

BEDFORD TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
POLITICAL ACTION REPORT – 4/28/14
Submitted by: Mimi Warren

Westchester Putnam Central Labor Council: Each year on **April 28, Workers Memorial Day**, working people throughout the world remember those who were hurt or killed on the job and renew the struggle for safe workplaces. 40 Years ago, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising every worker the right to a safe job. Unions and our allies fight each day to make that promise a reality, winning protections that have made jobs safer, saving hundreds of thousands of lives and preventing millions of workplace injuries and illnesses, but the work continues...

Did you know: Every year, more people are killed at work than in wars...?

In honor of Workers Memorial Day, members of the Westchester-Putnam Central Labor Council will hold a vigil at the Renaissance Plaza in White Plains on April 29th. The slogan for Workers Memorial Day is: **Mourn the Dead, Fight for the Living.** Workers Memorial Day reminds us that job safety for everyone is a priority.

Update: Mrs. Green's: as reported previously, 9 workers were fired from Mrs. Green's Natural Market in Mt. Kisco for supporting the right to form a union. The average length of employment for these workers was 4 years, some having been employed there for 10 years, but they were fired for "poor customer satisfaction." Some of these workers are part of our parent community and are out there standing in front of Mrs. Green's from 10:00 to 4:00 on Mondays, through Fridays, and 10:00 to 2:00 on Saturdays. **Please consider stopping by and standing in solidarity.** If you can't stay, at least drive by and beep to show your support. The National Labor Relations Board continues to review the case. Take a moment to think about the possibility of being fired for "poor customer satisfaction" after 4 or 5 or 10 years of work. Think about what life might be like if you didn't have due process rights related to your employment.

Mobilization May: kicks off with **Worthy Wage Day** on Thursday, May 1, a national day of action, held annually since 1987 as part of an ongoing grass roots campaign to raise awareness of chronic underfunding in early childhood education and the damaging effects on young children.

Did you know:

- Poverty-level wages are driving experienced early childhood educators from the field.
- Funding for child care subsidies has been cut in hundreds of communities around the nation, making child care less attainable for hundreds of thousands of families.
- A bad economy, cuts in state child care subsidies and increases in parent copayments have all forced many child care businesses to close. This not only decreases the availability of early learning opportunities for the nation's youngest children, it also damages the small business sector, both urban and rural, of the American economy.

Research also shows that the most important component of quality in early care and education is the quality and consistency of the caregiver/teacher.

So, thank an early childhood educator today!

Let's Go to the Movies: Cesar Chavez was an American farm worker, labor leader and civil rights activist, who, with Dolores Huerta, co-founded the National Farm Workers Association. The Westchester Putnam Central Labor Council has arranged a private showing of the Cesar Chavez movie on Saturday, May 3rd at 10:00 at the Saw Mill Multiplex Cinema. The cost is \$5.00 and reservations are necessary. If you are interested, please contact Mimi Warren ASAP at mbrownwarren0117@bcsdny.org for more information.

In District Lobbying: Over the next three weeks, members of locals from Westchester and around the state will be meeting with Legislators in their district offices. We will discuss high stakes testing and ask our legislators to support an immediate two-year moratorium on high stakes testing.

We will also be focusing on Tax Cap reform. Maintaining the current Tax Cap will continue to force districts to eliminate programs and cut teaching positions. Without significant additional aid, many school districts lack sufficient resources to fund current programs. In addition, we will speak to replacing the 60% supermajority requirement needed to override the Tax Cap with a simple majority vote.

In addition, we will be asking for equitable funding for Special Acts Schools, such as Greenburgh 11, located at Children's Village. These schools serve children with intense needs, placed by the juvenile justice, child welfare mental health, developmental disabilities and special education systems.

Stand with Spencerport: 60 Middle School Teachers in Spencerport, NY have sent a letter to Commissioner King, Chancellor Tisch and Governor Cuomo demanding transparency and accountability in the administration and scoring of the Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Exams. Please consider reading their letter and signing at: <http://standwithspencerport.wordpress.com/> Over 3500 parents and teachers have already signed!

2nd NYSUT Race for Solidarity: NYSUT members will be gathering on May 10th at FDR Park in Yorktown for the second 5K Race for Solidarity. Come and run and stick around for a bar-b-que following the race. It's guaranteed to be a fun event. Walkers welcome! Register at <https://register.chronotrack.com/reg/form?eventID=7335>. The fee is \$35.00.

Remember to visit NYSUT's Member Action Center and keep sending those Faxes <https://mac.nysut.org/issues>

If you haven't already done so, download the App for the Member Action Center.

You can and do make a difference.

** Remember to visit NYSUT on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/NYSUTUnited>

