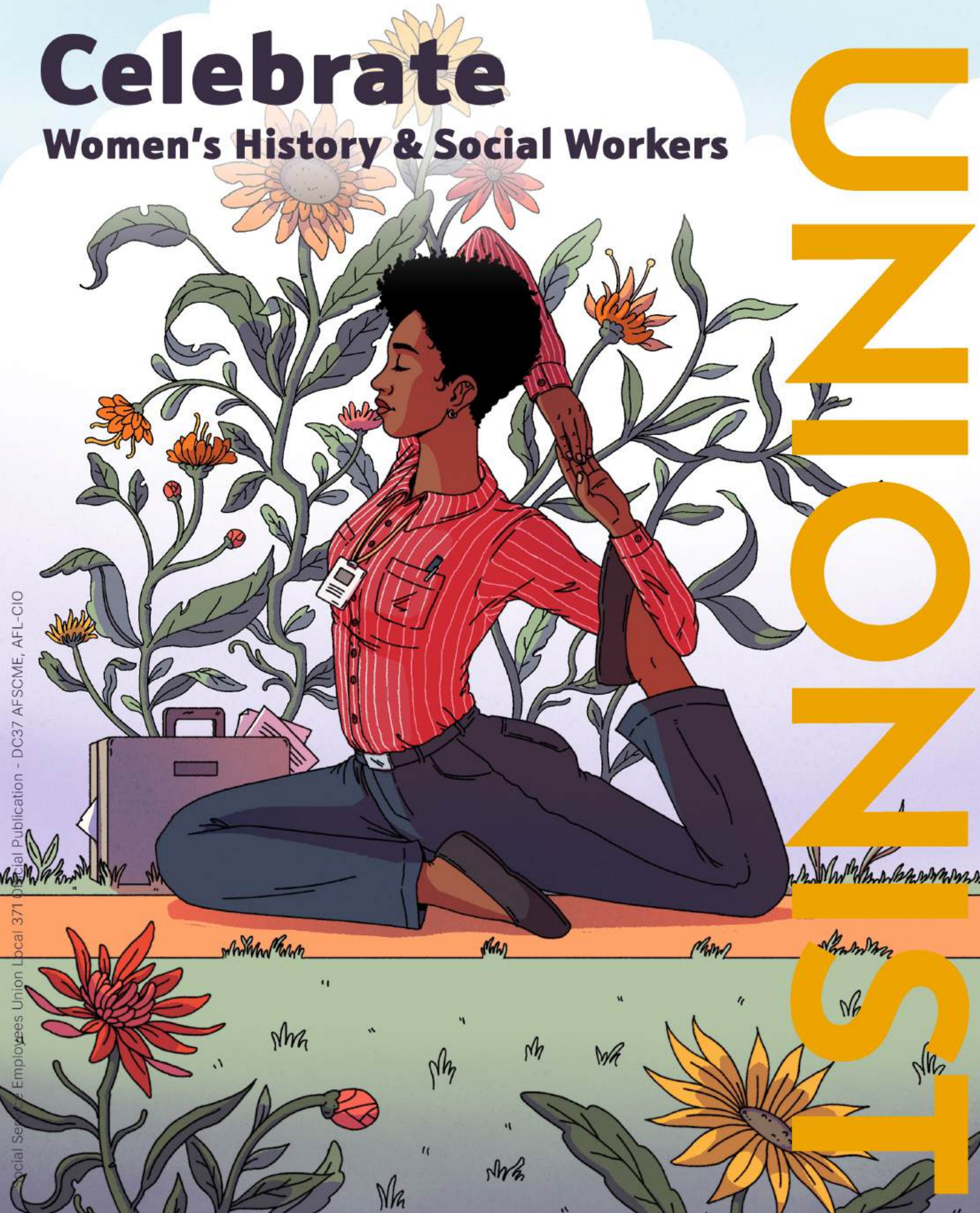
MARCH 2026 VOLUME 56 NUMBER 2 MIGHTYUNION.ORG

Celebrate

Women's History & Social Workers



MIGHTY UNION

Social Service Employees Union Local 371 Official Publication - DC37 AFSCME, AFL-CIO

Celebrating Women & Social Workers

President's Message

March is the time that we celebrate Women's History Month and Social Work Month. Clearly, we should be celebrating them all year long. However, in March, we take extra time to recognize their struggles, challenges and accomplishments.

Just as we celebrate various cultural and ethnic groups, this is the time to expand our knowledge and appreciation for women and social workers. We would not be here if not for women—and social work is the foundation for good mental health.

Take some time to thank the women who have played important roles in your lives, particularly the ancestors. Thank a social worker for the indispensable role they play in creating a safety net for those who are vulnerable. You never know; next time, that person struggling might be you.

Tribute to a Steadfast Unionist

This issue also honors and celebrates the life of Reggie Styles. All of us who knew him are blessed to have had him in our lives. We begin with his family, who have shared these words of gratitude and appreciation penned by Reggie's daughter, Raven Lanore.

Dear Union Family and Friends,

On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to sincerely thank each and every one of you for the love, support, and presence you showed us during the passing of my father, Reggie Styles.

Seeing so many of his coworkers and union family come together meant more to us than words can express. Your kindness, your stories, your hugs, and simply being there helped carry us through one of the hardest moments of our lives.

My dad took great pride in his work and the relationships he built over the years. He truly valued his coworkers and considered many of you part of his extended family. Knowing how deeply he was respected and loved brings us comfort and peace.

He was proud to be from Brooklyn, loved his Knicks and Mets, and never missed a chance to enjoy his Earth, Wind & Fire. But most of all, he loved people. He believed in treating everyone with kindness and always tried to leave others with words of wisdom and encouragement. Seeing how many lives he touched confirms what we always knew, that he was special.

Thank you for honoring his memory, standing by our family, and reminding us that he will never be forgotten. Your support will stay in our hearts forever.

With sincere gratitude,
Raven, Reggie Jr and Family

We've included a tribute to Reggie on pages 8 - 10. Let's continue to pour our hearts into our union in Reggie's honor.

