how we are being treated. She started by pointing out that it was "an honor to talk to those who understand what is going on in schools today." She criticized the notion that teachers who care about students and work everyday in the most challenging circumstances to educate them, are characterized as not accepting accountability when no accountability is even considered for those whose great wealth "can buy education reform."

Lewis also said that the use of the word "reform" in the context of education "needs to be tied up and thrown away" because it is based on the false assumption that public schools are broken. She pointed out the fact that if

we remove the scores of the 25% of our students who live in poverty, U.S. students would rank first in the world in reading and science and third in the world in math. Lewis also proposed to increase funding for Illinois schools by levying a financial transaction tax of one cent per transaction at the Chicago Board of Trade. She concluded that improving our schools cannot be based on eliminating collective bargaining, laying off and disrespecting teachers, and making school days longer without also making them better.

"...if we remove the scores of 25% of our students who live in poverty, U.S. students would rank first in the world in reading and science and third in the world in math."

Senator Richard Durbin (D) was represented by his Suburban Outreach Coordinator, Greg Bales, who discussed President Obama's Jobs Act, which will provide infrastructure dollars to rebuild schools and free money to keep teachers in the classroom.

The following Illinois legislators also spoke. Among other points, they voiced their appreciation of teachers and stressed the importance of education:

IL Senator Kirk Dillard (R), 24th District
IL Senator Dan Kotowski (D), 33rd District
IL Senator Don Harmon (D), 39th District
IL Representative Dennis Reboletti (R), 46th District
IL Representative Patti Bellock (R), 47th District
IL Representative Michelle Mussman (D), 56th District
IL Representative Angelo Saviano (R), 77th District
IL Representative Camille Lilly (D), 78th District

IL Representatives Bill Cunningham (D), 35th District, and Kelly Burke (D), 36th District, also attended but were not able to speak due to scheduling conflicts.

Thanks to Steve Preckwinkle for being our master of ceremonies, and to the hardworking Legislative Breakfast Committee for making this event possible. We look forward to our next Legislative Breakfast scheduled for September 29, 2012.

Union Yahoo!!!

IFT Local 571 Unites in the Fight for Human Rights
by Deb Muhammad

The AFT is on the move! The recent “Civil, Human, and Woman’s Rights Conference,” held in Detroit, Michigan, was a success. Union Members from across the country unified to support the fight against laws that could affect working people globally.

IFT members organized, “along with other AFT members,” to support Michigan workers in a rally against the “Right to Work” SB729 introduced by Senate Majority floor leader Arlan Meekhof.



Local 571 member Deb Muhammad attending the “Justice in the Streets” march to the “Labor Legacy Monument” at Hart Plaza.

The bill was designed to target school employees represented by unions of more than 50,000 members. The bill will give employees a right to refuse automatic fair share reductions from their pay, ultimately breaking down the union and employee rights to a fair wage.

The conference provided informative workshops to include “Defending Workers Rights: Grass Root Strategies,” “Keep the Faith,” “Unity: We’re Better Together,” “Hands Off Our Retirement,” “Young Adults:

Bridging the Gap,” “Overcoming Bullying: It Gets Better,” and other powerful sessions led by prominent and influential speakers.

“While teaching our children to read and write, we must incorporate the teaching of civil service and activism to provide them the tools necessary to promote peace in their world.”

The plenary session left uplifting messages for members to take back to their communities and continue in the fight.



Loung Ung speaks on the struggle fields to barely escape the killing where her family was murdered.

Photo: Google Images

One inspiring speaker, activist, author, and survivor of the “Cambodian killing fields,” Loung Ung, had this to say, “While teaching our children to read and write we must incorporate the teaching of civil service and activism to provide them the tools necessary to promote peace in their world.”

“New Voice” is an organization led by community teen activists. The organization was established to enhance the voices of teens and address education and safety concerns in the Detroit area.

During the conference, the AFT members along with other community members united and walked the dark streets of Detroit in the annual volunteer program “Angels’ Night,” that was established to keep neighborhoods safe from pranks associated with Halloween.



The 15-year-old female chair of education for “New Voice” thanks the AFT for supporting their efforts.

After the conference, some AFT members paid a visit to Occupy Detroit to converse with community activists about their protest against corporate greed and corruption.



Local 571 member Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba along with other AFT members speak with residents in the tent city.

