

# COMMUNIQUE



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By Marci Rosenblum, Communications Director

# 1 VIRUS SHUTS DOWN the World



**IT TOOK JUST ONE VIRUS TO SHUT DOWN THE ENTIRE WORLD.** One virus called SARS-CoV-2 that caused COVID-19 and spread like wildfire throughout China, Italy, and Europe before crossing the ocean to America. One virus that so far has killed more than half a million people and put the rest of the world into lockdown in order to survive.

During this tragic time, people from all walks of life banded together to fight the silent killer. Race, gender, nationality, age, and religion didn't matter to the virus, as everyone, everywhere was infected—the old, the young, the rich and the poor, and especially the black and the brown, which had significantly higher infection and death rates than any other race. No one was safe, and all were forced to persevere through what has truly been one of the worst health crises in recent history.

For three long months, most New Yorkers lived under stay-at-home orders, confined to the inner walls of their homes, stepping outside long enough simply to see sunlight and breathe a few moments of fresh air. For those deemed essential workers, the story was much different, but for everyone, lives were turned upside down to make sure that families, friends, neighbors, and coworkers all remained healthy—and stayed alive.

Friends helped friends. Younger neighbors checked on elderly neighbors. Healthy New Yorkers assisted those with chronic health issues. Everyone did what they could to help someone else because the whole state, the entire country, was in the same situation — locked up.

Despite one virus shutting down the entire world, almost three months later ... **ONE BLACK MAN'S DEATH OPENED IT BACK UP.**

With Minneapolis retail businesses having just started to reopen, on May 25 a 46-year-old Black man suspected of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill was handcuffed and pinned face down on the ground by a white police officer who pressed his knee against the man's neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds. That man, George Floyd, was unconscious, showing no signs of life.

His death sparked immediate unrest in Minneapolis where protesters set fire to buildings, and awakened a country that had been in lockdown for 90 days. Floyd's death also reignited the seven-year-old Black Lives Matter movement, once considered almost divisive, and made it massively mainstream.

"The problem is that 'Black Lives Matter' is not just a rallying cry, and neither is "Say His Name,"" said Local 1180 President Gloria Middleton in talking about the chant that resurfaced after Floyd's death. "While George Floyd's face has now become synonymous with the Black Lives Matter movement, it is about so much more than the death of just one person. America is in trouble, but the real problem is that America does not have a plan to correct these 400-plus years of disparate treatment on all levels for Black Americans."

As the city, state, and country are crawling out of this horrifying pandemic, beginning to reopen, and returning to some form of normalcy, thousands of Americans have taken to the streets to protest about racism, many for the first time in their lives. The crowds, overwhelmingly young and racially mixed, often wear masks but pay little attention to social-distancing constraints.

George Floyd is not the first Black person whose death at the hands of a white police officer has sparked massive protests; only this time, the response is much different. His death triggered demonstrations in all 50 states, in large cities and small towns, with protestors from all ethnicities standing with Black activists. Sports figures, businesses, educational institutions, governments, and foreign countries all joined in on the Black Lives Matter movement to effect real change by demanding justice, condemning racism, and speaking out against police brutality.

This time, it's more than just words of understanding and pacification. This time, the ball is in motion toward concrete action since America already had a series of congruent events in place that created the perfect storm for rebellion. George Floyd's death was just the straw that broke the camel's back. The year started with Trump's impeachment trial, several previous police killings of African-Americans, and then the pandemic and a country-wide imposed lockdown that led to the highest level of unemployment since the Great Depression in the 1930s. After months of being cooped up, Americans were looking for a reason to get outside and Floyd's death was more than enough reason.

"More people than ever were home watching the news because they were on lockdown, teleworking, or unemployed," Middleton said. "When the video of George Floyd's death was broadcast, no one could look the other way. Everyone was paying attention because they were in front of a television or internet. There was no avoiding what was happening and no ignoring that our country is dealing with a much larger systemic problem."

**Jan. 16**

**Trump Impeachment Trial Begins**

The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives impeached President Donald Trump in December 2019, setting the stage for the 2020 trial in the Republican-led Senate on whether to remove him from office.

