

# United Public Service Employees Union



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*Making a Difference Everyday*

THE  
ADVOCATE

## TOWN OF WARE DPW EMPLOYEES UNANIMOUSLY VOTE UPSEU!



L to R: UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Roger Stolen, Unit Vice President David Comeau, Water Steward Kevin Lizak, Secretary Donald Dunbar and Unit President Fred Venne

In a Massachusetts state election, Town of WARE DPW employees voted to join UPSEU. After years of Teamster representation and learning of UPSEU's successes throughout the state, the unit decided they too wanted a change and voted to leave the Teamsters to join UPSEU.

**UPSEU Welcomes Town of WARE DPW Unit Employees!**

Spring  
2018



**United Public  
Service Employees  
Union**  
*Making a Difference  
Everyday*

#### **Our Mission**

UPSEU is committed to being the preeminent organization representing public sector employees by providing professional, on-site representation, superior negotiations, and adherence to democratic principles which maintain the integrity of the union for the benefit of our members and their families.

#### **UPSEU Officers**

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President

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Executive Vice President

**Kimberly Nowakowski**

Vice President

**Randy Tillman**

Secretary/Treasurer

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Linda Pickwick  
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## **A Message from President Kevin E. Boyle, Jr.**

Over the years our representatives have encountered heart-breaking situations when a UPSEU member passes away. Sometimes it is due to a long battle with a life threatening illness, and other times it has been totally unexpected. I, as well as our representatives, have helped the families of our members to understand what benefits are available to them, not only through their contract but through the state and federal government as well.

A life threatening illness can be an overwhelming situation for the family. Very often the family is unaware of what benefits are available or what steps need to be taken to protect their loved one's pension. When tragedy strikes, entitlements and benefits are generally the furthest thing from their minds. In these situations, our UPSEU representatives have stepped up and gone beyond what is expected of them. We have driven to the hospital, hospice facility or family home to meet with the family and explain what they need to do to protect their pension. This often involved driving a family member to the NYS Local Retirement System to obtain their loved one's records so they could decide whether to file for disability retirement or hold off and hope for the best. Other times we have brought both forms and a notary to the member wherever they may be, and walked them through completing the forms. As sad as it is when a member passes, we are glad that our intervention helps to protect what the member worked so long and hard to earn.

Although UPSEU stands ready to assist you in a crisis situation, don't forget we are also here to help you prepare before a crisis occurs. We all have to face our mortality, and although we may not know when our time will come, we can take steps to help ourselves and our families in the process. UPSEU works with several law firms and elder care attorneys who offer discounted rates to help our members get their legal documents in order.

It is essential to have both a living will and power of attorney in place, if you want your beliefs and preferences regarding end of life decisions to be followed. The power of attorney or advanced care directive gives someone you trust the durable power of attorney to manage your affairs in the event you are unable to do so. This includes paying bills, depositing checks, managing financial affairs, and handling legal documents such as disability forms, pension forms, or medical insurance. You can name a friend, a family member, or a professional and it will remain valid in the event you become incapacitated. Planning in advance is the best thing you can do for your family, as it avoids any misunderstanding regarding your final wishes.

Every member should have an up to date and comprehensive written will of all your assets and how you want them distributed. Regardless of the amount of your assets, you may want to consult a professional to determine how to protect these assets from tax liabilities for your beneficiaries. Without a will, the courts decide how your assets will be distributed.

In addition, you may want to consider being an organ donor. Further information is available at [www.sciencecare.com](http://www.sciencecare.com) and [www.organdonor.gov](http://www.organdonor.gov). Be sure to carry an organ donation card in your wallet/purse so that it can be readily available and also keep a copy with your legal documents.

Being prepared is the best thing you can do for your family during this most difficult time. Your UPSEU representatives are available to help you and your family to the extent that we can.



# UPSEU Welcomes Our New Members

## Windsor Locks Custodians Vote Unanimously UPSEU



### Windsor Locks BOE Custodians

L to R: Fermain Lopez, Greg Weigert, Unit President Guy Misenti, Ed Smalley, and Zak Weigert

In a Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations secret ballot election, the Windsor Locks Board of Education Custodians made their decision known by voting unanimously to join UPSEU. Due to increasing concerns with their previous union's (UE 222/CILU) financial stability and lack of resources to truly advocate on their behalf, the unit began to consider alternative options. After learning more about the level of representation, staffing, resources and benefits members received with UPSEU, the group made the decision to switch, and never looked back.

