

Member Leader Spotlight—Greg Gomez

This is part of an ongoing series highlighting member-leaders and how they are working to create a better world for everyone

Q: First things first: How long have you been with SEIU?

A: I've been a union member since 1996 and have been in SEIU since our older legacy association merged with legacy Local 700.

Q: Congratulations on winning a seat on the Farmersville City Council! What made you decide to run?

A: Running for office wasn't an easy decision to make. Watching my eldest daughter search for a job and have to deal with commuting to work made the decision a lot easier. I saw that our young adults have very few choices when it comes to finding jobs in town. Most often, they must look in Visalia and compete with others there for work. Then comes the struggle to find a way to get to work. Our buses don't run 24hrs a day and to this day I have to pick her up after work on weekends and take her to work if she has an early shift, because the buses also don't run between Farmersville and Visalia every 1/2 hour or even every hour. We don't have a full service grocery store in town either, so we have to make decisions about driving East or West 5 miles for groceries. We can't just walk to the store to get a loaf of bread or even fresh fruits and vegetables.

Q: Was being an SEIU member helpful in getting elected? What did we do really well for you?

A: COPE was instrumental in getting me elected to office; it's where I learned about the political process. It was the impetus for me to reach out to the community and make connections with the local political groups and like-minded folks in our community. My appointment to the planning commission was the result of a conversation I had with our city councilman (member) during a contract vote. I learned how to run a political campaign by working with our community/political organizer on campaigns that we endorsed. I owe everything to our COPE committee.

Q: Everyone knows that campaigning is hard work with lots of ups and downs. What was your best moment on the campaign trail?

A: There were many great moments during my campaigning. The best moment I had was early. I had just received enough political contributions to get a vinyl banner made and I was pretty excited. I had already picked out the perfect spot for it right on a chain link fence on a well-traveled road and I had already gotten approval from the property owner to put it up. The banner was there for 2 weeks and then it disappeared. I got depressed and then I got mad. I was able to channel that anger and use it to my advantage because all it did was fuel my determination to win. I started printing flyers and I made a pledge to myself that I would personally visit all 1,000+ likely voters in the city and I did it! Every time I wanted to sit a weekend out or felt that I had done enough already, I thought about my missing banner and it put wind in my sails.

Q: If another member came to you and asked how to get their own campaign started, what advice would you give them?

A: The best advice I could give a member that's interested in seeking office is first, if you don't already, start contributing to COPE and start attending meetings. Next, get involved in your community and seek out local political clubs or community organizations that align with your values. Don't be afraid to start in a lower office and work your way up. It's much harder to run for an office if you are starting from scratch and have no voting record to stand on. Start on a city commission, like I did or a school site council or PTA. You will learn valuable skills like running a meeting, handling a budget and you will gain followers. Talk to your community/political organizer and ask them to help you. They have those connections and can point you in the right direction.

Q: Thanks for taking the time to share this with our members and congratulations again!



Marcy Weber's Victory

I called SEIU when the County's hiring process didn't seem fair. I have been a Mental Health Case Manager for many years. I felt I had enough experience to move to the next step of my career, so when the opportunity to promote came along, I applied right away. After receiving a rejection letter that denied me an interview based on my lack of experience, I knew

something wasn't right. Our union stewards got on the job right away and started asking Human Resources about my qualifications. They also pointed out that the County was late providing me with my latest evaluation (PAF) which recommended that I be promoted to the position that would have qualified me for the promotion. Next thing I know, I got a notice from HR, advising

me that I would have the chance to interview to the promotion! I am so thankful that SEIU was there for me to help me get a fair shot at advancing my career! Now I know that as members it is up to us to speak up for fairness in the workplace.

- Marcy Weber, Mental Health Case Manager III, Visalia Adult Clinic



"Our union is only as strong as our members"

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS JOIN US FOR STEWARD EMPOWERMENT DAY!

Come Spend a Day with us Learning about your Rights as a Union Member.

Wednesday, March 6th

9:30a.m.-4p.m.

SEIU Union Office

1811 W. Sunnyside Ave.

Trainings will be conducted on County Time and Spots are Limited!!!!

To Sign Up Contact Lori Landers *(559) 635-3720 *lori.land@seiu521.org

Meet the Director

We have a new director in our Visalia Office, Teneya Johnson. Teneya brings with her a wealth of union experience in both private and public sector unions. She is excited about her new role and anxious to meet the members and hear what their vision is for the union. To schedule a time to meet with Teneya please contact her by email at teneya.johnson@seiu521.org or by phone at 635-3720.

Contract Tidbits Did You Know....



Union Employees have the right to representation at discipline meetings.

Article 11 of your contract states that any employee covered by the contract has a right to representation by the Union at a meeting with a supervisor which involves disciplinary proceedings.