- President Anthony Wells

*Cover Illustration by **Shin-Yeon Moon** | **shinyeon-moon.com***

MARCH 2026

03 6:30 PM — **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** 1501 Broadway, Ste 450, Manhattan

04 5:30 AM — **DC37 LOBBY DAY:** Buses to Albany leave from DC37 Pre-registration required

05 6:30 PM — **LGBTQ+ COMMITTEE:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW

09 6:30 PM — **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING:** DC37, 125 Barclay St. Manhattan

10 6:30 PM — **CONCERNED SOCIAL WORKERS:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW
BCW CHAPTER MEETING: Teleconference - SEE BELOW

11 6:00 PM — **CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW

12 6:30 PM — **WOMEN'S COMMITTEE:** 1501 Broadway, Suite 450, NY NY & Teleconference - SEE BELOW

13 5:30 PM — **SOCIAL WORK CELEBRATION:** DC37, 125 Barclay St., Manhattan

16 6:30 PM — **ASIAN HERITAGE COMMITTEE LUNAR NEW YEAR EVENT:** 1501 Broadway, Ste 450, NY, NY

17 1:30 PM — **RETIREES' COMMITTEE:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW
6:30 PM — **CARIBBEAN HERITAGE:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW

18 6:30 PM — **DELEGATE ASSEMBLY:** 125 Barclay Street Manhattan

19 6:30 PM — **LATINO HERITAGE COMMITTEE:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW

23 6:30 PM — **BLACK HERITAGE COMMITTEE:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW

24 6:30 PM — **NEXT WAVE COMMITTEE:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW

25 6:30 PM — **POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW

26 6:30 PM — **HEALTH & WELLNESS:** Teleconference - SEE BELOW

UNIONIST

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Eye on Health

Be Safe

Get Checked!

With their rewarding yet demanding vocations, many SSEU Local 371 members are urged to practice self-care, but it's easy to overlook the most crucial self-care of all: preserving your own health. As Women's History Month unfolds, let's pledge to get our check-ups and keep on top of our health, no matter your gender.

Get checked for women's and men's cancers

At the top of the checklist should be routine cancer screenings. For women, it's crucial to get mammograms as recommended by your doctor, according to your risk factors and family history. The same goes for pelvic exams, which can be lifesaving tools to prevent cervical cancer. Both boys and girls should also receive an HPV shot. This can help prevent cancer in both men and women. Familiarize yourself with the symptoms, and don't be afraid to see your doctor if you're concerned. Early detection saves lives!

By age 45 or 50, most doctors recommend that men get a prostate exam and blood test. Black men are at higher risk of being diagnosed with prostate cancer, so doctors often recommend they get their first exam by age 45. If you have symptoms, go in sooner! It could save your life. The city allows employees to receive excused leave for cancer screenings. To learn more, go to **tinyurl.com/dcas-screen**. and search for 440-15.

Early detection leads to far better outcomes

Though cancer rates overall have steadily declined, colorectal cancer has risen rapidly in Americans under 50. It is now among the leading causes of cancer deaths in young people, with low fiber diets, sedentary lifestyles and ultra-processed foods likely playing a role. Doctors urge every American to get a colonoscopy by age 45—or sooner if you have symptoms!

Unfortunately, we still live with health disparities in the US, with African-Americans and Native Americans suffering higher cancer mortality rates than White, Hispanic or Asian-Americans. We must do all we can to preserve the health of our communities, through advocacy as well as early detection.

Men's and women's health is not just about cancer prevention, however. For women, seeing a gynecologist regularly can help detect and treat painful conditions like endometriosis. When you're pregnant, regular prenatal obstetric care will ensure the long-term health of you and your baby.

Hormones also shift and decline in both men and women as they age—it's always worth seeing a provider any time you have unpleasant or concerning symptoms. Finally, lung cancer is the deadliest cancer in the US. If you smoke, reach out to your health insurance provider about smoking cessation classes and ask your doctor about gum, lozenges or drugs to help you quit. Let's encourage each other to safeguard our health and lead our best lives.

YOUR BENEFIT CARD

Are you set up to receive your benefits?

Filling out your union green card makes you an SSEU Local 371 member. But have you filled out a **white card**? This is how you receive your union **benefits**.

Benefits Coordinator Nitza Sutton notes that you MUST fill out ALL your information *neatly and legibly*, including your start date (the first day you reported to your job.) You only need your social security number, not those of your dependents.

REMEMBER: DESIGNATE A **BENEFICIARY**. This is extremely important. Your beneficiary doesn't have to be a family member; it could be a friend, and they don't have to live in the US. If the beneficiary is under 18, the funds will go into a trust until they reach legal age.

The city makes an annual contribution of $794 per member into an annuity fund. You can't withdraw or deposit into it. You receive the money 60 days after you separate from city service, transfer into a non-SSEU Local 371 title, or pass away.

FEBRUARY 6, 2026

BLACK HERITAGE CELEBRATION

The 2026 Black Heritage Celebration on Feb. 6 was full of lively artistic and cultural performances reflecting the theme, "Melanated Moves: Celebrating Black Resiliance." As we enter a midterm year with an opportunity to elect new voices in Congress, the messages shared were more relevant than ever.

President Anthony Wells struck a note of defiance as he declared, "Black history is American history. You can't have American history without us. It's about how we built this country—starting with 250 years of free labor."

Labor and civil rights intertwined

His message was echoed by the other speakers. District Council 37 Executive Director Henry Garrido recalled SSEU Local 371's 2017 Black Heritage event featuring Congressman John Lewis, who reminded us that labor has always been a twin pillar standing with the civil rights movement. Lewis said unions must "have the courage to stand up when others are not." Garrido also called on members to oppose the recent "atrocities in Minnesota" including the killings by militarized Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers.