Unit President Guy Misenti said, "We know the level of quality representation that Labor Relations Representative Colleen Ezzo will provide. To have her representing us and to receive increased resources and benefits, it was a no-brainer to join UPSEU." We welcome this new unit and are confident that our strength and solidarity will make a difference for the members in the workplace every day!

## Windham Supervisors & Professionals Vote to Leave MEUI Local 56/SEIU

The Windham Supervisors and Professionals Staff recently voted to join UPSEU in a secret ballot election. These employees were frustrated with the lack of representation and support they received from their former union, MEUI/SEIU. As a result, Labor Relations Representatives Daniel Bonfiglio and Jeremy Powell reached out to the employees and held an informational meeting for the unit to learn more about UPSEU. They were impressed with the information they received. The unit, as well, received great reports about UPSEU in the independent research they conducted by contacting the leaders from the Middletown Supervisors Unit, who voted to join UPSEU in 2015, and the Windham Police Department who UPSEU has represented since 2007. Negotiations for a successor agreement are currently underway.



### Windham Supervisors & Professionals

L to R: Town Engineer Joe Gardner, Unit President and Public Works Assistant Superintendent Scott Clairmont, Town Fire Marshal Michael Licata, Unit Secretary and Collector of Revenue Gay St. Louis, Town Clerk Patricia Spruance and Director of Economic Development James Bellan. This is only a portion of the unit.

## New York Steward Training



On April 6, 2018 UPSEU COPS and EMS Divisions teamed up to provide basic steward training to twenty six new stewards. Training consisted of both public and private labor law.

Some of the topics included grievance handling, the disciplinary process, and Taylor law changes. Attorney Alex Dell attended and provided in depth training pertaining to Workers Compensation, General Municipal Law 207c, New York Disability and New York State Retirement. COPS Division members from Lewis County Sheriff's Department, Herkimer County Sheriff's Department, Massena Police, Ogdensburg Police, Granville Police and Washington County Communications attended the training along with EMS Division members from Guilderland EMS, Empire Ambulance, Mohawk Ambulance and Western Rescue Squad.



## Wolcott BOE Paraprofessionals, Library Aides & Security Aides Leave CILU/UE & Join UPSEU

The Wolcott BOE Paraprofessionals, Library Aides and Security Aides were frustrated with the lack of representation they were receiving from their former union, CILU/UE. As a result, they contacted UPSEU to learn more about the organization and were greatly impressed with the information they received, as well as with the research they conducted. As a result, the unit voted nearly unanimously to join UPSEU.

Any cloud of uncertainty for a change in representation was erased when they received more help and support for a pending grievance, than they had from their previous union. UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Colleen Ezzo stated, "Despite the group doing all the legwork on gathering strong evidence to support the grievance, the CILU/UE union representative had called their grievance frivolous and went as far as notifying the superintendent as such!"



L to R: Wolcott BOE Executive Board Members  
Debbie Golden, Janice Gallagher, Kelly Barrows and  
Arllene Manning

## 3 Village Aides & Monitors Overwhelmingly Approve Pact

With nearly unanimous support, the Three Village Central School District Aides and Monitors approved a new five year agreement. Annual wage increases above the norm, on time increment and an additional annual adjustment to the top of the salary schedule highlighted the agreement.

Additional improvements in areas of the contract included longevity, release day for conferences, attendance incentive and an increase in holidays. UPSEU congratulates the excellent work of negotiating team members Phyllis Cesare-Cardline and Sue Menton for their work during the bargaining process.



## OCEANSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS MEMBERSHIP MEETING

L to R: Unit Vice President Jose' DeLaRosa, Unit President Mark Montemarano and Labor Relations Representative George Mignosi

## West Islip School District Members Approve New Contract

With 80% of unit members voting to approve the terms of a new contract, UPSEU's West Islip Custodial, Grounds and Maintenance, Food Service and Transportation members now have a new agreement. Annual increases plus increments, a new longevity step, added holidays for Food Service Workers, improved premium pay for Transportation members, added stipends, increased shift differential and a retirement incentive were among other gains included in the pact.

Like many past negotiations with the district, we went through the mediation process and concluded with fact finding. Ultimately, the fact finder's recommendations served as the template for an agreement to be achieved.

