



# Local 153 News

42 Broadway, Suite 1936, New York, NY 10004 (212) 741-8282

Winter 2022

## Richard Lanigan and Local 153 Administration Re-Elected



In this photo taken at the September 21 general membership meeting are, from left to right: Myra Hepburn, Grace Adams-Cunningham, Steve Turkeltaub, Danette Torres, Richard Lanigan, Mark Phillips, Kelly Cunin, Jeanne Drevon and Pansy Royal.

Local 153 Business Manager Richard Lanigan and the union's administration team were re-elected by acclamation at a general membership meeting held on September 21. It will be Lanigan's second term as Business Manager, and he and the rest of the elected administration will serve for three years.

The meeting was open to all members of Local 153, and they had a choice of either attending in person or via Zoom video conference. Because of the ongoing pandemic, it is not surprising that the vast majority of members chose the latter method of attending.

The nominations and election portion

of the meeting was chaired by Maralin Falik, the Chief Executive Officer of Global Election Services, a company that monitors votes to ensure fairness and accuracy. Nominations were allowed either in person or via Zoom.

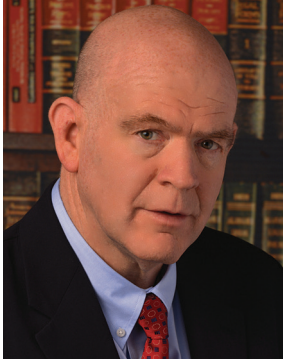
Lanigan and the entire administration  
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## Members at BioBus Celebrate First Contract

Local 153 members at BioBus have their first contract! The employees at this non-profit began organizing in December, 2020 and won recognition the following

month after a unanimous vote to join Local 153. At the time, Li Murphy, a community scientist at BioBus and a member of the union's organizing

committee, said, "Unionizing allows our non-managerial staff to give a collective vote of confidence in the organization's  
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By Richard Lanigan, Business Manager

## Questions That Deserved to Have Answers

**From time to time I receive a letter or email from a member asking questions about why the union supports or doesn't support a particular issue. I look forward to these questions because they reflect what a union member feels and I appreciate that they have taken the time to write.**

Just as important, questions force people to look at issues and think about underlying interests. That's why I would like to share questions that highlight certain issues and examine the underlying interests. Here are some of those questions:

Are you concerned about the increasing cost of health care for your family?

Are you concerned about whether you will have a financially secure retirement?

Are you concerned about the cost of college education?

Do you believe the U.S. economy should generate opportunity for better paying middle class jobs?

Are you concerned about public safety and the safety of children in school?

Are you concerned about retired parents living on a fixed income?

Do you believe the U.S should support

democratic governments around the world?

Do you believe that employers should have the right to discriminate?

Do you agree that immigration policy should be closely related to job creation?

Do you believe that an immigrant to the U.S. who serves in the United States military and finishes their service with an honorable discharge should be eligible for citizenship?

Do you believe that high-paid lobbyists and wealthy political contributors have disproportionate influence on government policy?

Do you believe there needs to be a comprehensive response to increased wildfires, tornados, and extreme climate activity?

Do you believe that World War II was fought to battle world-wide authoritarianism and fascism?

Do you think a shop steward acting in the role of advocate should have the protection of the law?

Do you believe that each American over the age of 18 should have the right to vote?

How has your life improved since the most recent tax cut?

Is there a role for government in the modernization of the national transportation and electrical grids?

Do you think public works projects to improve or rebuild condition of highways, bridges, airports, and railways is a proper public investment?

Do you believe nurses and others who risked their lives should be paid a premium rate or have greater amounts of sick time and disability coverage for the work they do?

Given the supply chain issues magnified by the pandemic, is it time to "on shore" or bring back production work to the United States?

A final important question is this: Why are these questions not being fully discussed in the houses of government? While media and politicians seem to focus our attention on who wears a mask or if a person has been vaccinated, there are other issues to consider. For example, if you have given thought to the questions here then you know that regardless of whether all of us agree on the solutions, work must begin soon to address these and other major policy issues of our day. When the pandemic is over these enduring questions will still be unanswered. For the record, when we as a union decide to take a position on an issue or policy, or the support of a particular candidate, these are the kinds of interests that we consider.

