

## May Newsletter

# AFSCME LOCAL 448

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**President:** Kathy Lane, 1-815-677-3699  
**Vice President:** Tamara Shorter, 621-6822  
**Secretary:** Alice Sutherland, 395-6661  
**Treasurer:** Gail Greenblatt-987-7721

**Chapter Chairs**  
 Dave Beccue-DNR, 885-3311  
 Laurie Scudder-Revenue, 987-7509  
 Diane Ritter-Lottery, 987-7018  
 Meliza Lester-DCFS 987-7920  
 Melissa Dix-DHS-987-7308

**Members at Large**  
 Aaron Sockwell-DHS, 232-6121  
 Kassandra Lumsden-DCFS-987-3266  
 Tom Soresie-DCFS-625-7594

**Trustees**  
 Tina Green-DCFS-625-7594  
 Jeff Bergstrom-DHS-987-7308  
 Robin Aebly-DCFS, 235-7878

**People Chair**  
 Laurie Scudder-Revenue, 987-7509

Chris Hooser-Staff Representative, 815-968-0447

<u>Meeting Dates</u>	
Rockford Labor Temple 212 S. 1st St. Rockford, IL	<b>June 4, 2020</b>
<b>All Membership meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. Food and drink will be provided at 6:00 p.m. for all meetings.</b>	

### **MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING CANCELED**

Due to Governor Pritzker's extension of the stay at home order, the membership meeting that was scheduled for 5-1-20 in Rockford will not be held. That meeting has been rescheduled for 6-4-20. The meeting will be held in Rockford at the Rockford Labor Temple which is located at 212 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Food will be available beginning at 6:00 PM and the meeting will start at 6:30 PM.

### **NOTICE OF ELECTION TO BE HELD FOR AFSCME INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION**

The AFSCME International Convention was to be held in Los Angeles this August. That plan has been changed and a virtual convention will be held. Details are still unknown. However we still need to elect those that will representing our local at this convention.

Elections for these positions will be held at our June membership meeting. The meeting will be held on 6-4-20 in Rockford at the Rockford Labor Temple which is located at 212 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Food will be available beginning at 6:00 PM and the meeting will start at 6:30 PM.

If you would like to participate in this convention but will be unable to attend the meeting, please submit a letter of nomination acceptance to an Executive Board member prior to this meeting indicating that if you are nominated you would accept that nomination.

### **SCHOLARSHIP SUBMISSION DEADLINE EXTENDED**

In light of all that is going on in at this time, we understand that it may be difficult for those who wish to submit an application for our local's scholarship to get the information needed. As a result we have extended the scholarship submission deadline to 8-1-20. All applications must be postmarked no later than 8-1-20 to be considered. The form can be found on **AFSCME Local 448 website**. Also the form will be mailed to all worksites once everyone returns to work.

Remember, these scholarships are for our dependents, not ourselves. Members must remain active and still be a member of a bargaining unit that is represented by AFSCME Local 448 at the time the scholarship is awarded.

## FORMER STAFF REPRESENTATIVE NAMED DIRECTOR OF MADISON TEACHERS INC.

Congratulations to Edward Sadlowski as he was named Executive Director of Madison Teachers Inc and will start his new position on June 1, 2020. Edward did a wonderful job while staff representative for our local. Madison Teachers are lucky to have him as their leader.

### AGENCIES WE REPRESENT

**Rockford IDES** staff had a nice surprise upon reporting to work on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Someone left this message for them at the entrance to the Rockford Unemployment Office.

Although the office currently closed to the public due to COVID-19, the staff are deemed essential and are reporting for work to insure that those in need of unemployment are able to access the benefits they so desperately need at this time.

Doing so is no easy feat. So far for the period of 3-1-20 through 4-24-20 there have been 1,016,933 claims filed. Last year for the same period there were only 86,739 claims filed. Those numbers do not reflect just the number of claim applications that have been received. Those numbers reflect the number of applications actually processed through completion!! IDES staff throughout the state have been putting in countless hours to insure all applications are processed as soon as humanly possible so that applicants can be paid without delay. That includes getting the Federal Extension (PEUC) and Federal Supplement (FUPC) of an additional \$600.00 per week up and running as well.

Another huge undertaking is getting the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program up and running. This program will enable those who would not normally qualify for Unemployment, such as those who are self-employed, to receive benefits as well. Our target is to have this system up and running by 5-11-20.



## **IDHS NEWS**

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) closed all local office lobbies. The closures began on Thursday, April 16.

IDHS says it is due to the peak of COVID-19 cases in Illinois.

All benefit applications will still be processed. Local staff are responding by telephone and will handle local emergency assistance needs.

We just wanted to let IDHS staff know that they are doing an awesome job helping their clients get the benefits they so desperately need right now. Your efforts do not go unnoticed.



## **MEET OUR MEMBERS**

In light of our members working on the front lines during this pandemic, we'd like you to meet a member who is in the field meeting with parents and their children to ensure children are safe from abuse and neglect. Meet **Christine Gardner**, an investigator in the DeKalb DCFS office.

### **Tell us about your job and let us know what agency you work for.**

I work at DCFS. I investigate allegations of abuse and neglect of children assigned by our state hotline. This involves seeing and interviewing child victims, caregivers, alleged perpetrators and other professional collateral contacts as well as observing the home environment to assess safety and risk of that child(ren). If there is evidence of a safety issue, we must mitigate this, up to and including taking protective custody of the child (ren).

### **How does your job provide a valuable public services?**

DCFS is charged with protecting child(ren). It is an unfortunate fact that sometimes the people in charge with caring for and protecting the most vulnerable in our society, children, abuse and neglect them. DCFS steps in and assesses and intervenes when necessary. We link families to services that can assist them with overcoming their issues and strengthen parenting and protective abilities whenever possible.

### **What's your inspiration to go to work every day?**

Everyday there is hope that I've actually made a difference for children on my caseload and our intervention resulted in a safe environment and an improved family situation for the child.

### **How does your union improve your work?**

I am lucky and grateful to have union representation. Not only do I have better pay and benefits due to my union but my union fights for us to have better working conditions.

Better working conditions such as lighter caseloads and improved safety measures for us. This directly translates into better outcomes for children we work with daily. Management is not often supportive or realistic in their expectation of us. Better pay and benefits has also meant that workers stay in this field and ongoing experience results in better assessment skills. It promotes a stable workforce which is critically needed.

As you know, our Local represents employees in many State agencies throughout Northern Illinois. We would like to get to know each and every one of you better. So, if you would like to help us do that, answer the following questions and we will feature a different employee in each newsletter and on the website. Email your submissions to Alice Sutherland at [mikenalice86@aol.com](mailto:mikenalice86@aol.com).

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