President Boyle noted the fantastic efforts of the negotiating team, who worked diligently throughout the process to bring the agreement to closure. Boyle stated, "The negotiating team led by Unit Chief Steward James Moran and included Jamie Troiano, Frank Mariani, Veronica Tardugo, Debra Tammone, Cathy Wiengarten, Mike Beckerman and Barbara Liroi, did an outstanding job."



### **Huntington School District Aides, Monitors & Assistants Secure New Agreement**

By a unanimous vote, UPSEU's Huntington School District Aides, Monitors, and Assistants Unit members approved a new three year agreement. Annual wage increases plus increments, a new sick leave donation program, additional increases for teaching assistants and a new payment to teaching assistants covering for teachers were included in the agreement, amongst other gains.

As a result of a UPSEU negotiated incentive, the former unit leadership and negotiating team members retired shortly thereafter. Kim Schaefer who assumed the Unit President position, and the newly elected leaders went back into negotiations, and an agreement was forged.

UPSEU President Kevin Boyle commended Kim Schaefer, Barbara Santoro and April Caleb for their efforts. Kevin noted, "It cannot be forgotten that former Unit President Donna Blair and Unit Leaders Nancy Lavery and Kim Schondebare worked hard and provided great leadership throughout the process, all of which led to the positive contract result."

### **3 Village Food Service Workers Ratify 5 Year Contract**

By a unanimous vote, the Three Village Central School District Food Service Unit members now have a new five year contract. Annual wage increases, increased longevity and added increases for cooks and assistant cooks were included in the pact. Improvements in areas such as an additional holiday and uniform allowance were also added during the negotiation process.

Special thanks to Negotiating Team members Jacqueline Groovenhoff, Amy Wright, Susan Kuffner, Michele Pellicano, Barbara Shoulder and Angel Giammatteo for their great work in delivering an excellent contract for their co-workers.

### **Town of Seymour Supervisors Unanimously Approve Tentative Agreement**

UPSEU is pleased to announce a five-year contract extension between the Town of Seymour and the Seymour Supervisors bargaining unit. The agreement, which includes a wage market adjustment for every bargaining unit member, is a major accomplishment considering the trend in Connecticut arbitration decisions and the state's financial challenges. Among other benefits, and in addition to market adjustments, the bargaining unit was able to obtain above average yearly wage increases, below average increases to medical insurance premiums during the term of the extension, and an improvement in clothing allowance benefits for impacted members.

Prior to contract negotiations UPSEU and the unit leadership reviewed economic data of similar units throughout the region, which revealed that our members were vastly underpaid for the work they have been doing. The town also conducted an independent research which confirmed UPSEU's findings.

In the end, the membership unanimously approved the tentative agreement, as it addressed each of their concerns. Following the ratification meeting, a rank and file member, Tony DePrimo, stated to the membership, "I have to say in my approximate 30 years in public service and being a member of a couple of different public employee labor unions, I was very impressed with the handling of this round of negotiations and the five year contract. I would like to thank Matt Geer, Jose Manjarrez and Paul Wetowitz for a job well done."

UPSEU Chief Negotiator Matt Geer stated, "The negotiations were a success, as the town recognized the pay disparity and finally addressed it on behalf of our hard working members. These pay adjustments were long overdue and is definitely a big step in the right direction. I applaud our membership for standing united on this issue, especially our Unit President Paul Wetowitz for his commitment, input and efforts throughout the process."

This agreement is also a testament to collaboration between UPSEU and the town, and a prime example of the kind of results that can be achieved when negotiations are driven by strong labor relations. Moreover, UPSEU would like to congratulate the Seymour Supervisors on their new contract and also for their hard work which made this outcome possible.

# UPSEU SECURES CONTRACT WINS

## UPSEU's TOWN OF ISLIP WHITE COLLAR UNIT MEMBERS GIVE BIG NOD TO NEW AGREEMENT



### TOWN OF ISLIP WHITE COLLAR NEGOTIATING TEAM

L to R: Theresa Baio, Reese McGuire, Alicia Totura, Unit President Barbara Maltese, Town Supervisor Angie Carpenter, Director of Labor Relations and Personnel Arthur Abbate, UPSEU Liaison Ellen Pleasant and Lisa Pfaffe.

The Town of Islip White Collar Unit recently voted on a new three year agreement with the membership approving it by an overwhelming 96% yes vote. This is the second agreement negotiated by UPSEU on their behalf. The White Collar Unit had joined UPSEU after hearing from their Blue Collar counterparts who had joined a few years earlier. Both units had suffered under 40 years of Teamster representation and negotiations that led them to 10 zero increases in 18 years. They too had a contract agreement prior to joining UPSEU where the Teamsters agreed to many givebacks for new and existing employees.