**March 1**

**First Coronavirus Case Confirmed in NYS**

**NYS PAUSE Order Goes Into Effect**

**March 22**

**March 13**

**Breonna Taylor Killed**

**Feb. 23**

**Ahmaud Arbery Killed**



# 1

# Black Man's DEATH

# OPENS It Back Up

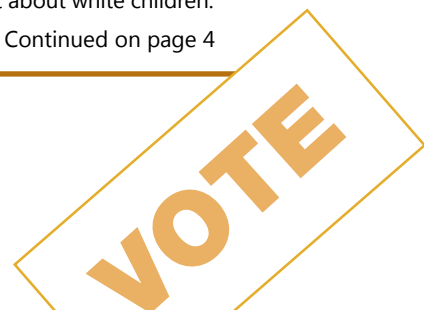
Since Eric Garner's death in 2014 on Staten Island at the hands of a white New York City police officer when 43% of Americans reported these types of incidents reflected a broader problem, a similar ABC poll after George Floyd's death suggested that number is now up to 74%.

To appease the constituent masses since it is an election year, many governments, including those in New York State and City, now have started instituting police reform legislation. In addition, many other visible and swift changes are on the way: several confederate and slavery-linked statues around the world have been toppled; wide-ranging conversations have been sparked about the responsibility industries and organizations have to address institutional racism; the Grammy's announced they would no longer use the word "urban" to describe music of Black origin; PepsiCo Inc., which owns the Aunt Jemima pancake mix brand, said it would lose its name and brand image "to make progress toward racial equality"; Johnson & Johnson announced it would stop selling products used by some people to lighten their skin tone; five brands, including Uncle Ben's, Mrs. Butterworth's, and Cream of Wheat, revealed plans to change and reexamine their names, mascots, and logos with racist roots; Black Out Tuesday was created with the intention to "black out" usual social media activity and take the time to learn about the Black Lives Matter movement; street names were changed, including one in Washington D.C. leading up to the White House that is now renamed Black Lives Matter Plaza; prominent physician groups like the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association declared racism a public health crisis and called for an end to police brutality against Black Americans; and CEOs and prominent heads of businesses have stepped down after claims of racism and toxic company culture.

"Our country has a deep-rooted systemic problem going back as far as slavery when Blacks were bought and sold as free labor to build this country. Black men and women have been killed for no apparent reason for decades," Middleton said.

Black history is taught as a footnote to American history in public schools—a contributing factor to the ongoing systemic problem. The only generations who thoroughly know about Black history are the ones who lived through it or are a generation or two removed. The younger Black generations know very little about where their ancestors came from or what they went through — and forget about white children.

Continued on page 4



## ELECTION DAY Nov. 3, 2020

### May 25

#### George Floyd Killed

in Minneapolis, Minnesota by a white police officer who held his knee on the unarmed man's neck for 8 minutes, 46 seconds.

### June 8

#### New York City Enters Phase 1 of Reopening

### June 15

#### LGBTQ Victory

United States Supreme Court ruled that an employer who fires a worker for being gay or transgender violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

### June 12

#### Rashad Brooks Killed

### June 17-19

#### JUNETEENTH

#### Made Official Holiday for NYS Workers

#### Made Official NYC & School Holiday

NYS made Juneteenth an official holiday for state workers and is on track to make the day an official statewide holiday next year.

