

UCTIE LOCAL 621



REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Is it a Movement? A seismic shift? A return to prominence? Or just a blip? What are we talking about? The Labor movement is on fire in our Country. Nationally, Unions are striking with very effective results. Businesses that were never organized by Labor before are receiving petitions for an election mailed to their front door. Workers are rising up and forming their own Locals. Major money is now being spent by corporations on trying to keep Unions out of their workforce. Cases and Petitions are overwhelming the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Is it a New Movement or a moment in time?

The Teamsters threatened a Strike at UPS and walked away with a really good contract and large % increases to their hourly wages. A major victory! The UAW had a strike against all three major car manufacturers at the same

time. They never did this before. The strategy worked wonders. The strike was settled, and UAW workers walked away with over a 20% raise over 4 years. Since the UAW received a great contract, Tesla, a nonunion company, vowed to raise their workers' wages. Nearly all companies that have nonunion auto plants have raised their workers' pay in the wake of the UAW's big wins over the big 3.

Since Labor has scored many victories with a strike or a threat of a strike, many other Locals and labor organizations are following their lead.

99% of Anheuser-Busch union employees at this plant voted to authorize a strike. 5,000 employees voted to strike.

...Continued on next page

→ MONTHLY MEETINGS ←

Local 621 holds monthly membership meetings on the 1st Tuesday of each month. Meetings are held at the Union Hall at 40-26 235th Street in Douglaston, NY 11363.

(No meeting July & Aug.)

Meetings are held from 3pm to 5pm

Come meet our staff and get to know your Delegate!

Check on your 401k plan and see if we have a beneficiary listed in your profile.

Be introduced to the benefit staff for medical and 401k.

We are here to help you out with any issue. Come have a voice for your future!

That gives the negotiating committee power. When an employer understands that almost 100% of his employees authorized a strike, negotiations start to move very quickly and to the union's advantage

Now DHL Express union members of Local 100 are going on strike. They understand what UPS gave in wages. So does DHL management.

All over the Country, businesses that were never unionized are becoming unions. Amazon, Apple, Starbucks and Trader Joe's are just a few of the new companies being organized. The NLRB is handling numerous cases against Starbucks and Trader Joe's and others. The Cases involve numerous charges with the main charge being closing stores that vote to unionize. The NLRB ruled that Starbucks closed 23 stores illegally. The complaint seeks the reopening of the stores and reimbursement of lost wages and other benefits.

This sounds good. But the case has gone on for months. Paychecks were lost. The damage was done to hard-working employees. A multi-billion-dollar company can absorb these losses. The everyday worker cannot. The Unions fight gallantly for these workers, but months go by, and people must move on and pay their bills.

Although there have been workers unionizing across the country at the locations we mentioned, none of the new unions have signed a collective bargaining agreement. The underlying problem is that although current labor law requires employers to "bargain in good faith," it does not require businesses to reach a collective bargaining agreement, and there is no time limit on how long it should take to reach a deal. This leads to enthusiasm among workers waning and the movement at

a particular business grinds to a halt. Is it a Movement or a Blip? Time will tell. But it could be a start to better things in Labor.

Local 621 is following the National lead that big labor is pushing. We have many organizing campaigns in the pipeline and our delegates are out serving our membership. We are proud of the results we have achieved this past year and look to 2024 to be even better. We appreciate our members taking the time to inform themselves and read our newsletter. We think it contains some good information or advice. We like to keep our members informed of our daily activities at the union. We also look forward to any responses or communications you wish to have with us. Please check the directory of Union Officials for our contact information.

Sincerely,

The Executive Board, Local 621



LOCAL 621 LABOR NEWS

Local 621 has started negotiations with our State Worker Division in the Township of Maplewood, New Jersey, for all **DPW** workers. Each side has presented their proposal to each other. We have a date set for the end of January to meet across the table. The Town has a new administrator and a new law firm handling the negotiations. The negotiating committee for the Union has met with the Town and discussed each proposal. We will keep you posted.