Since joining UPSEU, we have worked diligently to restore the givebacks negotiated by the Teamsters and under this recently negotiated contract, most of the givebacks have been reversed for new employees. No long term employee givebacks now exist.

When accessing current average raises in our local area, UPSEU was able to exceed this number with additional monies at the top step, and added monies to the new 15 year schedule which was added in our last round of negotiations. Improvements in the agreement were achieved in many other areas including: leveling up the two vacation schedules, added vacation carryover, improved payout of sick leave upon retirement and a new classification upgrade/pay adjustment process to be implemented in the second and third year. A significant issue impacting the unit was the increase afforded unit members when working out of classification which historically led to cents per hour increases. UPSEU sought and achieved a minimum one dollar (\$1.00) per hour to ensure that working out of title had value for their efforts.

President Boyle commended the negotiating team led by Unit President Barbara Maltese and which included Reese McGuire, Lisa Pfaffe, Alicia Totura and Theresa Baio. Boyle also praised the tremendous efforts of UPSEU White Collar Liaison Ellen Pleasant, and the work and assistance of UPSEU's Vice President Kim Nowakowski throughout the process.

## UPSEU's TOWN OF ISLIP BLUE COLLAR UNIT MEMBERS OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVE NEW PACT

With 93% of unit members approving its terms, UPSEU Town of Islip Blue Collar Unit members now have a new agreement. Since joining UPSEU in 2010, after nearly 40 years of Teamster representation, UPSEU has been working to reverse years of poor representation and contracts that left the unit falling further and further behind their counterparts. In the 18 years before joining UPSEU, the unit endured 10 years of wage freezes and had steps frozen for five years. In the contract prior to the unit joining UPSEU, the Teamsters negotiated a contract that included numerous givebacks for employees hired thereafter, and several givebacks for existing employees.

In UPSEU's two contracts, and the new one just overwhelmingly approved, we have reversed many of the new hire Teamster givebacks, eliminated Teamster givebacks for long term employees and moved all unit members forward. Gone are the days of zero's, as UPSEU has negotiated above average increases in each year of its now three contracts on the unit's behalf. The recently concluded contract again includes above average annual wage increases plus step, and increases the new 15 year step immediately impacting 50% of the unit by adding monies each year of the contract. Health coverage remained unchanged with most unit members paying nothing, and new hires, which began paying under the last Teamsters contract, remaining at the existing level.

Other areas of improvement included: law enforcement protection when effectuating arrests, leveling up the Teamsters two tier vacation schedule providing over 40% of the unit an additional three to five days per year, improved vacation carryover, improved sick leave payout at retirement and leveling up of the two tier health waiver. A new classification upgrade/adjustment process was added in the second and third years of the agreement to address pay inequities.

UPSEU President Kevin E. Boyle, Jr. commended the negotiating team for remaining steadfast in the fight to deliver an excellent contract. With the support demonstrated by the vote, they clearly were successful. Boyle thanked team members led by Unit President Frank Correira and which included Tom Breig, Bernard Dennis, Robert Finn, Kevin Horrmann, Tom Keane, Rob Papa and John A. Mattia for their tremendous efforts. Boyle also commended UPSEU's Liaison Representative Peter Pollak for his tremendous assistance throughout the process, as well as that of UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Pat DeFelice for his work throughout the process.



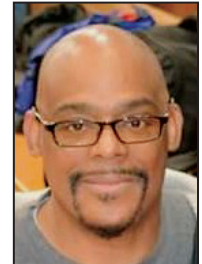
Unit President Frank Correira



VP DPW Rob Papa



VP Public Safety Tom Keane



VP DEC Bernard Dennis



VP Supervisors/Foreman  
Tom Breig



VP Parks & Recreation  
Kevin Horrmann



VP Aviation/Transportation  
Bob Finn



Unit Secretary  
John A. Mattia



## NJ Governor Murphy Signs Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act



L to R: USW Local 755 President Joe Gautier, Governor Murphy, UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Mark A. McCart, USW Local 655 President Ken Russell

On May 7, 2018, the new Governor of New Jersey, Phil Murphy signed the Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act. The N.J. State Legislature and the Governor, recognizing that organized labor has been under attack both locally and nationally, sponsored a new law that would bolster support for unions and help employees learn their rights under collective bargaining.