**How has your life improved since the most recent tax cut?**

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# Victory for Local 153 Members at NYU

The professional staff at New York University's Tandon School of Engineering approved a new contract that raises their wages and improves their benefits, ending nearly a year of difficult contract negotiations. The bargaining unit of 38 non-teaching employees voted unanimously to ratify the six-year contract on November 15, 2021.

The agreement provides Local 153 bargaining unit employees with a variety of significant benefits including childcare subsidies, increased percentage in wages, portable tuition, and a discussion process through a Labor-Management Committee to develop a new remote work policy.

"Our members achieved overwhelming success at negotiations because we were engaged and focused to achieve a fair and equitable contract," said Susan Hermon, Chief Steward and program coordinator at Tandon's Center for K-12 Stem Education. "We hope to build further improvements on our contract by remaining "Union Strong"

and collectively active in the New York University community."

During the summer, Local 153 members-organized under the slogan "We Are Violet too" — and called for the same tuition remission, child care assistance, increased wages, and a remote working policy for NYU faculty, other unions, and non-union employees.

As reported by the Washington Square News, under the ratified contract, the bargaining unit employees will be receiving a 17.25% increase in base salary, a 2% increase over the previous 2015 contract. Additionally, the employees will be eligible to participate in NYU's Portable Tuition Benefits Plan for faculty and non-union employees that includes a maximum annual \$7,275 tuition reimbursement for children who attend an accredited college or university. Previously, these employees would only receive tuition remission if their dependents attended NYU.

"None of our kids were getting accepted into NYU which is the issue," Hermon

said. "In the last six years, none of our children were getting any tuition remission. Younger people with younger families now want to take advantage when their children don't get into NYU and at least receive some form of assistance towards tuition to another educational institution."

Local 153 Senior Business Representative Seth Goldstein, who was one of the negotiators, slammed NYU's current admissions policy. He said the employees' original tuition remission plan contradicted the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion by restricting children of working class families from affording college.

"How do you have real classroom discussion if you don't have working people there?" Goldstein asked, "Classicism is unfortunately alive and well at NYU."

Hermon said the members' victory highlights the power of unions. "Organized labor is at its best when we move an agenda forward based on equity and positive change," she said.



Here are Chief Steward Susan J. Hermon, Steward Zavia Stewart, and Jonnett Romano, three of the members employed at NYU's Tandon School of Engineering.

# Richard Lanigan and Local 153 Administration Re-Elected

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slate were nominated by Monique Davis, a Local 153 member employed at Emblem Health. In making the nomination Davis cited many of the accomplishments of the union in the last three years.

“Madam Chair, I would like to say a few words about this team,” Davis said. “They are experienced and always work in the best interest of the members.”

Davis noted that the union’s administration and staff work long hours, and often on weekends to service members.

“In the last three years the union’s staff has represented members in grievances, negotiated good contracts with employers, negotiated terms to assist people with the impact of the pandemic, and negotiated furloughs instead of layoffs to preserve medical coverage,” she said.

In listing other actions by the administration, Davis pointed out that Local 153 activated members for the 2020 election, increased representation capacity by hiring an additional field representative, and took advantage of OPEIU’s Apprentice Organizing Program to organize new members. She added



Business Manager Richard Lanigan is congratulated by Grace Adams-Cunningham and Pansy Royal.



Maralin Falik of Global Election Services verifying the eligibility of all members on the administration’s slate.

that Local 112 had merged, bringing into Local 153 nearly 800 nurses as new members. As we reported in the last edition of Local 153 News, the merger brought with it financial resources that would be exclusively applied to organizing new members.

The union also “took measures to deal with the pandemic,” Davis said. “It tightened its belt, and restructured finances and staffing,” adding that Local 153 has developed a more collaborative approach with the establishment of the Finance Committee.