On December 17th, 2023, Local 621 and City College of New York hosted the Annual reading of the beloved poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas" at the Church of the Intercession. The Church is located at Broadway and West 155th Street. Local 621 has for over 10 years supported the Church and each year donated decorations for the special occasion. The poem was first published 200 years ago, anonymously, in an upstate newspaper. Since then, we have found out that the poem was written by Clement Clarke Moore. He wrote it as a Christmas present for his six children. Please come and join us next year. All are welcome and there is no charge!

Local 621 has over 200 Union members at Philadelphia International Airport (PHL). We wanted to update you on a few issues at PHL. Local 621 filed an arbitration case against ACI for failure to remit benefit money owed to the Union employees of ACI. We had a two-day arbitration case and are awaiting the decision. During November 2023, Local

621 set up an Expressive Activity at Terminals D and E in Zone 6 and 7 on November 14th, 15th and 16th. We gave information to all passengers and employees heading into the airport. We told them that ACI was breaking the Law.

In 2024, Local 621 officials will be coming to your workplace to discuss the importance of having beneficiary forms on file for the 401k plan and United Benefit Fund Life Insurance plan. A beneficiary form is a document stating who you want to receive your benefit upon your passing. This document is of extreme importance. If we have a signed copy on file and something unfortunate happens to you, within 15 days your beneficiary will receive your money from the 401k plan and the life insurance from United Benefit Fund. If we do not have a beneficiary form on file, then the estate winds up in probate for 6 months. Please email dean.delucia@uctie.com with any questions or form requests with the subject line "Beneficiary Form request".

SOME IMPORTANT REMINDERS FROM LOCAL 621:

We have our membership meeting on the first Tuesday of each month excluding July and August. The meetings are held from 3 pm to 5 pm. Food and beverages are served. Stay tuned for our BBQ.

We have a new dental provider, Sele-Dent and a new vision provider, General Vision Services. The benefits remain the same. Please read all about it in the Dental and Vision section of this newsletter. Send us your email address if you have not done so. Email is crucial for us to have in your file. Send an email to dean.delucia@uctie.com with the subject line "Union Member".

Follow us on social media for the latest



news and videos:

TikTok: @uctie_local_621

Instagram: uctielocal_621

Facebook: sixtwentyone_uctie

Review the Directory of Union Officials in this Newsletter and contact us with any questions or concerns.

Local 621 is excited to announce we won our Arbitration case against ACI, a cleaning company at Philadelphia Airport. The case concerned nonpayment of benefits to union employees of ACI. The decision allows Local 621 union members of ACI to collect \$4.54 an hour worked from July 1st, 2023, through December 31st, 2023. Starting on January 1st, 2024, each union member will receive \$44.98 an hour worked. All the money collected will be deposited into their union 401k plan. Arbitrator David F. Reilly, Esq. presided over the case. Local 621 Attorneys did a great job.

Local 621 also wants to update you on our Arbitration case in Maplewood, New Jersey. A Local 621 union member, who works at the Department of Public Works, was denied overtime over 14 months. At the Arbitration hearing, and before the case was presented to the Arbitrator, both sides met and settled the case. The Local 621 union member was happy with the outcome.

A new company, GreyStar, one of several new employers under contract with Local 621, has purchased a few buildings that are under a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with Local 621. We have met with new ownership. We have met with their Attorney. They understand that they must honor the collective bargaining agreement in place. They have. We are now negotiating a new CBA with the company.

Our organizing efforts at PHL are going strong. We are making great progress in communicating and establishing a relationship with most employees at Prospect, Inc. We have had major interest from employees with other companies. We are ready to file for an election. It's going to

be a fight and a difficult campaign. But we are ready for this challenge. Local 621 has been established in Philadelphia for over 20 years. We stand on our record.

Finally, we have a big win for **Winston Towers**. We have settled our economic reopener for wages and medical coverage. Employee wages have increased 5.1% in 2023 and 4.6% increase in 2024. **Employees will be receiving a retro check back to August 21st, 2023.** We have sent a letter requesting dates for the economic reopener for year three. We will keep you posted.