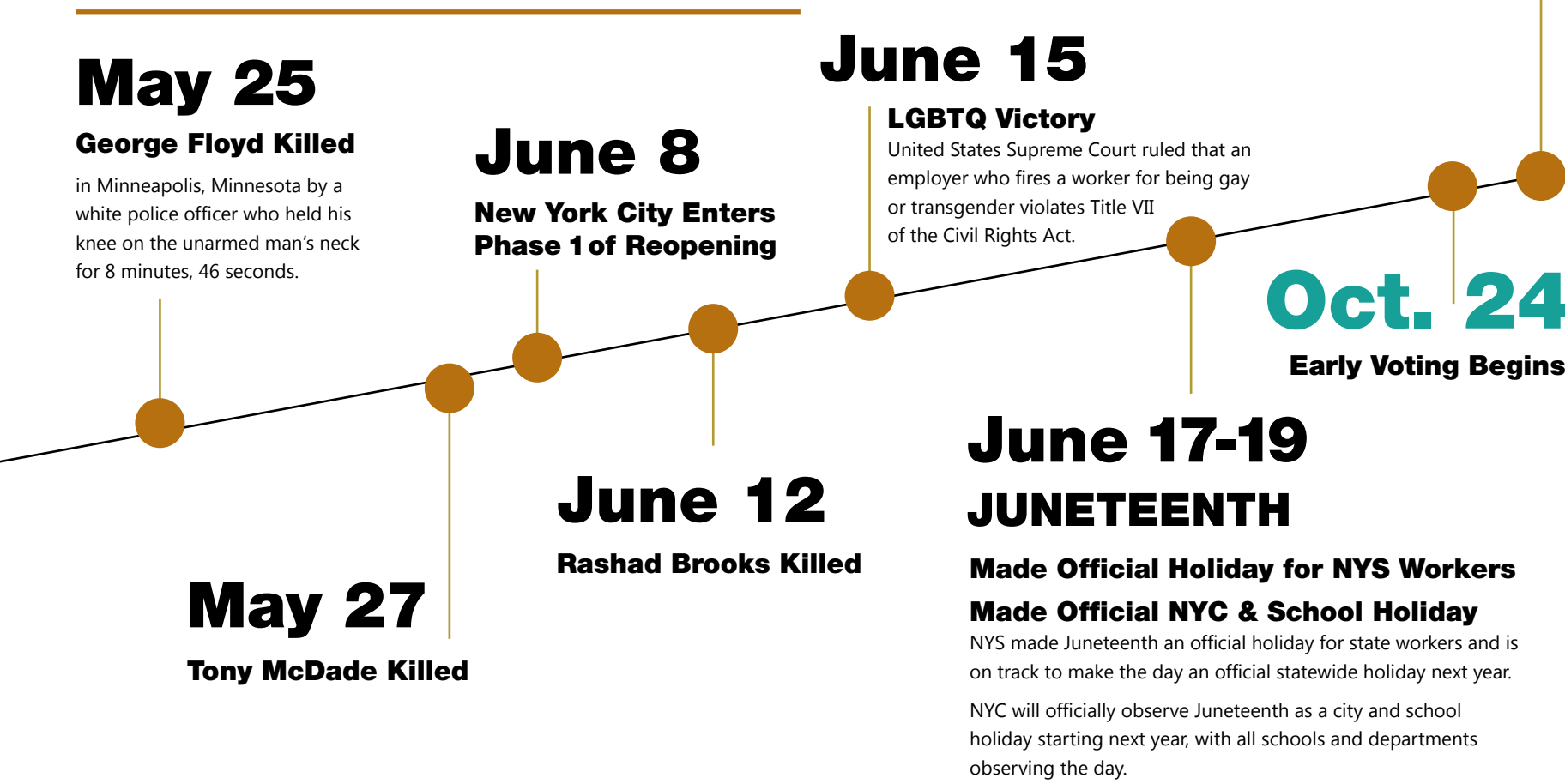
NYC will officially observe Juneteenth as a city and school holiday starting next year, with all schools and departments observing the day.

### Oct. 24

#### Early Voting Begins

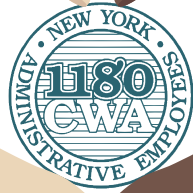
### May 27

#### Tony McDade Killed



“Our lives begin to end  
the day we become silent about the  
things that matter.”

#1180AGAINSTHATE



#BLACKLIVESMATTER

“With 80% of teachers being white and 40% of all public schools not having a single teacher of color, Black students across the country are being robbed of the opportunity to see themselves in what they’re studying and experience the richness of Black history. Instead, they’re bombarded with negative narratives based on biases, prejudices, and stereotypes, forcing them to settle for raggedy and distorted views of who they are and what their culture represents,” according to The New Teacher Project.

If there was ever a time for change, it’s now. Americans must understand that Black people are tired of sitting back and going along with the status quo. No where is that

going to be more evident than in the upcoming November president election when Black Americans have the power to express themselves at the polls and make change.

With racism and police conduct as the two most important issues in their choice of presidential candidates, most Black Americans are sharply critical of President Trump on both matters and realize the high stakes in the outcome of the election, according to at least one poll. Not surprisingly, former Vice President Joe Biden currently leads Trump by a huge margin — 92% to 5% — among Black registered voters. This is not to say that those in favor of Biden actually support him, but rather they oppose Trump, and there is

# AMERICAN BLACK HISTORY

## 1830s-1860s

### Abolitionist Movement



In the North, the increased repression of southern Black people fanned the flames of the growing abolitionist movement. During this time, the movement to abolish slavery in America gained strength, led by free Black people such as Frederick Douglass and white supporters such as William Lloyd Garrison, founder of the radical newspaper *The Liberator*, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, publisher of the bestselling antislavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. While many abolitionists based their activism on the belief that slaveholding was a sin, others were more inclined to the non-religious “free-labor” argument, which held that slaveholding was regressive, inefficient, and made little economic sense.