“Three years ago, the Local 153 Pension was likely to crash, today it is on a substantial footing,” she said. “Many groups are now in the OPEIU National Retirement Savings Plan, one of the best 401 (k) plans in the country. The Local 153 Benefits Plan is a short time away from announcing the new Retiree Medical Savings Plan and OPEIU just announced discount retiree health care.”

Davis concluded her nomination of the administration slate by declaring, “Local 153 is a union that is showing that it can fight for its members and is engaging members and shop leaders to train

them for the future. Although the union has been through a lot, it is currently postured to grow and represent members aggressively.”

Since there were no other slate or individual nominations, Lanigan and the administration were re-elected by acclamation. Here is the administration elected on September 21:

Business Manager: Richard Lanigan; President: Steve Turkeltaub, Joint Industry Board; Vice President: Wilma Artau Banda, Fruitco; Secretary-Treasurer: Myra Hepburn; Recording Secretary: Brenda St. John, HealthNow; Trustees: Patrick Flanagan, Hilton Hotel,  
*Continued on next page*



Re-elected Secretary-Treasurer Myra Hepburn chats with Mark Phillips and Jeanne Drevon following the meeting.



# Richard Lanigan and Local 153 Administration Re-Elected

*Continued from previous page*

Millie Sanchez, Municipal Credit Union, and Jessica Timo, United Federation of Teachers.

Executive Board: Nora Avila, General Vision Services; Frances Avnet, Hofstra University; Grace Ann Cunningham, Emblem Health; Anna Gallo, Long Island University; Susan Hermon, New York University Tandon; Julio Hernandez, AFSCME DC37; Philip Holmgren, Segal Company; Brenda Knight, Seton Hall University; Richard C. Knowles, Depository Trust; Amanda Kowalski, Lehigh Valley Hospital; Peter McGurgan, Wesleyan University (Physical Plant); Judith Morales, Advantage Care Physicians/SIPP; Kathy Neville, Knights of Columbus; Margaret Noonan, Fordham University; Jason Rodgers, Pratt Institute; Brandee Seigried, Lehigh Valley Hospital; Eugene Taylor, Public Service Electric & Gas; Danette Torres, SEIU 32BJ; Gil Yellinek, Amalgamated Bank.

It should be noted that Lanigan, Turkeltaub, Artau Banda, Hepburn and St. John were elected to be delegates to the 2023 OPEIU Convention by virtue of their office.

“I want to thank the Local 153 membership for this vote of confidence in the union’s leadership team,” Lanigan said, following the administration’s re-election. “And I express deep gratitude to the members of the union’s administration and staff for their dedication and hard work. They do not have easy jobs as a rule, but they have worked even harder during this unprecedented pandemic. On their behalf and on behalf of myself I pledge to all members that we will continue do everything possible to earnestly represent you not only during these difficult times but at all times.”



Following the meeting re-elected Business Manager Richard Lanigan visits with members via Zoom.



Due to the pandemic many members chose to attend the meeting via Zoom rather than in person.

# Setting the Direction for the U

The new Local 153 administration is working hard, exploring ideas to best serve the union's membership and their families. This process has included staff meetings for the union's personnel, a detailed financial report and the creation of an orientation booklet for the union's Executive Board Members.

The staff meetings have included discussions about the work assignments of the Local 153 Business Representatives and the duties of the personnel that help administer the union's functions, among other items. In the latter department, consolidation has resulted in good cost savings for Local 153.

## Organizing

Organizing has also been a topic at staff meetings. The Local 153 administration recognizes the importance of growing the union and has taken steps to do so. As an example, Local 153 received the International Union's organizing apprentice assistance and hired organizers to begin to rebuild the membership base. Using a small amount of savings, the union strengthened representation.

Hiring organizers and involving existing members in unionizing drives are steps that have paid off well. More than a half-dozen shops have been successfully organized in the last year-and-a-half,

even during the height of the pandemic. Employees from Kickstarter, American Jewish World Service, the Anti-Violence Project, City Bar Justice Center, BioBus and IncludeNYC are among the newest members of our union through organizing efforts.