Governor Murphy stated, “Today I am pleased to sign the Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act. As a strong advocate for organized labor, I recognize the myriad benefits of employee unionization, as well as the continued challenges unions face in maintaining and growing their membership. This bill promotes labor stability in the public sector by ensuring that employee organizations that are the exclusive representatives of public employees in collective negotiations are able to carry out their statutory duties by having access to, and being able to communicate with the employees they represent.”

The act requires an employer to include all full time and part time employees who perform bargaining unit work in the union. Employers may not coerce or attempt to dissuade an employee from signing a union card. This was always part of PERC (Public Employment Relations Commission) Law, but the employer who engages in such acts can now be held financially liable for the first time in PERC history. Additionally, employers must provide the union with the names and pertinent information of all new employees. They must also allow the union work time to meet and sign up new employee members. With these new protections, unions will now have a fighting chance to access and educate employees about their rights and the advantages of working in a unionized shop.

## Discipline Rescinded! New Haven DPW Member Made Whole

UPSEU member and public works employee Scott Murphy, a driver for the Refuse Division in the City of New Haven, was issued a three day suspension without just cause. During the normal course of Scott’s day which consists of collecting refuse from residential neighborhoods, all refuse drivers are required to assist in snow removal operations during snow storms. Murphy’s normal assignment during snow storms was to operate a small plow truck on his familiar route, clearing snow from parking lots. However, at the start of a snow storm, Murphy was directed to do “push back” (cleaning the snow up to the curb) on a unfamiliar route, using a large snow plow. He immediately raised concern with his supervisor, explaining that he had not been trained on the much larger plow, which was newer to the fleet. Despite relaying concerns over the route he was given, including his not being familiar with the layout, he was told to perform the assignment he was given.

While plowing in the early morning hours, Murphy accidentally hit a bump out curb that was non-detectable through the accumulating snow, causing damage to the plow. The city issued Murphy a three day suspension for what they deemed as gross negligence.



Scott Murphy

Murphy filed a grievance, believing that the accident was just that, an accident. Labor Relations Representative Colleen Ezzo stated, “The union supported Mr. Murphy and this grievance, as there was no evidence presented that identified any negligence. Clearly Mr. Murphy did his best to raise valid concerns with his supervisors.”

During the initial level grievance hearings, the city refused to budge, and the union filed the grievance to arbitration. In a recent decision, the arbitration panel sided with the union, finding that there was no just cause and ordered that the discipline be rescinded and that Mr. Murphy receive payment for the three days. Upon learning of the decision, Scott Murphy stated, “I couldn’t be happier! I want to thank Colleen Ezzo and Attorney Ditman for all their dedication and support in fighting this!”



# ***UPSEU is Making A Difference Everyday!***

## **Columbia County Members Ratify 4 Year Contract by a Landslide**

UPSEU Columbia County members loudly and solidly ratified their new 2018 four year agreement by 92% of the votes cast. The UPSEU negotiating team put forth a comprehensive four year package to their members that included enhancements in numerous areas and contained no concessions for current workers. "We were able to maintain health insurance coverage with no increases in the co-pays and attained some significant increases in longevities and health insurance buyouts," said Chief Negotiator Kevin E. Boyle, Jr. A world of thanks to the UPSEU negotiating team members Chief Unit Officer Cindy Tipple, Assistant Unit Officer Pat Abitable, Assistant Unit Officer Lisa DiStefano, Betty Bednar, Chris Iman, Barbara Stedge, Don Coons, Tom Elliot, Josh Campeta, Mark Wendelken, Mary Ellen Madison, Jane DeGennaro, Kate Dunst, UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Mike Kuski and Regional Coordinator Kathy Wright-Muzio.

## **Connecticut Unit Officer & Steward Training Draws Record Turnout**



The largest ever turnout of local unit officers from across Connecticut attended UPSEU's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Basic Unit Officer Training at the Meriden Public Library. A record number of participants were treated to a detailed explanation of the Family Medical Leave Act, an in-depth tutorial on grievances and unfair labor practices by labor relations representatives, attorneys and an expert with the U.S. Department of Labor. Participants received a number of brochures covering FMLA Guidelines, a reference guide on Wage and Hour laws, important contact information, standard grievance forms and a packet highlighting many of the benefits UPSEU offers members that can be accessed through [upseu.org](http://upseu.org).