Local 571 ER&D Professional Development Courses for Winter 2012

Reading Comprehension Instruction*

Dates and Times-8 sessions:

January 26; February 2, 9, 23; March 1, 8, 15, 22, 2012

Dinner:

4:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m..

Sessions:

5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

Workshop Credit: 30 CPDU's or 30 PTP's

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

Friday, January 6, 2012

Managing Student Behavior for Support Staff**

Dates and Times-8 sessions:

January 26; February 2, 9, 23; March 1, 8, 15, 22, 2012

Dinner:

4:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Sessions:

5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

Workshop Credit: 24 PTP's

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

Friday, January 6, 2012

Location: Both courses will be held at the Robert M. Healey Conference Center (500 Oakmont Lane, Westmont, IL 60559-5520)

Cost: \$50 per course (includes materials and light supper)

**Course is for teachers and support staff. Teachers earn 30 CPDU's and support staff earn 30 PTP's. For an additional cost, participants can earn two (2) Governors State University graduate credit hours or two (2) Prairie State Community College undergraduate credit hours. Participants may enroll and pay for university or college credit hours at the first class session.*

***Course is for support staff only. Participants will earn 24 PTP's.*

The registration form and course descriptions are available on our website (www.wstu571.org). Members may also call our office for a registration form and course descriptions (630-468-4098).

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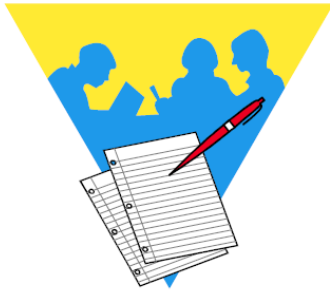
aft.org/members

* New York State United Teachers members have insurance programs through NYSUT Member Benefits Trust. To obtain more information about these plans, members can call **800/626-8101**.

AFT + is your advocate. For information on all **AFT +** programs, call 800/238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail aftplus@aft.org. The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to disclosureinfo@aft.org; or visit **www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure**.

2012 AFT PSRP CONFERENCE

April 19-22, 2012



LOCAL 571 PSRP (SUPPORT STAFF) UNION MEMBERS INTERESTED IN ATTENDING THE AFT PSRP CONFERENCE AT THE MARRIOTT WARDMAN PARK HOTEL IN WASHINGTON, D.C., ON APRIL 19-22, 2012, SHOULD UNDERSTAND AND ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING.

- ⇒ The Local has budgeted to send up to ten (10) union members to the 2010 AFT PSRP Conference at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., which will convene April 19-22, 2012.
- ⇒ Attendees will be reimbursed a total of up to \$950 (with receipts).
- ⇒ A PSRP Council member wishing to attend should complete an application, and send it to the Local 571 office by 4:00 p.m., January 9, 2012. Contact the WSTU to obtain an application. See the address and fax number printed below.
- ⇒ Selection of attendees will be made by a committee appointed by the Local 571 President on January 9, and attendees will be announced at the 571 House of Representatives meeting on that day.
- ⇒ Attendees will be selected using the following criteria:
 - Level of participation in Council;
 - Recommendation of Council President;
 - Level of participation in Local, State, and or National PSRP committee(s).

LOCAL 571 – IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO
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Website of the Month

Illinois Kids First Website:
<http://illinoiskidsfirst.ift-aft.org>

This is a re-launch of a website used to educate the public about educational issues and is now a free web portal designed for parents and teachers. It provides resources to aid in students' success, both in the classroom and at home. A blog will be added to the site to allow parents, students, and teachers to discuss issues related to success in the classroom.



What's Missing from the Messenger?

E-mail your thoughts to
Angel Holmes at
angelholmes@sbcglobal.net



We're on the
Web!!!
www.wstu571.org

2012 AFT CONVENTION CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are now being accepted for delegates to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Convention that will convene in Detroit, Michigan, on July 26-30, 2012.

All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as delegates to this convention. Delegates who are elected and attend this convention will be reimbursed for expenses up to \$950 from Local 571.

Nominations must be printed or typed (name and school district) and received in the Local 571 office on or before January 9, 2012. If you are interested in nominating yourself or another member, please send your request to Judy Jennings via e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org, facsimile at 630/468-4088, or regular U.S. postal service at Local 571, P.O. Box 390, Westmont, IL 60559-0390.

Nominees will receive a written or electronic acknowledgement of receipt. Voting will take place in each Council of the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, via secret ballot. Council leaders will notify members of the date(s) and location(s) that voting will take place.

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