THERE IS A NEW DENTAL PLAN FOR ALL UNITED BENEFIT FUND PARTICIPANTS. The new plan is called Sele-Dent. Any questions you may have please call Danielle at 718-513-2477 Ext 101.

When you select a dentist and go for the first time, let them know you have Sele-Dent with United Benefit Fund. Please follow the steps below.

Visit: <https://www.Sele-dent.com>

- Step one: On top of the page click on Labor Organizations. Then click on unions
- Step Two: In the middle of the page the blue rectangular box says "View Benefits Information for your Group" Click on it.
- Step Three: A list of Organizations comes onto the screen. Click on United Benefit Fund.
- Step Four: The screen shows you Plan One and Plan Two and a List of Dentists in your area.

The plan details did not change, just the provider and Dentists. Please review list of Dentists and make an appointment today. Good dental health helps prevent heart disease. Floss Daily.

YOUR TOOTHBRUSH COULD BE A LIFESAVER IN THE HOSPITAL.

By Dennis Thompson HealthDay Reporter

A person's toothbrush could be a true life saver if they land in a hospital ICU, according to a new evidence review. Regular toothbrushing is associated with lower rates of death in the intensive care unit (ICU), shorter lengths of stay and shorter times spent on a mechanical ventilator, researchers report in the December 18th issue of the journal JAMA Internal Medicine. That's because daily toothbrushing appears to protect patients against developing pneumonia while they're hospitalized, researchers said.



"The signal that we see here towards lower mortality is striking - it suggests that regular toothbrushing in the hospital may save lives," said researcher Dr. Michael Klompas, a hospital epidemiologist and an infectious disease physician in the department of medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Klompas said it's rare in the world of hospital preventive medicine to find something like this that is both effective and cheap. "Instead of a new device or drug, our study indicates that something so simple as brushing teeth can make a big difference. For the study, Klompas and his colleagues combined results from 15 clinical trials involving more than 2,700 patients. They found that pneumonia rates were lower among patients who received daily toothbrushing, particularly those on mechanical ventilation. Toothbrushing also decreased the risk of dying in an ICU and shortened the length of time patients needed care. A daily toothbrushing regimen decreases the amount of bacteria in the mouth, potentially lowering the risk of pneumonia. Most of the studies in the review focused on ventilated patients in an ICU, but researchers believe that the protective effects of toothbrushing should extend to other hospital patients.

"The findings from our study emphasize the importance of implementing an oral health routine that includes toothbrushing for hospitalized patients," Klompas said. "Our hope is that our study will help catalyze policies and programs to assure that hospitalized patients regularly brush their teeth or have someone assist them."

COULD UNHEALTHY GUMS WORSEN COPD?

By Ernie Mundell

New research in mice is pointing to a surprising connection: Gum disease could exacerbate chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Because gum disease is a chronic, inflammatory infection, it has long been linked to higher heart disease risks. Now, Chinese researchers believe it could also have ties to the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, COPD. COPD is a

progressive, inflammatory lung condition that's often (but not always) linked to smoking. There is no cure for the illness, which over time makes breathing more difficult. Prior research at Sichuan University helped confirm that a bacterium often found in the mouth, *Porphyromonas gingivalis*, is a major contributor to gum disease. Because gum disease and COPD are both inflammatory conditions, the Chinese researchers investigated possible links using a mouse.

In one set of experiments, they found that mice infected with gum disease and COPD had faster progression of COPD than if they only had COPD. In another experiment, the team tracked the spread of *P. gingivalis* throughout the rodent bodies. They found the bacterium moved from the mouth to COPD-infected lung tissue, where it upset the natural colonies of microbes in the lungs. By treating gum disease and therefore dampening its effect on immune cells in the lungs, doctors may be able to help control the progression of COPD. The findings were published Jan 12 in the journal *mSystems*.

Remember to floss and be good to your teeth or they will be false to you!