Next, Keynote Speaker Dr. Elaine Sanders took up the theme, delivering an inspiring reflection on the Black experience. Dr. Sanders is a certified emotional intelligence coach with a PhD in educational leadership and management. Borrowing from a Kendrick Lamar lyric, Sanders used the theme "They not like us" to emphasize the resilience and achievements of the Black community.

She noted that African-Americans "preserved their language patterns, music, food, kinship, spiritual folktales and coded communications" despite unimaginable conditions during enslavement. They have since risen to the top of their fields in the arts, sport, academia, journalism, law, STEM, medicine and even to the U.S. Presidency. Their music, fashion, slang and dance influence popular culture the world over.

Voting a key responsibility

Sanders emphasized that today, as the government tries to erase Black history, the community has a responsibility to vote—a right that was denied for so long. She urged the crowd to mentor others, create opportunities, patronize Black businesses and celebrate their brilliance, which is born from struggle.

"Today, we honor the legacy that refuses to be erased, the strength that refuses to be broken, and the people who continue to rise," she said.

Celebrating joy

Many leaders joined the Black Heritage celebration, including District Council 37 President and Local 372 President Shaun D. Francois, who introduced Garrido. Former Assemblymember Annette Robinson attended, as well as Local 2627 President Laura Morand, Local 1549 President Anthony Lakhan, and many others. Executive Board Member Gregg Thompson served as an excellent emcee.

The Victory Music and Dance Company delighted attendees with two contrasting performances. First, a boisterous marching band played lively songs featuring acrobatic dancers. Then, girls aged 8 to 14 performed a poetic modern dance routine, accompanied by soulful music representing the Black historical experience.

Author Nicole Williams, founder and CEO of Victory Music and Dance, sold copies of her book, "Becoming Nicole Williams: A Journey of Faith, Growth, & Divine Purpose." Previous Black Heritage Speaker Steven Anthony King also sold copies of his book, "It's Really Good to See You." In addition, Keynote Speaker Dr. Sanders sold copies of her tome, "I Am a Woman with Issues, but I Still Qualify!"

Rounding out the program were poet Amari Dechinea with a piece about resilience, and Shawn Antoine II. The award- winning young filmmaker put together a long video montage of seminal figures in Black entertainment and history. He also shared a clip of his latest short work, a beautifully shot film called The Sight Unseen, about a sighting of a glowing cross in the Bronx in 1971. Finally, DJ Webb closed out the evening with music and dancing;vendors also sold their wares.

Black Heritage Committee Co-Chair Michelle Blackstock said, "I would like to thank all of the many people who collaborated to make this evening a success. President Anthony Wells, Co-Chair Lisa Bobb, the entire committee, and so many speakers, performers, staff, vendors, and supporters contributed their time, energy and love. In this political climate, it is essential that we remember our history and celebrate it. A special thank you to Dr. Sanders for her wisdom and generosity. The theme "Melanated Moves" is special to me; it says that through our struggles, we always find joy in each other."

PICTURED (right): President Wells (group shot) with the Black Heritage committee; District Council 37 Executive Director Henry Garrido (4th row, left); Victory Music & Dance co (top row); Dr. Elaine Sanders (3rd row, right); Shawn Antoine II (4th row, 2nd); Gregg Thompson (4th row, 3rd); President Wells and officers (4th row, right); poet Amari Dechinea and members dancing (5th row, 3rd); and members enjoing themselves. Photography by Jarrett Esaw

Melanated Moves:
Celebrating
Bl:k Resilien

MARCH 2026

HONORING OUR WOMEN & SOCIAL WORK HEROES

W. GERTRUDE BROWN

W. Gertrude Brown, born in 1888, was a pioneering Black leader and social worker who helped break the racial barrier in the Progressive movement of the 1920s.

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Brown became a social worker after high school and founded the city's first hospital for Black Americans. She moved to Ohio and held community leadership roles including executive secretary of the Federation of Social Services for Negro Women. In 1923, she received her bachelor's degree from Columbia University.

The following year, Brown moved to Minneapolis to head the Phyllis Wheatley Settlement House. Women created "settlement houses" to alleviate poverty and bring healthcare, resources, and education to low-income immigrant communities.

As African-Americans began migrating north in the early 20th century, however, the settlement houses remained mostly segregated. Under Brown's leadership, the Minneapolis Phyllis Wheatley House was an important safe haven during Jim Crow. It provided needed social services and lodging for African-Americans.

W. Gertrude Brown famously grew the Wheatley house and fostered a flourishing cultural exchange there during the Harlem Renaissance, hosting luminaries like Langston Hughes, Marian Anderson, W.E.B. Dubois, and Paul Robeson. Brown also provided space for Black leaders to conduct union activities.

At the same time, she took summer courses at Oxford University and was active among civil rights groups.

Though Brown died young in an automobile accident in the 1940s, she left a lasting legacy on social work and social justice.

WILMA MANKILLER

Cherokee social worker and activist Wilma Mankiller was born in Oklahoma in 1945 and grew up in extreme poverty. One of 11 siblings, she was raised in a house with no electricity or running water.

The Mankiller family moved to San Francisco when Wilma was 11. After high school, she married and had two daughters, and was a full-time mom studying social work when, in 1964, a small group of Native American activists occupied Alcatraz Island.

Mankiller was inspired and began fundraising and providing support for the American Indian Movement and grassroots civil rights groups. These organizations sought to fight poverty, discrimination and police brutality, and advocated for treaty rights and the preservation of indigenous culture.

For five years in the 1970s, she began raising funds and preparing documents for the Pit River Tribe in Northern California, which was suing over lands that had been stolen from them. She also founded and directed East Oakland's Native American Youth Center. Mankiller took a job as a social worker for the Urban Indian Resource Center, where she worked on social programs and helped pass a law allowing Native communities to keep more adoptees within their communities.

Mankiller then returned to Oklahoma, where she completed her bachelor's degree and worked for the Cherokee Nation as an economic stimulus coordinator and grant writer.

In 1983, Mankiller ran for deputy chief of the Cherokee Nation and received death threats and had her tires slashed due to sexism. After two years, the tribe's principal chief resigned and

WILMA MANKILLER, CONTINUED

Mankiller took over the role, earning her international acclaim for breaking gender boundaries.