We should add that Local 153 has also added members through mergers. It is encouraging to know that workers at other local unions have studied Local 153's governance, operation and track record, and have found our union favorable enough to engage in mergers. Examples are Local 212 in Buffalo and Local 112 in Pennsylvania, which brought hundreds of members into Local 153.

## Finances

Meetings of both staff members and the Executive Board have also focused on the union's finances. Effective changes have been implemented by Local 153 and future changes will be necessary to ensure the union's financial stability. It is important for the union's staff and Executive Board Members to discuss why these changes became necessary and why additional changes will be needed. Many of the changes that have taken place have already been detailed in Local 153 News. Examples of steps taken to save money have included, among others, automating dues, moving to a smaller and less expensive

office, terminating and/or renegotiating consultant contracts, reducing mailing costs, eliminating participation in ads and donations for fundraisers, reducing office temp help, converting to a more paperless office and a bi-weekly payroll, and creating an automated portal for employer dues payments.

With all these steps taken, Local 153 has reduced its costs by over \$1 million (one million dollars) a year. As meaningful as that is, however, the union still has a sizable monthly deficit and has not yet been able start the very necessary process of building financial reserves for its operating and defense funds, and to pay down underlying debt. For these reasons other changes will be needed.

## Additional Topics Discussed

Another topic of discussion has been the idea of updating the Local 153 Constitution. It's an important subject because constitutions are the governing documents of any union. Because of this, it becomes necessary at times for these documents to be updated to conform with changes both inside and outside members' workplaces, as well as changes in the political environment.

Member Engagement has also been discussed. Over the next year or so, our union will have a completely revamped website that will enable members to



Stewards meetings and training sessions are planned, like those seen here.



# Union's New Administration

interact more easily with the Local 153 administration. Virtual conferences will be held to further educate shop stewards, those self-sacrificing members in individual workplaces that devote so much time to representing members, resolving grievances and answering questions, among other responsibilities.

## Orientation Booklets

The union has also devised an orientation booklet for new Executive Board members and is in the process of developing similar orientation booklets for shop stewards and, soon after that, all members of Local 153, as well as recently retired members.

The orientation booklets fully explain the structure of Local 153 and the role it has had in the union's success. It explains the various roles of Executive Board Members and Business Representatives. Executive Board Members comprise the governing body of the union, while Business Representatives, have a variety of important tasks, including assistance with negotiating contracts, handling grievances, responding to individual members' questions and even helping to organize new members, among other tasks. The orientation booklet for members and shop stewards will explain that the stewards assist Business Representatives and the

union itself in providing information to members, enforcing contracts, handling grievances, negotiating agreements and other activities. As noted earlier, the union will be holding virtual meetings for stewards, as well as training sessions.

The booklets will address the fact that in addition to unity another of Local 153's great strengths is its diversity. Our union has members of all races, ethnicities and religions. That kind of diversity is clearly evident in the union's administration. Local 153 is also one of the most geographically diverse local unions in the country. Local 153 represents workers in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and elsewhere, and it includes such varied workplaces as the hotel industry, colleges and universities, Registered Nurses, the New York Stock Exchange, Yankee Stadium, Co-op City, the Municipal Credit Union, Blue Cross in Buffalo, Resorts World Casino, Yonkers Raceway and Kickstarter, among many others. This widespread geographical diversity means that the union has to have a highly innovative approach to both organizing and representation.

## Meetings

Meetings are also an important part of Local 153. The ability to hold these gatherings via Zoom and other

platforms means that they can often be held without in-person attendance being necessary. There are a minimum of three general membership meetings a year, monthly meetings of the Executive Board, shop meetings, steward and delegate meetings and other meetings. As part of setting the union's direction, the administration will eventually make as many meetings as possible available virtually. That's because Local 153 strongly believes that members should be directly involved in every aspect of the union's operation and function.