## 1808

### Congress Outlaws African Slave Trade

U.S. Congress outlawed the African slave trade in 1808, but the domestic trade flourished and the enslaved population in the U.S. nearly tripled in the next 50 years to nearly 3.9 million.

## 1774-1804

### Northern States Abolish Slavery

Although slavery itself was never widespread in the North, between 1774 and 1804, all of the northern states abolished slavery, but the so-called “peculiar institution” of slavery remained absolutely vital to the South.



## 1619

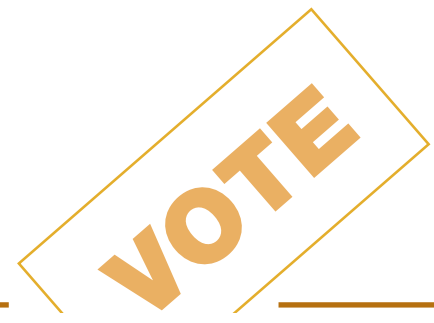
### Slavery Begins in U.S.

Many consider this to be a significant starting point to slavery in America when the privateer, *The White Lion*, brought 20 African slaves ashore in the British colony of Jamestown, Virginia. The crew had seized the Africans from the Portuguese slave ship *Sao Jao Bautista*.



a difference. Now it's just up to Black registered voters to actually vote, Middleton said, which is something Local 1180 will be focusing on in the next several months.

"Black Americans are tired of hearing that all lives matter because if that were true, then Black lives would matter, too, but they don't, and unless we learn about our own history and come together to make real change in November, then Black lives will never matter," Middleton said. "So, it's time to **#speakout**, **#standup**, and let the world know that while **#AllLivesMatter**, so, too, do **#BlackLivesMatter!**" ■

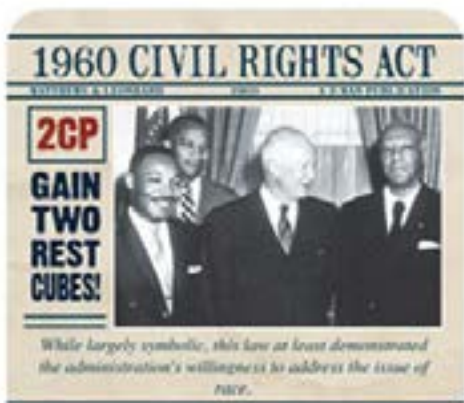


# ELECTION DAY Nov. 3, 2020

## 1960s

### Civil Rights Movement

Almost a century after slavery was officially abolished, resistance to the lingering racism and discrimination in America that began during the slavery era would lead to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, which would achieve the greatest political and social gains for Black Americans since Reconstruction.



### THE BLACK VOTE MATTERS

Fury surrounding the death of George Floyd, combined with fear of the coronavirus and its economic impact, make this a dark moment in our national life. But African-Americans shouldn't feel hopeless, because the Black vote has actually never mattered more. It is at the heart of the fight to take back America. The biggest story of 2020 politics is hard to ignore, but somehow it is being ignored. The Black vote now defines American politics.



## 2008

### First Black Elected President of the United States

In Nov. 2008, the nation elected its first African-American President of the United States when Barack Obama was chosen as the country's 44th Commander in Chief following a decisive victory over the white Republican challenger. No one in 1619 who first brought slaves to this country would ever have imagined that an African-American man would be sitting in the Oval Office. President Obama is married to a descendant of American slaves who herself excelled at both Princeton and Harvard Law—proof of just how far African-Americans have come in the last 400 years.

## 1865

### 13th Amendment Ends Slavery

The 13th Amendment to U.S. Constitution, adopted on Dec. 18, 1865, officially abolished slavery, but freed Black peoples' status in the post-war South remained precarious, and significant challenges awaited during the Reconstruction period.