In 1987, she was elected to a full term as the tribe's first female principal chief, serving until 1995. Under her leadership, tribal enrollment tripled, she strengthened the tribe's finances, and oversaw a lawsuit against the US government for coal, oil and gas deposits that had been taken from the Cherokee. Throughout her tenure, she helped strengthen the tribe's self-governance, created a mentorship program for Cherokee girls attending tribal school, improved health services and created new education programs.

After her chiefship, Mankiller taught Native American Studies at Dartmouth College and launched a nationwide lecture tour. She received numerous awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and honorary degrees.

Mankiller died of cancer at age 64. Her likeness has been immortalized on the quarter coin under the "American Women Quarters" series, she has a scholarship and a health center named after her, and she was inducted in 2018 into the National Native American Hall of Fame.

Dolores Huerta during the California Grape Boycott and Strike, holding up a sign that means "strike" in Spanish

DOLORES HUERTA

Dolores Huerta was born in New Mexico in 1930 to blue collar Mexican-American parents. After graduating from college in 1953, she taught school in rural California. Her students, the children of poor Latino farmworkers, would come to class hungry and without shoes. Huerta realized that she could do more good for these families by organizing the parents.

She began attending meetings of the Community Service Organization (CSO), a grassroots Latino civil rights group that also trained the legendary Chicano union leader Cesar Chavez.

In the next few years, Huerta founded new CSO chapters and testified before the California State Legislature on issues affecting farmworkers. She advocated for giving them retirement benefits and health coverage. Huerta also conducted voter registration drives, taught citizenship classes, and advocated for her community.

Worked closely with Labor Legend Cesar Chavez

Starting in 1958, Huerta began founding labor unions for farmworkers. Along with Cesar Chavez, she co-founded one of two unions that eventually became the United Farm Workers (UFW). Her activism was not personally lucrative, however, and during this time, she struggled to earn enough to support her seven children; she had to take on piecemeal work to survive. Still, Huerta spent long hours doing the grassroots work necessary to build the movement, visiting worker camps, calling and canvassing potential members and collecting dues.

In 1965, Huerta and Chavez joined Filipino-American organizers in launching the massive California grape boycott and strike to protest the exploitation of farmworkers. Huerta played an essential role, became one of the UFW's vice presidents and lead organizers and helped secure favorable contracts for the workers after the five-year boycott ended.

In the following decades, she continued to lead union organizing efforts, all while her family grew to 11 children. In 1974, she was a founding member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and continued her lobbying and political activism. Huerta helped pass the first-ever law to recognize farmworkers' right to collective bargaining in California.

In later years, she became a feminist activist and founded the Dolores Huerta Foundation to further the non-violent civil rights movement. Huerta is the recipient of dozens of awards and honorary degrees, and has remained active in Democratic politics. She is now 95 years old.

Rest In Power

Reggie Styles

OCTOBER 25, 1956 - JANUARY 7, 2026

BELOVED FATHER, GRANDFATHER, BROTHER FRIEND, ACTIVIST, UNION LEADER

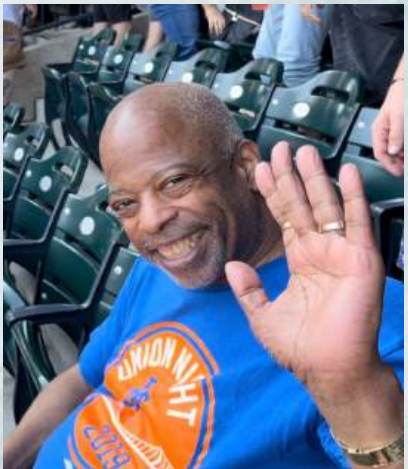
Reginald Styles — Reggie — was born in Brooklyn and was a lifelong confidant, companion and source of support for his family, friends and the close-knit crew from his neighborhood.

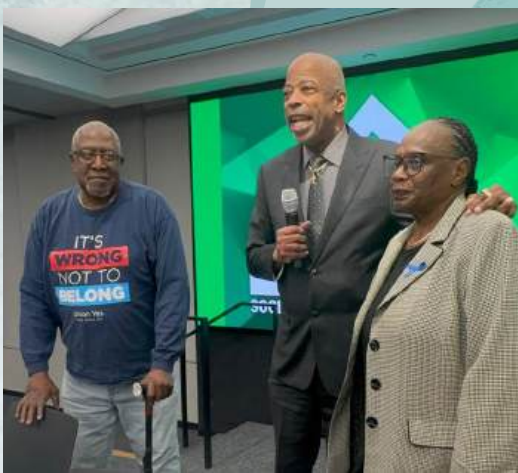
He obtained a bachelor's in psychology from Brooklyn College, worked on Wall Street for a brief stint, then entered city service as a caseworker for the Bureau of Child Welfare. In 1985, he was hired as an organizer for SSEU Local 371 by then-President Charles Ensley. Despite the gentle demeanor he often shared around the union office, he was fierce and uncompromising in his fights on behalf of workers and clients.

Reggie was later promoted to supervisor in Fair Hearings within the Human Resources Administration. In May 2011, when President Anthony Wells was elected, his first act was to bring Reggie Styles aboard as executive assistant to the president. He served as advisor and confidant until his untimely passing this year.

Reggie was a true unionist; he was committed, knowledgeable and provided advice and mentorship to the younger officers and staff. He always cared deeply about people, and leaves behind a large community who mourn him.

In addition to his parents and seven siblings, Reggie was blessed with a son, Reginald Darren Styles, a daughter, Raven Styles, six grandchildren and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.





PICTURED: Reggie with numerous union officers, staff, and friends, including President Anthony Wells and Chief of Staff Nola Brooker (1st page, lower right)

A True Unionist Loved by All

EVERETTE WATTLEY

I remember meeting Reggie, when I was a caseworker at Bedford Avenue. Since that time, until his passing, I have never heard anyone say an unkind word about Reggie. He always had a smile on his face and would light up the room with humor, even during contentious hearings. He made you feel confident, and knew how to ease your anxieties and fear before heading into a hearing. You always felt reassured with Reggie. I know I did...and Lord knows I stayed in trouble. SSEU Local 371 has lost a brave soldier who fought tirelessly on the frontline for the struggle.