## Political Activity

The union's political activity was covered in the staff meetings and Executive Board orientation and is described in part in this edition of Local 153 News. Any support Local 153 provides to specific issues, office holders and/or candidates is based on the union's firm belief in equality and fairness. In short, Local 153 adheres to the principle of supporting candidates that support workers and their families. This has helped the union and its members greatly over the years. Our hope is to engage with members to work for the election of candidates that support these issues. In the past Local 153 has supported candidates that favored union-sponsored legislation, tax

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Shop meetings can sometimes be held, like these, attended by Local 153 members at Seton Hall University and EmblemHealth.

# Setting the Direction for the Union's New Administration

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breaks for working families, paid family leave, child care subsidies and other common sense measures.

## Benefits

Almost all union contracts contain health benefits and many contain pension contributions. But Local 153 has added more benefits for all members, regardless of their shops of employment. These benefits include a 401(k) plan, a student debt reduction program, free college degrees, discounts on eyeglasses and contact lenses, four different college scholarships (five for Hotel Division members), defense fund payments of \$290 per week for members engaged in an authorized strike, defensive driving classes and others. A full list and explanation of these Local 153 supplementary benefits can be found in this edition and in the Benefits Booklet that can be found on the union's website.

## Communication

Local 153 has a long history of direct communication with members through the publication Local 153 News that you are reading now and that is mailed to all members. Local 153 members also receive in their home mail copies of White Collar, which is

provided by OPEIU. Both publications are also available on the web. Local 153's website is OPEIU-Tristate.org and OPEIU's website is OPEIU.org

The Union also keeps in touch with members through Twitter (Twitter.com/Local 153) and Facebook (Facebook.com/OPEIULocal153).

Local 153's website contains news about the union, editions of Local 153 News and the most recent edition of the Benefits Booklet that delineates all the benefits and services that are available to Local 153 members. As mentioned earlier, Local 153 will have a completely revamped website in the months to come that will enable members to interact more easily with the union's administration and have current information. In addition, Local 153 is currently engaged in a project to gather members' electronic contact information to communicate quickly, effectively, and inexpensively. If you have not yet provided your email address to your shop steward please do so, or email it to Union153@opeiu-tristate.org

## The Pandemic's Impact

Of course, there is another important topic of discussion that was covered at our staff meetings and in the orientation booklet for the Executive Board. In 2019

none of us could have ever imagined that the world as we knew it would soon change so swiftly, so dramatically and so terribly because of an unprecedented pandemic. But through it all Local 153 remained on the job.

It wasn't easy, but new contracts were negotiated, grievances were handled, furloughs for members were negotiated instead of layoffs, new members were organized, and Local 153 personnel had innumerable conversations with management to deal with the myriad of issues raised by Covid.

But the pandemic did more than disrupt our lives. It led to 3,000 Local 153 members losing their jobs. Although some of these members began being called back to work during 2021, the loss of so many dues paying members, among other pandemic-related things, severely affected the union's finances. This was addressed by the prudent steps that were outlined earlier in this report – steps used to save money and keep the union functioning well.

With a new administration taking hold we hope that this review has been informative. Setting the course of action for the union has been a prime objective. We believe that the information contained in this article shows that the union is indeed heading in the right direction!



New members have been added to Local 153 through both organizing drives and mergers. Here, members at Blue Cross in Buffalo take part in a ratification vote and Schuylkill nurses fight for a contract.



# Wesleyan Workers, Students Show Solidarity

The staff at Bates College made headlines recently with their efforts to unionize. With that unionization effort has come a sharp backlash from the Bates administration. Workers recently filed a complaint to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) about Bates's union-busting practices in response to a selectively applied non-solicitation clause in the employee contract.

In recognition of the brave effort by the staff at Bates College, the United Student Labor Action Coalition (USLAC) and Physical Plant workers at Wesleyan University have been showing support. "We stand in solidarity with the Bates workers fighting to amplify their voices in the workplace," USLAC, a student collective dedicated to supporting workers on campus, said in a statement. "We also strongly condemn the Bates Administration's efforts to suppress these very voices. Unions are the strength of the modern-day labor force,

and an attempt to unionize is not only a material win for the workers but also a moral win in the furthering of the workplace towards a more democratic model."

