



# SEIU Healthcare News



SEIU Members GOTV in Gary, IN – November 2nd, 2008

## November 4, 2008: A New Beginning for America's Working Families

Time and time again, President-elect Obama inspired Americans with the phrase, "You are the people you have been waiting for." SEIU members took that message to heart and worked tirelessly this past election for our families, for our communities and for our future. The result was an historic moment for country and for our union. In President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden, America's working families have two new champions in the White House, leaders who are ready to address the tremendous challenges

that far too many Americans are facing in this turbulent economy.

Throughout the election season, SEIU Healthcare members rallied, registered voters, marched, got out the vote – all for the possibility of change:

- 3,000 members and staff campaigned in 18 battleground states.
- We knocked on three million doors, and called more than 16 million voters.
- We reached new voters – registering almost 250,000 in all.
- SEIU members helped elect 6 out of 8 pro-worker candidates in

targeted Senate races and 21 of 27 candidates to House seats.

As we go to press, we are within two seats of reaching our goal of winning a pro-worker, progressive majority in the Senate.

Now as we look toward a new year and a new beginning for our country, SEIU Healthcare members have an incredible opportunity to be a force for real change that works for all of us —starting with quality, affordable healthcare for all, and ensuring that every worker has the right to choose to join a union.\*

# Political Action: “Now is the Time to Pull up Our Sleeves”

Those are the words of SEIU Healthcare 1199NW member Charlotte Anibas in a letter to the editor of the Seattle Times. She writes, “No matter if you voted for President-elect Barack Obama or Sen. John McCain, if you are a union member, small-business owner or retiree, we share one community. We need to play our part to help our elected leaders fulfill their campaign promises. It’s time to seize this moment and create the change that working families need.”

More than 100 members and local union staff are now rededicating themselves to focus on growing our political strength in preparation for our campaign to ensure that our new administration of President-elect Obama and our next Congress are ready to deliver on their promises to America.

Our COPE campaign will run through December 15 and focus on engaging more members in California, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin. By growing our Political Action Fund in these states which hold critical Congressional votes, we’ll be prepared to launch our campaign in 2009 to bring real change to working families everywhere. In total, SEIU Healthcare aims to sign up over 7,000 members to COPE.

## Here’s how you can do your part to change our country and help America seize this once in a lifetime opportunity:

- Join with thousands of your fellow members by giving to COPE.
- Ask your delegate or member political organizer how you can get involved in our work in 2009.

# Missouri Homecare Workers Win Campaign to Improve Care at Home



Homecare workers in Missouri are also celebrating an Election Day victory that gives them a new voice about their future.

Missouri personal care attendants joined with people with disabilities, senior citizens, and homecare advocates to win approval of a ballot initiative that establishes a Quality Home Care Council that will strengthen the homecare system in Missouri and also give attendants the freedom to form a union.

The measure passed overwhelmingly on November 4, with support from 75 percent of voters.

“I’m thrilled. This is fantastic news for Missourians who need long term care and for caregivers like me,” said St. Louis homecare attendant Tasha McGhee. “The next step is to work together to improve our jobs and the services we provide.”

Homecare workers in Missouri are not yet united in a union. But at the start of their efforts to collect signatures to put the initiative on the election ballot, they received vital support from members of SEIU Healthcare Illinois & Indiana.\*

# Snapshots of Our SEIU Healthcare Heroes

There were thousands of SEIU Healthcare heroes that left their families and their jobs to join fellow members on the election trail. Here are just a few of their stories:



*Tyrome Bell, Mental Health Associate,  
Mt Sinai Medical Center, New York City*

**Tyrome Bell** has been a mental health associate at Mt Sinai Medical Center in New York City for 16 years. A veteran delegate of 1199SEIU-UHE, Tyrome got his initiation to political campaigning during the 2004 elections, when he worked as an SEIU Hero in Jacksonville, FL for seven months. This year, he went to Detroit, MI on August 19 and stayed through Election Day, working as a lead organizer.

“Working in Detroit’s inner city was an eye-opener—so many people in such desperate shape. Devastated neighborhoods, where every other house was boarded up or condemned. But the people really responded. They came out big time for Barack Obama. And the commitment of the people in our campaign was amazing....Election night was beautiful. It is impossible to put into words the emotion we felt after working so hard and achieving a truly historic victory. Such a sense of accomplishment and of empowerment.”

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# Snapshots of Our SEIU Healthcare Heroes

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## **Annette Hilliard,**

a member of SEIU Healthcare Illinois & Indiana, was recently laid off from Chicago's Michael Reese Hospital after 28 years as a unit clerk, when the facility announced it was closing.



*Annette Hilliard, clerk, Chicago's Michael Reese Hospital, Chicago, IL*

“Being unemployed, I went to the union hall to see what I could do. I started phone-banking for Healthcare United, calling healthcare workers—both union and non-union—around the country to make sure they understood the importance of this election.

“I'd never before participated in an election campaign before. I spoke with healthcare workers in Indiana, in Georgia, all over the country. I wanted to make sure that they understood the healthcare plans and voting records of Senators Obama and McCain.

“By Election Day, it turned out that I had spoken with 3,890 people. It doesn't seem like a big thing to me. I was just doing my job. But I was inspired. It was so exciting to be working with the union and I was overjoyed with the Obama victory. I really wanted it to happen, of course, but never believed that it really would. I never saw it coming. After this, I am interested in working in politics a lot more.”

**Annette Wisniewski** lives and works in the battleground state of Ohio. A rank-and-file vice president of SEIU Healthcare West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio, Annette has been an administrative assistant at The Nord Center, a mental health services facility in Lorraine for the past 21 years.

Annette knows from personal experience that our country's healthcare system is broken. It was what motivated Annette to throw her energies into our election work.

Shortly after she was born, Annette's granddaughter had to be medivaced to a hospital, where she has spent her entire young life so far. “If we didn't have Medicaid,” she says, “they would not have been able to provide her that level of immediate care. In a strange way, I consider myself ‘lucky; that my family makes so little that they qualify for Medicaid. It's the situations like the one of my grandbaby that I've faced as a single mother, and the patients I've seen through the years at work, that showed me how much the system needed fixing. My experiences in dealing with the healthcare system motivated me to volunteer for the presidential campaign in the hopes that things would really be fixed.

“After what I experienced talking with my neighbors and coworkers in Ohio, it looks like change in our healthcare system is really going to happen this time, and I was able to be a part of it, and see how much ordinary people feel like they are finally able to make a difference.”



*Annette Wisniewski, Administrative Assistant, The Nord Center, Lorraine, OH*