VICE PRESIDENT ARMENTA WEEKES

Reggie never had a bad word to say about anyone, but he always had a lot to say. When you said good morning to him, if you got away with just a good morning he would catch you later. He was either going to catch you up with the latest news or a historic moment. Whichever it was, he gave you his opinion but more importantly, he was interested in yours. He will be missed but forever loved. R.I.Paradise, Reggie.

CASSANDRA WASHINGTON, GRIEVANCE REP

Dear Reggie, I want you to know that you were love. No, I don't mean that you were loved but you were the exemplar of love. There wasn't one time that I was in your presence that you didn't greet me with a hello, smile, hug or kind word. I'm not surprised about your demeanor because you often spoke about the values you learned from your mother and it truly showed in your existence. When I received the news of your departure, the word kindness fluttered my heart so deeply with tears of sadness yet gratitude. Thank you for being a comforting friend.

PAULINE MOORE, ORGANIZER

Reginald Styles was an extraordinary individual who treated everyone with genuine respect—especially women. I often arrived at the office earlier than scheduled just to sit and talk with him, as our conversations were always meaningful and filled with wisdom. He shared stories about the history of the Union, his deep love for the Union and its members, the importance of organizing, and the principles that guided his life. He spoke of his family with deep love and pride, especially when sharing stories about his mother and other relatives. His family was truly his heart. Mr. Styles was a caring and supportive man whose presence left an indelible mark on everyone who knew him. His kindness, wisdom, and sincerity made a lasting difference, and I truly wish there were more people in this world like him.

AGGREY DECHINEA, FORMER NEGOTIATIONS & RESEARCH ASSOC. DIR.

From time to time we encounter an individual whose influence transcends all social strata, including race, class and gender. This was Reggie Styles. He was not afraid to speak truth to power and challenge the status quo. He was also an experienced problem-solver, who resolved issues and conflicts at various locations. He mentored the union staff members, giving prescient and sagacious advice. His big heart, and inclination to help others, were unrivaled. Reggie spoke effusively about the Earth, Wind and Fire song 'That's the Way of the World." Its two most profound lines, to me, were: **Hearts afire creates love desire / Take you high and higher to the world you belong**. These two lines accurately encapsulate how Reggie lived his life and the joy and fulfillment he brought to those around him. Thank you, Reggie.

MAIKUDI OKORE, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ORGANIZATION

It was Reggie Styles who gave me and Kesha Graham training on how to become a great organizer. Reggie, you will be missed. May your gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

ROBERTO FERNANDEZ, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Reggie will be remembered for his kindness, his mentorship, his deep and invaluable knowledge of the union's history, and the camaraderie he brought to our conversations—especially during baseball season.

DEBBRA BROWN, SECRETARY

Fly high into God's loving arms, you are with your Father and he's saying, "Welcome home." We miss your warmth and your presence, but we know you will forever be among us...you were a man of honor in all that you did. Life doesn't teach us how to handle grief; it gives us LOVE, the ability to overcome all. God bless the broken road that led you to us. It gave us the opportunity to befriend one of the most caring, loving, and thoughtful human beings—so instead of grieving, we will celebrate you like the loving person you were. The gates of heaven await that smile that will add to heaven's lights.

SARAH DORSEY, EDITOR

From my first days at the union, Reggie made me feel welcome, sharing in his gentle and earnest way about the values he learned from his mother. He had the kind of vision that allowed him to look beyond the petty categories that divide people. His loyalty was to justice and love, and I appreciated the way he was simply himself—no need for pretensions. The union has suffered a true loss, but his example provides a moral compass we can look to in the years to come.

ELECTION RESULTS

At District Council 37 on January 21, 2026, two delegates to the Officers Election Committee were nominated and elected by the Delegate Assembly. The winners were: ***Edna Mayo-Thompson;*** and ***Katrina Reed.***

MARTIN LUTHER KING

CONFERENCE 2026

by Samantha Simon
Executive Assistant to the President

The goal of the 2026 AFL-CIO Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil and Human Rights Conference was to show us how to keep fighting for change without using violence. We learned practical ways to organize and plan, so we can win better economic rights and address racial injustice in the labor movement.

One session, called Rockin' this MUTHA^%&*$R, focused on the difference between activism and involvement in building power. It made us think about whether we are passive in our approach or intentional in how we support the union movement in our fights, and how that affects our ability to make a difference.

Another session, The Price We Pay, looked at how mass incarceration affects working families. Mass incarceration is a growing problem for working families and communities of color. It weakens families, who spend time and money supporting loved ones in prison, and when those family members return, they often struggle to find good jobs and remain unprotected in society.

The conference also emphasized nonviolence and showed us how to unite people with shared interests to fight with our words, using protest, education, and teamwork. We gave back to the community by making blankets, putting together winter kits with gloves, hand warmers, and blankets, and some of us decorated quilt squares. My biggest takeaway was this: "We have people who will fight on the frontline every time, and we have the ones who will remain in the background." We need both to succeed in any fight.