"As Local 153 members employed at Wesleyan University, we celebrate and stand in solidarity with your efforts to unite your voices, fight for justice, and secure better working conditions at Bates," said the group of workers employed at the Middletown, Ct. college's Physical Plant. "We believe that a union is the best tool that an employee has to make sure that their complaints are acted upon. Our union has allowed us to speak with one voice as we have demanded fair wages, increased benefits, and safer conditions. We urge you to stand strong in the face of pressure from the Bates administration and know that workers on college campuses across the country are not only rooting for your success

but are also being inspired by your leadership, as they join the fight for justice as well."

The Local 153 members at the Wesleyan Physical Plant explained in their letter that was published in the Wesleyan Argus newsletter the great things they have gained through their union membership. They concluded their message by saying, "Forming the Physical Plant union at Wesleyan has never harmed our relationships with our supervisors. In fact, unionizing has only made it easier for us to have collaborative, open, and positive relationships with our managers and supervisors."

The students and workers at Wesleyan had a final, collective message for the Bates College workers trying to unionize: "We cannot wait to hear of your victory in the upcoming election!"



Local 153 members and students at Wesleyan University showing support for Bates College employees.

# Health & Safety at Work

The three young women stood on the roof of the building ten stories above the streets of lower Manhattan. They probably said a prayer, and then they held hands tightly and jumped to their deaths. They were followed by dozens of other women. Those who chose not to jump burned to death. A total of 146 workers were killed that day, March 25, 1911, in a fire that raged through the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory located on the corner of Greene Street and Washington Place.

The women were all young, some only 13 years of age, and they were almost all Italian and Jewish immigrants. They worked as seamstresses, sitting in front of sewing machines for 12 and 16-hour shifts for which they were paid very low wages. But they did not die in vain. They are remembered every year at a memorial service held where the very building that led to their deaths still stands.

One of the reasons the fire took so many lives is because the exit doors to the factory were locked. The reason? To keep union organizers off the property.

New York City was horrified by the deaths of 146 of its young workers. Calls were made for reform. Those calls took hold and laws were passed to make

it easier for unions to organize and to make workplaces much safer.

Today, throughout many buildings in New York there are exit doors with panic bars on them. They are the push bars that allow you to open a door from the inside even when the door is locked. Panic bars became mandatory because of the Triangle fire. After the fire investigators discovered that the women were unable to open even the few doors that were unlocked because they couldn't touch the searing doorknobs and there were no fire extinguishers to assist. Today, throughout all buildings and workplaces there are exit signs that can be seen in the dark and even through heavy smoke. These signs became mandatory because of the 146 workers who died in the Triangle fire. Today there are fire extinguishers everywhere in these buildings because there were none at the Triangle factory. And fire department inspectors examine buildings and workplaces frequently, another aftermath of the Triangle fire.

Throughout the country today there are workplace safety laws in place that are in large part a result of the Triangle factory tragedy, and it should be remembered that unions led the fight to have these statutes enacted. In fact,

unions led the fight to establish OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, an agency that is part of the U.S. Department of Labor that inspects and examines workplaces for threats to workers' safety and/or health.

In 1989 the AFL-CIO declared April 28th as Workers Memorial Day. The date of April 29th was chosen because it's the anniversary of the enactment of OSHA in 1970.

The upcoming dates observing the anniversary of the Triangle Fire and Workers Memorial Day make this a good time to remind Local 153 members — indeed all working Americans — that they can visit OSHA on the web. OSHA.gov contains background information about workers' rights and employer responsibilities, and it provides electronic links to many sources of information about occupational safety and health issues.

Workers can even use the web site to file complaints with OSHA about health and safety hazards in the workplace. By going to the "Workers Page" at OSHA.gov workers will find a form that takes about 10 minutes to fill out. The form is automatically transmitted for follow-up to the appropriate OSHA office.





# Local 153 Membership Benefits

## ▶ DEATH BENEFIT

\$5,000 Death Benefit + Additional \$2,000 OPEIU Total \$7,000.