As of January 1, 2024, General Vision Services (GVS) is the new vision provider network for United Benefit Fund. To find a participating provider go to the GVS website at www.generalvision.com or download the GVS Mobile App. Always use the Benefit Code number 6063. Here you will be able to view your optical plan and locate providers in your area. Also, use the zip code locate feature to find a participating provider or you may call GVS at 800-VISION-1 (800-847-4661). Out of network benefits are available so review the website. If you have any questions regarding

your vision, *please contact Maureen Barrett at 718-513-2477 ext. 104.*

The new plan will offer mail order contact lens discounts. Lasik is now easier for GVS members. Included in the plan are spectacle lenses, materials and coatings. Frame allowance up to \$175.00. Please review your benefits on the website.

IMPORTANT EYE CARE NEWS!

Avoid these Eye Drop Products, FDA Advises

- EzriCare Artificial Tears were recalled after the CDC linked them to serious infections in multiple states.
- Brimonidine Tartrate Ophthalmic Solution was recalled due to a manufacturing problem with the caps.
- Purely Soothing, 15%MSM Drops were recalled due to non-sterility.
- Dr. Berni's MSM Drops 5% Solution and
- LightEyes MSM Eye Drops were recalled due to bacterial contamination, fungal contamination, or both.

These are just a few eye drop products recalled recently. Please Google your eye drop brand.

Glaucoma: A Hidden Threat to Vision Health Rising Swiftly.

A silent disorder is rising among older people worldwide, as millions unknowingly grapple with glaucoma – an eye condition that can cause irreversible blindness but shows no obvious symptoms until late-stage disease, ophthalmologists warn. It's predicted that by 2050, the number of people with glaucoma will surge by more than 200%, highlighting an urgent need for heightened awareness, early detection, and advanced treatment strategies. Once symptoms arise, some may notice blind spots in their peripheral vision, and in their central vision in late stage.

Glaucoma occurs when there is increased pressure within the eye, causing damage to the optic nerve, which transmits information from the eye to the brain. If left untreated, it will result in

partial vision loss or complete blindness. It often develops gradually and without noticeable symptoms in its early stages, earning it the nickname “the silent thief of sight.” It is most common among people over the age of 60, those with a family history of glaucoma, and people who have diabetes. It disproportionately affects Black people, who are six times more likely than White people to have advanced vision loss from the disease. More than 120,000 people in the U.S. are blind from glaucoma, accounting for 9% to 12% of all cases of blindness.

Glaucoma treatments range from eye drops to laser treatments to surgery, all of which aim to reduce eye pressure. Some doctors will recommend oral medication along with eye drops. Glaucoma testing can be done during a regular eye exam and may involve one test or a combination of tests that are relatively quick and painless. Those include dilating the pupil with eye drops to examine the optic nerve, along with measuring the thickness of the cornea to find out your risk for the disease, which is higher if the cornea is thin. Go get tested before any symptoms arise. If you notice symptoms, it might be too late

HABITS FOR HEALTH BY THE HILB GROUP

Relaxation Techniques

Life. It’s Stressful. The daily traffic jam you call a commute, the occasional juggling of schedules to accommodate a sick child or the unexpected car repair. No matter the cause, your body reacts with a flood of stress hormones designed to help you stay on high alert. Your heart pounds, breathing becomes rapid and shallow, muscles tense, and senses are heightened. The stress response is the body’s normal reaction to what it believes to be a threat. While we can’t avoid all the stress

in our lives, we can create habits that will help us respond to it in healthier ways.

Dr. Herbert Benson, author of **The Relaxation Response**, shares that through regular practice, we can encourage our body to release chemicals and brain signals that help turn off the stress response and bring the body back to its pre-stress levels. The following is his Relaxation Response technique, paraphrased:

- Find a quiet spot and sit in a comfortable position.
- Close your eyes.
- Relax your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face.
- Become aware of your breathing. Breathe through your nose. Breathe easily and naturally.
- Continue this for 10 to 20 minutes. You can open your eyes to check the time but don’t use an alarm.
- Allow relaxation to happen at its own pace. If distracting thoughts occur, try to ignore them by refocusing on your breathing.
- When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes before opening eyes and standing up.