Winners of SEIU Health Care Informational Event Raffle



Grand Prize Winner!
\$20 Starbucks Gift Card



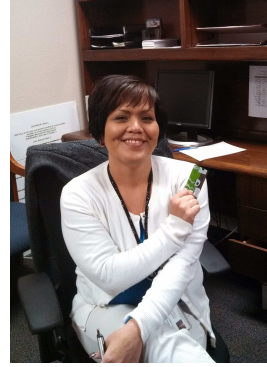
Anita Ramirez
 Self Sufficiency Counselor II,
 TulareWORKS

First Prize Winner!
\$10 Starbucks Gift Card



Cassie Rodriguez,
 Sr. Account Clerk,
 Child Support Services

Runner Up!
\$5 Starbucks Gift Card



Anna Rodriguez,
 Child Support Officer,
 Child Support Services

Runner Up!
\$5 Starbucks Gift Card



Mike Rodriguez,
 Office Assistant II,
 Health & Human Services

Winner!
\$5 Starbucks Gift Card



Sheila Michael, Supervising
 Child Support Officer,
 Child Support Services

Winner!
\$5 Starbucks Gift Card



Michael Hart,
 Office Assistant III,
 Health & Human Services

Did you know these benefits came from unions?

Many of the everyday benefits and protections you and all U.S. workers enjoy daily are part of the history of labor unions and the direct result of union efforts:

- minimum wage,
- social security payments,
- an eight-hour day with weekends off,
- overtime pay,
- child labor laws,
- the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) which requires employers to meet safety standards for you and your fellow workers.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES LEAVE ACT

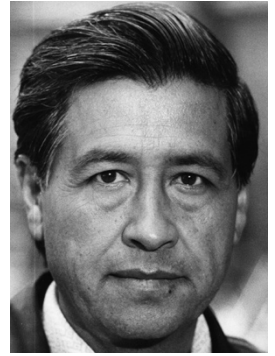
The School Activities Leave Act entitles parents to participate in their children's extra curricular activities. You can take School Activities Leave, or SAL, in any month of the year. You must give your employer at least one week's written notice for your SAL request to be legitimate. You cannot take more than eight hours leave in any one month or more than 40 hours in one academic year. So, it's important to plan ahead before deciding on your SAL dates each year. Typically, you are not paid for SAL but you can use your vacation accruals. Your employer is entitled to verify the activity and your attendance there.



Cesar E. Chavez: Celebrating the Legacy

Cesar E. Chavez was a great man who dedicated his life to helping others. Cesar was born to parents who taught him important ideals about hard work, the importance of education and respect. As a young boy, Cesar worked on his family's farm feeding and caring for the animals, collecting eggs, and bring water to the house.

Cesar started the National Farm Worker Association to help improve the working conditions of farm workers. Men and Women of all backgrounds joined Cesar in this movement. Cesar did not believe in violence much like Dr. Martin Luther King. He dedicated his life to making the world a better place and to serving others. He continued to work to bring respect, dignity, justice, and fair treatment to the poor, to farm workers and to people everywhere.



Join us in Celebrating the Legacy of Cesar Chavez
Saturday, March 30, 2013
9 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

March, Easter Egg Hunt, Birthday Cake for Cesar Chavez, and Fun Activities for All Ages!
Contact your Internal Organizer for More Information.

Fulfill Your College Goals with a SEIU International or Local 521 Scholarship*

College goals can be expensive. To help Local 521 members fulfill these educational goals SEIU International awards scholarships through four scholarship programs, and Local 521 awards scholarships through two other scholarship programs. These scholarships enable members and their children to pursue their educational goals at accredited colleges, universities, and technical schools.

SEIU International Lottery Scholarships

15—\$1,000 scholarships renewable for up to four years
 33—\$1,500 scholarships for one year of study

SEIU International Moe Foner Scholarship

1—\$5,000 scholarship awarded to a full time student pursuing a degree or training in the visual or performing arts, who believes these arts can advance social change.

SEIU International Jesse Jackson Scholarship

1—\$5,000 scholarship renewable for up to four years awarded to a student whose work and aspirations for economic and social justice reflect the values and accomplishments of the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

SEIU International Bonnie Ladin Scholarship

2—\$2,500 one time scholarships awarded each year to a student who will be attending the National Labor College Bachelor of Arts program.

SEIU International National Labor College Scholarship

SEIU International Nora Piore scholarship

1-\$4,000 and is renewable for up to two years.

***The deadline for SEIU International scholarships listed above is
 March 1, 2013.**

SEIU Local 521 Clarence Dodge Scholarship

This scholarship is named after Legacy Local 715's first president, Clarence Dodge, and provides 10 winners with \$1,500 each for their first year of study.

***The deadline for Clarence Dodge Local 521 scholarship is March 29, 2013.**




For more information about these scholarships, visit our website:

<http://www.seiu521.org/scholarships>


Mark your calendars!

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

<p>February 12 6 p.m. Visalia Office COPE (Committee on Political Education</p>		<p>February 20 5:30 p.m. SEIU Local 521 Budget & Finance Committee</p>
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MARCH

<p>March 18 5:45 p.m. Eligibility Workers Industry Council</p>		<p>March 27 6 p.m. Tulare County Membership Meeting</p>
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