\$5,000 AD&D Benefit + Additional \$2,000 OPEIU Total \$7,000. (Death by accident total \$14,000).

Eligibility – Membership in good standing with payment of dues for 12 months during the last 14-month period prior to death, exclusive of the month of death.

**For more information, please call 212-741-8282**

## ▶ TOWING BENEFIT

Two towing/service calls per year for members and family living in the same household, valued at up to \$80 each. You will need “producer code 74046” for “plan letter C”.

**For information, call 212-741-8282**

**For towing and service call information, call 800-617-2677**

## ▶ 401 (K) NATIONAL PLAN

OPEIU has established a voluntary 401 (k) program that charges considerably less management fees than standard 401 (k) plans. Members will be able to enroll in this benefit shortly.

## ▶ STUDENT DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM

Students with \$10,000 or more of outstanding student debt have an opportunity each year to reduce the amount they owe.

## ▶ FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION BENEFIT

Members may earn tuition-free an Associate Degree online through Eastern Gateway Community College. The free college benefit provides degrees in Associate of Arts, Associate of Criminal Justice, Associate of Business Management and Associate of Arts in Early Childhood Education, with more free online degree programs to come. To obtain a brochure about this program call Local 153 at 212-741-8282 and press “7” for member benefits.

## ▶ GENERAL VISION SERVICES “Vision Pass”

Eyeglasses discount packages for you and your family.

**Call the union for a “vision pass” 212-741-8250/8251**

## ▶ AFL-CIO UNION PLUS BENEFITS

Discounts for services such as dental, vision, health clubs, legal services, pet and car insurance, car rentals, mortgages, etc.

**Visit [unionplus.org](http://unionplus.org)**

## ▶ WORKING ADVANTAGE

Discounts for theater and events, entertainment, sporting events, shopping, travel, etc.

**Visit [workingadvantage.com](http://workingadvantage.com)**

**Create an account using ID#: 924400144**

## ▶ SCHOLARSHIPS

Howard Coughlin, John Kelly Labor Studies, Union Privilege and Lavina Michl Wright with grants of up to \$6,500.

**Visit [opeiu153.org](http://opeiu153.org)**

## ▶ DEFENSE FUND

Where an authorized strike is called, members will receive \$290 per week.

## ▶ UNION SUPPORT SERVICES

For members and their families who suffer with substance abuse, depression or stress.

**Call 212-741-8282**

## ▶ PUBLICATIONS

Local 153 News and OPEIU’s White Collar.

## ▶ RETIREE ASSOCIATION

National Council of Senior Citizens Active on Social & Political Issues.

**Call 212-741-8262**

## ▶ EDUCATION FOR UPGRADING SKILLS

Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint Access, Web Design, Business Writing, Job Readiness and Financial Planning. Additional programs are being formed.

**Call Victoria at 212-675-3210**

# Local 153 News

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## Members at BioBus Celebrate First Contract

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future. We now all have the logistical and legal grounds to lift each other up and hold each other accountable to our mission-centric work.”

The successful organizing drive and subsequent contract negotiations at BioBus paid off on February 11 when the Local 153 members voted unanimously to ratify their first contract.

BioBus is a science education nonprofit that helps minority, female, and low-income students across New York City explore and pursue science through mobile labs, internships, and support with scientific research projects. Workers in the BioBus unit includes community scientists, drivers, and workers in development, IT, and more.

Here are some of the gains in their first contract:

- Just cause and progressive discipline—the end of at-will employment.
- Substantial base salary increases, regular cost-of living increases,.
- Five weeks of vacation time, with a payout of up to 5 days of unused

time and salary premiums based on experience each year.

- Increases to paid holidays, personal days, and bereavement leave.
- Paid sabbatical.
- A retirement plan with a 1% (one percent)

automatic contribution and 2% (two percent) matching from the employer.

“Today, we voted unanimously to ratify our first contract” Joseph Parziale said on Twitter on February 11. “It has some huge wins for us as non-profit education workers and makes sure our passion for our work is rewarded fairly!”