Collage by Sarah Dorsey

Official Rules for the 2026 Delegate Elections

A. GENERAL RULES:

1. The Delegate is the chief Union representative of his or her location and represents all members there regardless of title.
2. Delegate elections shall be held annually in May.
3. Delegate and Alternate Delegates shall be appointed in accordance with the Local's Constitution; one Delegate for a minimum of 25 to 74 members, two Delegates for a minimum of 75 to 124 members and, in like manner, one additional Delegate for each 50 members. For each Delegate, there shall be two Alternate Delegates.
4. Membership in good standing commences when a worker is on union dues check-off, or when a worker is both on "agency shop fees" deduction to the local and his/her "green card" has been received in the Union office. Membership in good standing is immediately established by direct payment of dues to the Union. Dues are payable monthly in advance.
5. Locations which do not hold elections in May will be considered to have unfilled positions, unless the Secretary-Treasurer has approved, in writing, an extension based on a specific problem.
6. Nomination meetings shall be held in each location with 15 days' notice. Such notice shall be any Union leaflet distributed to the members in the work location or mailed to the membership, or notice prominently posted on bulletin boards, or published in The Unionist.
7. Nomination meeting notices shall specify the date, time and place of the election. The nomination notices should also specify the date, time and place of a run-off election should it be necessary. If the election dates, time and place are not specified on the nomination notice, a second notice must be given at least 15 days in advance of any election.
8. No funds of SSEU Local 371 or of any affiliate body shall be used to support the candidacy of any member for any elective office within AFSCME.
9. No publication sponsored by the Union or by any affiliate body shall endorse or support any candidate for elective office within AFSCME.
10. Any nominee for elective office shall have the right to have campaign literature mailed once to each member in good standing, through the Union office, but at private expense.
11. Messages in the Unionist newspaper will constitute official notice to all candidates. It will be the responsibility of all candidates to read the Unionist regularly in order to keep themselves informed. The Unionist is online at mightyunion.org/the-unionist
12. Prior approval of the Secretary-Treasurer is required for a change in the composition of the work location.

B. THE WORK LOCATION ELECTION COMMITTEE:

1. The conduct of the election shall be the responsibility of the Work Location Election Committee (WLEC). The Committee shall be chosen at the nomination meeting and shall consist of no fewer than two (2) Union members in good standing who are not candidates for any position involved in the election. The members of the WLEC should be present at the nomination meeting.
2. The WLEC shall remain neutral on all issues and candidates.
3. The WLEC shall post on the bulletin board the names of the candidates nominated, the date, time and place of the balloting, and the names of the members of the WLEC.
4. The WLEC shall, as soon as possible, inform the Secretary-Treasurer's office by phone (212-677-3900) of the nominees' names in the order they are to appear on the ballot and shall assist the Secretary-Treasurer's office to identify the distribution points covered by their election.
5. The WLEC shall be responsible for picking up all election material including the latest membership run, ballots and report sheets from the Union office.
6. The WLEC should count the ballots immediately after closing the polls, but no later than the end of the day.
7. The WLEC has an additional responsibility enumerated under Section H (Certification of the Election).
8. The WLEC shall, immediately after the election, destroy all ballots which have not been used.
9. The WLEC shall maintain all records of the election for thirty-one (31) days, or in case of protests, for 31 days after the resolution of all protests. On the thirty-first day the WLEC shall destroy all the material except the membership run which should be given to the Delegate for the location's use.

C. NOMINATION AND DECLINA-TION RULES:

1. Any member who is in good standing for six weeks on the date of nomination may run for Delegate or Alternate Delegate.
2. At the nomination meeting any member may nominate himself or herself or any other member. No second is required. The nominee need not be present.
3. Any member nominated for Delegate is automatically nominated as a candidate for Alternate Delegate. However, a member may be nominated and run for Alternate only.
4. A motion to close nominations is always out of order. Nominations for each office are closed only after three consecutive calls for "other nominations" go unanswered.
5. No further nominations shall be accepted after the close of nominations.
6. Every nominee shall be given an opportunity to decline. Declinations after the nomination meeting must be submitted in writing to the WLEC. A member declining the Delegate nomination will still be considered a candidate for Alternate Delegate unless he/she also specifically declines to run for Alternate Delegate.
7. If there is only one nominee for each open office, such unopposed candidate or candidates shall be declared elected, provided they fulfill all requirements for office. In all other cases, elections shall be by secret ballot.

D. VOTING RULES:

1. Only members in good standing may vote.
2. Absentee or proxy voting is prohibited.
3. A standard ballot form shall be used at all locations.
4. The polls cannot be watched by any

candidate. However, each candidate has a right to have a representative (who must be an AFSCME member) as an observer.

5. There shall be no campaigning at the polls. No one at the polls (including those registering voters, distributing ballots, poll watching, etc.) shall indicate support for or opposition to any candidate within the hearing of anyone voting or waiting to vote. No candidate is allowed at the polls except to cast a ballot.

6. Elections are to be held for at least two (2) hours during the lunch hours or during the pay periods in conventional 9 to 5 locations. Wherever possible, elections shall be held all day.

7. For locations where there are shifts, voting must be available for some period for each shift. Wherever possible, the election shall be held throughout all shifts.

E. VOTING PROCEDURES:

1. In order to receive a ballot, the member's name with Union Designation (Code UA or UX in Pay Grade Column) must appear on the membership run provided by the Union Office. Any other code (AA, A, S, or X) denotes Agency Fee payer or Non-Member and, therefore, renders one ineligible to vote unless the WLEC confirms that a "green card" has been received in the Union Office. In HHC an Agency Fee payer is identified by the number 9 in the first column after the name on the printout or by an asterisk (*) on the pay stub.

2. The member must sign the membership run next to his or her name and will then receive a ballot.

3. If the member's name is missing or an ineligible code appears, he/she must submit a paystub showing "U" beside dues deduction or Union membership must be verified by phone through the Union office. Upon receiving proof of membership, the WLEC shall print his/her name and social security number on the membership run, and indicate how membership was certified. The member must then sign next to his/her name before receiving a ballot.

F. COUNTING RULES:

1. Each candidate has a right to one (1) representative (who must be an AFSCME member) to be present at the counting.

2. The number of ballots cast should not exceed the number of signatures.

3. Write-in votes, blank ballots, and signed ballots are void.

4. A vote is valid if a member votes for the same candidate in both Delegate and Alternate columns. The two marks shall be considered as one vote for said candidate as Delegate.

5. Use common sense if the intentions of the voter are clear; count the vote.

6. The Delegate votes shall be declared and counted first. When counting for Alternate any member who ran for Delegate and lost shall have the Delegate votes received added to the Alternate votes received to make his or her Alternate total.