At first, it may be hard for you to sit still for 5 minutes, let alone 10-20. With practice, it will become easier. Aim to establish a daily routine that includes time to elicit the relaxation response at least once for 10-20 minutes.

Top 10 Tips For Staying Healthy

Some lifestyle choices can make a big difference when it comes to your mental and physical well-being and quality of life. Here are the Top Ten Tips for good health and longevity.

1. ***Get Moving:** If you want to feel healthier, more energized, or in a better mood, get moving.



Regular exercise can benefit both your physical and mental health in a multitude of ways. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, if you are an adult, just 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week can positively impact your health.

2. ***Eat More whole foods and less processed foods:** Whole foods are foods that have not been heavily processed or altered. They don't contain a lot of added chemicals or artificial ingredients to help them taste good or give them a long shelf life. In general, whole foods are healthier for you and provide your body with more vitamins, minerals, and essential nutrients than processed foods.

3. ***If you smoke, try to quit:** Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. According to the CDC, tobacco use accounts for nearly 1 in 5 deaths in the U.S. each year. In fact, it's estimated that smokers, on average, die about 10 years earlier than nonsmokers. Smoking can damage nearly every organ in your body. It increases heart disease, strokes, respiratory disease, and lung cancer.



4. ***Make sleep a priority:** Sleep is vital for every process in your body. Sleep is a time for your body to repair cells and restore energy. Your brain also performs many essential functions while you are sleeping. How much sleep you need depends on your age, but for most adults, the CDC recommends at least 7 hours or more of sleep each night.
5. ***Stay Hydrated:** Drinking enough water each day is key to good health. Your body needs water for many important functions, like maintaining your body temperature, aiding digestion, keeping your organs working properly, and delivering nutrients to all your cells. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends 9 cups of fluid per day for women and 13 cups of fluid a day for men. Make water your go-to beverage. Avoid sodas and energy drinks that contain a lot of sugar.
6. ***If you drink alcohol, do so responsibly:** While an occasional alcoholic drink likely won't affect your health, drinking too much alcohol can take a heavy toll on many of your organs. Overconsumption of alcohol can damage your liver, brain, and heart, and also increase the risk of several types of cancer, including breast, colorectal, and liver cancer. Heavy drinking can also impact your mental health. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Health Services, moderate drinking is classified as 1 standard drink per day for women and 2 standard drinks per day for men.
7. ***Make preventive care a priority:** Preventive care is the care you get from your doctor to stay healthy. While you may typically think of your doctor as the person you see when you are ill, your doctor also plays a key role in keeping you healthy and preventing you from getting sick or developing a chronic disease in the first place. By being proactive, you and your doctor are

more likely to catch early warning signs of certain diseases before they become more serious. Specific types of preventive care are regular doctor visits with blood testing and screening, mammograms, colonoscopies, osteoporosis screening, genetic testing and any other appropriate test depending on your family history or age.

8. ***Know your numbers:** One of the advantages of preventive care is that your doctor will screen you for several key measurements, including your body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides and blood glucose. If any of these numbers are outside the recommended range, you and your doctor can discuss what needs to be done to address this issue. Being aware of issues before they cause other problems is key to making the right lifestyle decisions.
9. ***Manage stress in a healthy way:** Stress is a normal part of everyday life and, when it's short lived, it can be useful. But chronic stress can affect you mentally, physically, and emotionally. Research has shown that high levels of ongoing stress have been associated with an increased risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke, depression and a weakened immune system. Although stress is unavoidable, you can try to handle it with relaxation techniques, exercise, yoga and meditation.



10. ***Practice safe sex:** If you are sexually active or have been in the past, it's important that you get screened for sexually transmitted infections. Some sexually transmitted diseases don't cause noticeable symptoms until weeks, months or even years later. Get screened.