First time attendee Cindy Leonard, Waterbury BOE Administrative Support Staff Unit Secretary stated, "The realm of topics were covered effectively by all the day's speakers. I learned so much and feel much more confident providing answers when members ask me questions. It was also great that the speakers took time to thank all of us for our service as UPSEU unit officers."

Regional Director Matt Geer commended the attendees for their dedication, and stated, "UPSEU is committed to educating our unit officers and stewards on the legal rights of our members by providing top-notch training. As a result, year after year the number of participants vastly increases, and is a true testament to the dedicated and committed unit leaders UPSEU has, and for that I am extremely grateful, as is the entire staff at UPSEU."

## **Changes on the Horizon at PERC and in New Jersey**

PERC, the N.J. Public Employment Relations Commission, has a new leader. As the primary agency that regulates labor law in the N.J. public sector, PERC has a huge influence on how unions and union members are treated. In the past eight years, under the Christie Administration, the balance that existed between labor and management was disrupted. Fewer PERC agents were available, Unfair Labor Practices were often decided against the union and generally management had a clear advantage.

The new Chairman Joel M. Weisblatt has promised that he will bring fairness back to PERC. On April 27, 2018, the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education sponsored the annual PERC conference. The keynote speaker was the new director of PERC. UPSEU representatives and the firm of Rothman, Rocco and Laruffa, the UPSEU legal team were in attendance.



**Joel M. Weisblatt**

Joel Wiesblatt is no stranger to labor or management. He has served as an arbitrator and mediator in both the private and public sectors. He worked as a staff mediator with PERC previously and is also an instructor at the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations. In addition to hearing from the new PERC Chairman, a breakdown of the NJ Workforce Democracy Act was presented, an arbitration panel discussed various arbitration scenarios, and Ira Mintz presented a summary on the change regarding the Atlantic County/Bridgewater decision. The Atlantic County/Bridgewater decision has held up step increment payments in various UPSEU shops, including Mahwah, where a ULP and grievance have been filed on behalf of the membership. In his presentations, Mintz stated that if the union contract contained a continuation or successor clause, PERC would uphold the membership's right to step increases, and that arbitrators would have to side with the union if an employer withheld a step increment. The changes regarding Atlantic County/Bridgewater will be instrumental in bringing the UPSEU grievance to a resolution.

## Members in the News

### Southington Paraeducators, ABA Therapists & EL Tutors Donations for Wolcott Animal Control and Bread For Life

Spring is in the air and UPSEU Southington Paraeducators, ABA Therapists and EL Tutors have been busy bees doing what they do best, which is helping and supporting others. On March 15<sup>th</sup> the unit made a sizable donation to Wolcott Animal Control for \$1,081.25 in memory of Patty Holcomb, a veteran and beloved paraeducator with more than 25 years of service in the Southington Public School District. Patty had a great love for animals and devoted many hours volunteering for the Wolcott Dog Pound. The unit, with cooperation from the S.P.S. District, sponsored a district-wide dress down day on her behalf. The donations received from the event will be contributed to those animals and their care. Suzanne Topper, the Unit Vice President made it her mission to make sure that Patty's passing would be remembered by those she worked with in the district and by those she cared for at the dog pound.



On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Southington Paraeducators, ABA Therapists and EL Tutors presented a check to Executive Director of Bread for Life for \$1,000 in addition to ten boxes for non-perishable food items! This check will help Bread for Life meet its mission to provide food, fellowship and dignity to all those in need in our community. A mission that has helped foster a partnership between the unit and Bread for Life for close to ten years now. The Bread for Life motto, "So no one may go hungry," is one that resonates with the group and they will continue their quest in 2019!



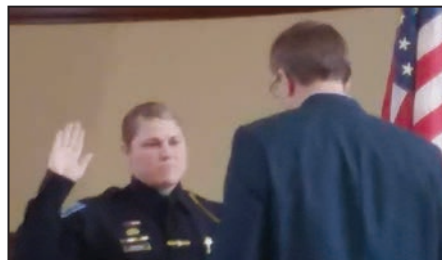
**Southington Paraeducator  
of the Year**  
Anne Lippincott  
Depaolo Middle School

### Willimantic Police Promotions

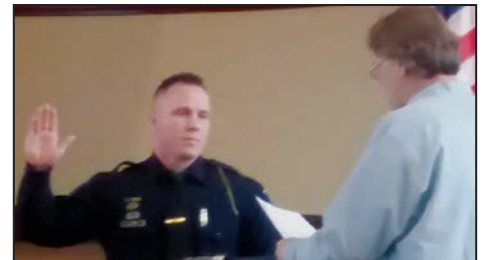
The Willimantic CT Police Department held a promotional ceremony this past March where three UPSEU/COPS members were promoted. We are pleased to continue our strong representation of the Willimantic Police Department. We would like to congratulate all three members on their accomplishments and wish them great success in their new positions.