7. In the case of a tie, a runoff shall be held at the request of any involved candidate. Any alternate method acceptable to all these candidates is permissible (e.g. lot, flipping of a coin, drawing straws, etc.). Fifteen days' notice of run-off elections must be given.

G. PROTESTS AND APPEALS:

1. Protests must be made in writing to the WLEC by a member of the work location within ten (10) days. In case of such protests, all interested parties shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard and a decision shall be made by the WLEC in writing within thirty (30) days after the filing of the protest.

2. In any election where an agreement of the count cannot be reached, this problem shall immediately be brought to the attention of the Secretary-Treasurer where a ruling will be made.

3. In case of an outright violation of the Constitution, a reelection may immediately be ordered by the Secretary-Treasurer.

4. Any protestant adversely affected by a WLEC decision may file a written appeal with the Secretary-Treasurer within ten days after the decision, or, if no decision has been rendered, within forty (40) days after filing the original protest with the WLEC. Upon receipt of such an appeal, the Secretary-Treasurer shall refer it to the Central Election Committee (CEC) to conduct an investigation, affording all interested parties an opportunity to be heard and a recommendation shall be made in writing to the Secretary-Treasurer within thirty (30) days.

(The CEC is composed of two representatives from each Chapter with the Secretary-Treasurer serving as Chairperson. However, no person may serve as a member of the CEC in any election in which he/she is a candidate.)

5. Any further appeals may be made to the Judicial Panel in accordance with the AFSCME Constitution and Judicial Panel rules.

6. If a protest is being considered before the WLEC has certified the election, incumbents shall remain in office until the WLEC certifies the election. If the election has been certified the newly elected Delegates and Alternates remain in office until a new election is held.

H. CERTIFICATION OF THE ELECTION:

1. The newly elected Delegates and Alternates take office immediately upon the certification of the election by the WLEC.

2. The WLEC shall post the election results on the bulletin board.

3. The WLEC shall submit the results of the local election in writing to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Union immediately after counting. This report must include:

a. A copy of the ballot used including totals received by each candidate; if the election is uncontested, a work location membership list including Social Security numbers.

b. The winners' names, home addresses, social security numbers, home telephone numbers, work location with their addresses and work telephone numbers.

c. The signatures and work phone number of the WLEC members.

4. The location shall be considered without Delegates by the Secretary-Treasurer until the report is received. When received, the report will be accepted subject to review by the Secretary-Treasurer.

5. Delegates and Alternates shall be ranked in order of the number of votes received. If members desire to yield their rank they must do so in writing to

Official Rules for the 2026 Delegate Elections, Continued

I. INTERIM DELEGATE ELECTIONS:

1. A Delegate transferred to a new work location shall continue as Delegate from his/her former location for a period of thirty (30) days or until such former location shall elect a new Delegate, whichever shall occur first.

2. In the event an interim election is needed for vacated Delegate or Alternate positions, said election shall be for the total number of vacant offices for the remainder of the unexpired term. No Alternate moves into a Delegate position automatically, but must be voted on. Incumbent Delegates move into the next higher available Delegate position. (Incumbent Alternates move into the next higher available Alternate position.) The election will then be held to fill the total number of remaining positions.

3. Alternates must resign their position as Alternates if they wish to run for a vacant Delegate position. This is to insure to the members the right to fill all vacancies at the same time.

4. However, if an incumbent Alternate resigned to run for a vacant Delegate position and is not elected Delegate, but is reelected Alternate, his/her rank among the Alternates shall be as if he/she had not resigned to run for Delegate.

4. The location shall be considered without Delegates by the Secretary-Treasurer until the report is received. When received, the report will be accepted subject to review by the Secretary-Treasurer.

5. Delegates and Alternates shall be ranked in order of the number of votes received. If members desire to yield their rank they must do so in writing to the Secretary-Treasurer.

Executive Leadership Retreat

Atlantic City, NJ · January 29 - 31

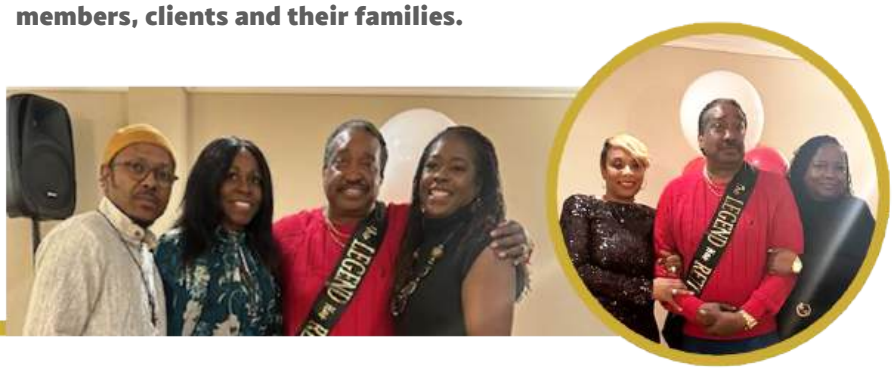
Over a brutally cold weekend, more than a hundred SSEU Local 371 officers, staff, executive board members and trustees gathered in Atlantic City, New Jersey to learn leadership techniques and to develop their skills representing members. AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer Elissa McBride and District Council 37 Executive Director Henry Garrido shared their wisdom, as did DC37 President and Local 372 President Shaun Francois. Participants engaged in exercises designed to enhance their communication and listening skills, and acted out on-location scenarios to help them be more effective leaders. They were asked to reflect on how generational differences and differing perceptions of a problem affect a group's effectiveness. And they received training on how to improve your emotional intelligence on the job.

Trainers Dr. Elaine Sanders and Professor Arthur T. Matthews delivered presentations and at the end of the weekend, participants held a round-table discussion on their experiences.