PRE-PAID LEGAL PLAN

The Law Office of Stephen Goldblatt, P.C. is council to Local 621 and administers the Local 621 UBF Pre-Paid legal services Plan (LSP). The Local 621 LSP provides legal services, at no cost to union members (exclusive of administrative/court fees), depending upon the type of legal situation. Examples include no-fault divorce, simple wills, and healthcare proxies. Additional legal services are available at reduced costs.

Goldblatt Legal Services
44 Court Street, Suite 1217, Brooklyn, New York 11201
917-771-8010, goldblattlegal@gmail.com

MINUTE CLINICS

We now offer access to MinuteClinic at little or no cost. MinuteClinic is a walk-in clinic inside select CVS Pharmacies and Target Stores and it is the largest provider of retail healthcare with over 1100 locations in 33 States. It is open every day, including evenings. They offer walk-in and scheduled appointments. They can also write prescriptions.

401K PLAN INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Our 401k plan is administered by the United Benefit Fund through the Principal Financial Group. Our plan ID number is 4-61039. When you contact the principal at 1-800-986-3343 you will need the plan ID number. Our office contact is Rita and she can be reached at rdelucia@uctie.com or by calling 718-513-2477 Ex. 107

UNITED BENEFIT FUND CONTACT INFORMATION

Jeanna Talamo, Administrator
718-513-2477 Ex 110
jtalamo@unitedbenefitfund.com

Daisy Garcia Leal, Member Specialist and
Benefit Coordinator - Bi-lingual
718-513-2477 Ex 102
dgarcia@unitedbenefitfund.com

Danielle Parco, Dental Specialist & Claims
Advocate
718-513-2477 Ex 101

dparco@unitedbenefitfund.com

Rita DeLucia, Controller
718-513-2477 Ex 107
rdelucia@unitedbenefitfund.com

Dean DeLucia, Field Operations
347-219-7536
dean.delucia@unitedbenefitfund.com

Alan Berwick, Field Operations
718-734-8700

LOCAL 621 CONTACT INFORMATION

Andrew Talamo, Business Manager
516-780-3112
Atalamo@Uctie.Com

Dean DeLucia, Secretary Treasurer
347-219-7536
Dean.Delucia@Uctie.Com

John Devine, President
516-322-3484
Jdevine@Uctie.Com

Steve Goldblatt, Union Attorney
917-771-9080
Goldblattlegal@Gmail.Com

Donald Utschig, Delegate
914-224-2838
Dutschig621@Uctie.Com

Rafael Griffin, Vice President, Spanish
Translator
347-578-1174 – Please Text

Kevin Walker, Delegate
917-995-2447– Please Text

Harold Getter, Delegate, Organizer
917-902-5658
Getter95@Gmail.Com

Alan Herwick, Delegate, Spanish Translator
718-734-8700 – Please Text



Local 621 set up an Expressive Activity at Terminal D & E in Zone 6 & 7

Organizing Department

Director of Organizing: **Kevin Walker**

Kevin Walker has been head of organizing for Local 621 for over 12 years. He has dedicated himself to making working peoples lives better by bringing them into a union family. He is a fighter. He is a dedicated man to his craft. He is knowledgeable in his field of union organizing and running campaigns. He gets the job done. Along with the Executive Board and wonderful staff of delegates at Local 621, Kevin has many tools and people at his disposal. Local 621 has the resources and staff to assist Kevin in campaigns to get workers unionized.

Kevin has been successful many times in organizing campaigns. But he cannot do it alone. The Local 621 union employees in Philadelphia Airport have been a huge help. They have been talking to fellow airport workers and discussing what Local 621 has done for them. They are handing out literature and making calls to show their support for Local 621. Any time Local 621 and Kevin are on an organizing campaign, we have local 621 union members help us. It has proven to be very successful. And the union members seem to like to help.

If you know of any workers who need union representation, please contact us at Local 621. We are here to help and lend support. Reach out to Kevin at 917-995-2447. We can make a difference.

Local 621
40-26 235TH STREET
DOUGLASTON, NY 11363