Officer Matthew Nixon was promoted to the new rank of Corporal.



Detective Amy Hartman was promoted to the new rank of Corporal.



Corporal Joshua Clark was promoted to the new rank of Sergeant.

# UPSEU Mailbox



Dear Kim,

Thank you for another informative meeting. The information that was shared at the meeting concerning Gracie was very sad and disheartening! With that in mind I think that all members should get their NYS Retirement paperwork in order if they have not already done so periodically. Not only in the case of a devastating situation, but also for all other information, i.e., prior service buy back, beneficiaries, and any other information. Beneficiaries not being changed due to divorce or death can cause issues for a family. Most people think they do not have to be concerned with this since they are not near retirement. I don't mean to interfere with the massive job you have, but maybe this can be mentioned to the members? Again, thank you for all that you do.

Rose Ann Smith  
Bay Shore Secretarial Unit

**Editor's Note:** Thank you Rose Ann for the suggestion, as President Boyle chose it as the topic for his column!

Dear Mr. Geer,

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Mr. Cory Garfman for coming to my defense so valiantly these past few months. In the most intense moments, those in the Special Ed Department and administration were bullying, intimidating, accusing and scoffing at my sincere expressions. In the nick of time, Mr. Garfman came into the situation and knew instantly what was truly happening and believed me at the very start. What a salvation he was for me, time and time again through this very stressful period. Mr. Garfman took the time out to talk with me and answer my questions and explain the contract's steps. After saying thank you so many times he would reply, "That's my job." He was very prompt in responding to my concerns. What was calming to me was Mr. Garfman's willing support, presence and exceptional professionalism. I won't ever forget his service or timing there in my life. Thank you Mr. Geer for the union representative, Cory Garfman, that you provide for people like me, who would have been rendered even more powerless in this situation. Thank you for the support and bravery that you provide. Thank you for being for the people, by the people.

Jacqueline Velez  
Seymour BOE Paraeducator Unit

Good morning Matt,

I hope all is well with you and everyone at our UPSEU office. I finally got a chance to take a moment to write you this email that I have been wanting to send to you. In the past, I have always said that I was happy with UPSEU and the long time excellent service that Wayne Gilbert had always given us. But this email is to let you now that I/we feel that Liz Ditman has been doing an awesome job on our behalf, from our contract negotiations, to protecting our members. Also, from being very tough and wise when in the room with the town, to being very considerate and caring to our members when outside of the room, she has been doing a fantastic job! However, keep in mind that she is no wallflower. She is professional, hard working, and always gets back to you with a proper legal answer to remedy anything that might be going on at the time. We are very fortunate to have Liz as our union representative and also our union attorney. I would like to thank Liz for all that she has done for us, and I would also like to thank you for assigning Liz Ditman to Unit 23. We are very grateful.

Joseph R. Colello  
Hamden Supervisors



## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ALL UPSEU MEMBERS Regarding Verizon Wireless Discounts

We recently had an issue with Verizon Wireless in regard to the denial of members to receive or continue to receive a Verizon Wireless discount. Verizon Wireless has asked for proof of eligibility, which in the past was UPSEU membership and having proof of being a public employee. Now, members must be employed by a employer who has a Verizon account, then employees can receive a courtesy discount.

If the employer is a Verizon customer, then the employer has a representative contact that can assist the member. The member will need to prove eligibility with their employee email address (work email). If no email account, go to a Verizon store with an employee ID and/or paystub.

Unfortunately for members whose employer is not a Verizon customer, the discount is no longer available. We were not forewarned of these new parameters and it is unfortunately beyond the control of UPSEU. However, if we can assist you in any way as you transition to this new Verizon Wireless system of proof, please contact Kim Nowakowski at 631-738-8773 ext. 1043. She will help you to the greatest extent possible.

*Making a Difference in the Workplace*



**REMINDER:**  
Deadline for  
Scholarship  
Applications is  
**JULY 1<sup>st</sup>**

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