President Anthony Wells was pleased with the in-depth discussions at the event and said he was impressed with the enthusiastic engagement of attendees. "There's no other way to put it: we are at war," he said. "The union movement, and our nation as a whole, is facing unprecedented challenges to our entire political system. What we need now is leadership. Every member of this union can be a leader at their location and in their community. Join us at one of our committee meetings and watch our website, mightyunion.org, to raise your voice at rallies, hearings and meetings. The union is you!"

CONGRATS KASEEM

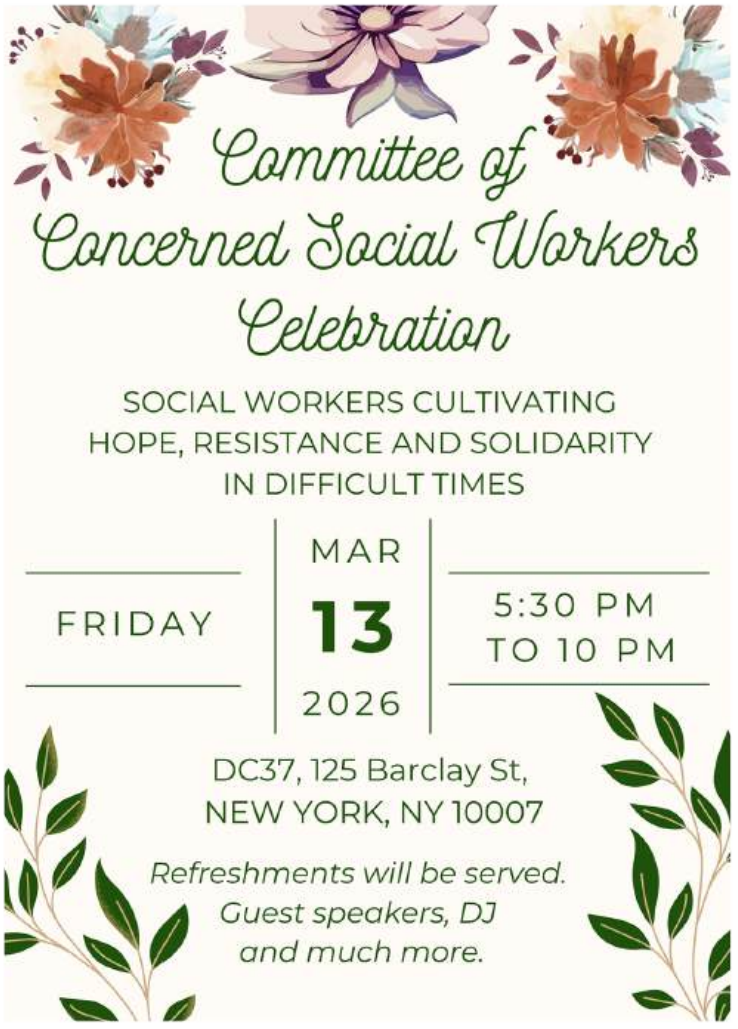
Congratulations to Kaseem Moven, who retired after 30 years of service with the Administration for Children's Services! Kaseem became a Child Protective Specialist in January 1996. He later obtained two master's degrees: a Master of Science in psychology and a Master of Social Work. He was promoted to Supervisor I and then Supervisor II. Kaseem has always been an advocate, diligently supporting the members and making himself available to troubleshoot issues on site with whoever needed him. In 2009, Kaseem became a union delegate and never looked back. We thank him for fighting the good fight for members, clients and their families.



TAI CHI AT THE UNION!

NEXT WAVE, ASIAN COMMITTEES HOLD SPECIAL MEETING TO SHARE CULTURAL PRACTICES

The Asian Heritage Committee held a special joint meeting with Next Wave on February 3 to celebrate the 2026 Lunar New Year. Tai Chi instructor Allen Fong demonstrated the ancient practice of tai chi, which uses slow movements to perform a sort of "meditation in motion." Fong and his wife also performed the 4,000-year-old practice of chi gong, helping to reduce pain and stress in volunteers from the audience. Thank you to Next Wave and the Asian Committee for sharing cultural knowledge and Happy New Year to all!



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VICE PRESIDENT FOR LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AMERICO REYES - SANTIAGO

SWAPS

SWAP - BOS worker at HRA's Dyckman Center in upper Manhattan wants to swap to Jamaica Center in Queens (preferred) or Queens Benefit Access Ctr, 32-20 Northern Blvd. Pls contact 929-681-4003.

SWAP - Community Coordinator/Sup I in HRA at Garrison Ave in the Bronx wants to swap to Manhattan. Please call 914-418-4754.

SWAP - BOS worker at Jamaica Center wants to swap to a Brooklyn location. Please call 914-906-3830 if interested.

SWAP - Case Manager at HASA Brownsville Center Brooklyn wants to swap to Queens Borough Center, Family Unit; call 646-200-1699.

SWAP - Caseworker at HASA Hamilton Ctr in Manhattan wants to swap to HASA at 95 Evergreen Ave, Brooklyn. Call 917-795-5784.

SWAP - BOS worker at Crotona Job Center in the Bronx would like to swap to the Bainbridge Ave. Center or the St. Nicholas Center. Please contact 347-992-1252 if interested.

SWAP - BOS worker at 95 Evergreen in Bushwick would like to swap to HRA Coney Island Center at 1912 Mermaid Ave. Please contact 646-808-9040.

SWAP - Sup I in the Bronx HRA would like to swap to APS on Jamaica Ave. in Queens. Please contact 718-880-0149 if interested.

SWAP - BOS at Center 45 in the Bronx would like to swap to any other center. Please call 845-538-0449 if interested.

SWAP - BOS worker at Fordham Center 44 in the Bronx wants to swap to Manhattan (preferably CRPU at 109 E. 16th St.) or Riverdale Center. If interested, please call 347-356-8738.

SWAP - Caseworker at 260 11th Ave in Manhattan would like to swap to Queens location. Please contact (929) 445-8257.

SWAP - Community Coordinator at 109 E. 16th St. Manhattan would like to swap to a location in lower Manhattan or downtown Brooklyn. Please call 347-804-1495 if interested.