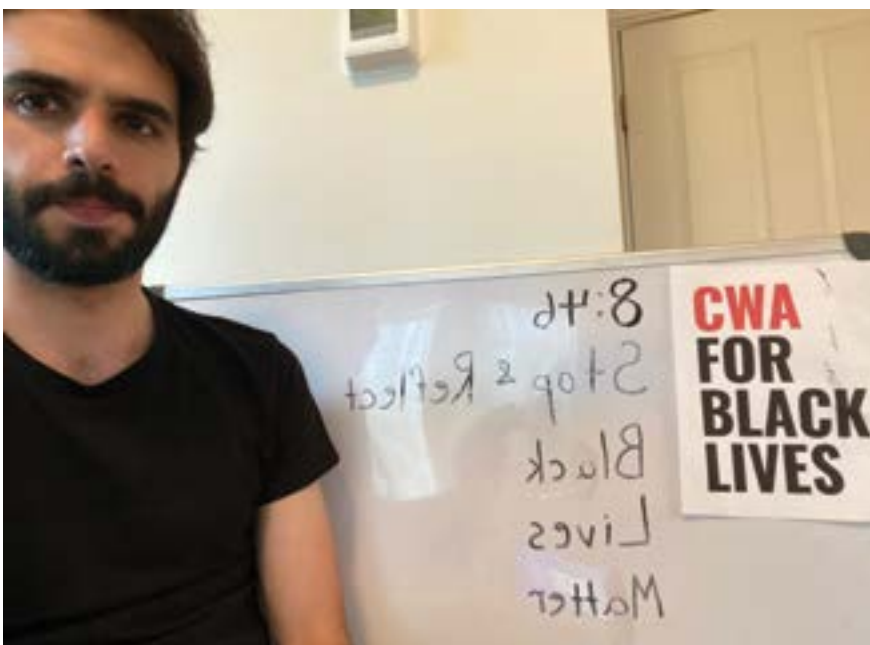




# #1180 AGAINST RACISM



**IMPORTANT NOTICES FROM THE LOCAL 1180 BENEFITS FUND**



**Deadline for 2019 Claims Filing Is Extended to Sept. 30, 2020**

Your Member Benefits Plan Description is now available on our website at

[www.cwa1180.org/benefits](http://www.cwa1180.org/benefits)



# GLORIA MIDDLETON

## President

### Reflection Brings Us to This Moment in Time

My goal for 2020 was to start off the year by clarifying my own values and erasing any doubts of uncertainty that creep up every now and then. Let's face it, we all have them. After all, this is an important exercise in growing, developing, and learning from our mistakes. So I began by writing down everything that we accomplished to date as your union leaders.

I took a few minutes to reflect on Local 1180's many accomplishments from 2019 and the early part of 2020, even though they actually seem like a lifetime ago. Then again, lately everything in life is divided into two categories—pre-corona and during corona. But the reality is, we really have come so far as a union, and a family, in the last couple of years. Sometimes it takes a moment or two of actual reflection to remind ourselves of all the good we have achieved.

Once I started making my accomplishment list, I was surprised by everything that came to mind—settling the EEO case and the payouts to our Administrative Managers ... settling our recent contract and payouts to our members that included differentials for Admin Managers, bringing back some differentials for our PAAs, and wage increases in 2020 during a pandemic ... and maintaining—and even increasing—our membership despite the *Janus* decision that went against labor.

Then came March 2020, and the world turned upside down. New York became the epicenter of a worldwide pandemic and the city was hit with what felt like a ton of bricks. The Mayor and the Governor told us to shut our doors, stay in, stop visiting loved ones, and if you lived together as a family under one roof, stay together. We were told not to visit grandma or grandpa, whether they lived in nursing homes or in their own homes...not to visit friends... only go out to the pharmacy or for food...wear masks, don't wear masks. We heard there was not enough personal protective equipment, not enough COVID-19 tests, that the White House was not taking this pandemic seriously enough, and that COVID-19 would not be nearly as dangerous as the media was reporting—until it was.

Family members were dying, friends were dying, death tolls at their peak were climbing to near a thousand per day. We couldn't have large funerals for family or friends, and the dead were being stored in refrigerated trucks because morgues were overflowing. For many of us, it felt like we were in a nightmare and couldn't wake up.

Yet we, CWA Local 1180 members, city workers, transit workers, hospital workers, food delivery and supermarket workers, along with fire and police, were told that we are essential workers and had to report to work in the midst of this pandemic—until it became so bad that the Mayor and Governor ordered as many City and State workers as possible to begin teleworking.

Different orders started arriving at 1180 every day from different agencies all saying different things. Sometimes orders even changed in the same day. Some agencies followed orders; others did not. We were on a battlefield fighting for our members' lives, but unfortunately, we lost several early in this crisis. Thankfully, many were diagnosed with COVID-19 and survived. We are all grateful for those survivors and our hearts are heavy for those who did not make it.

As soon as we knew the teleworking was as under control as it could be, we started our next battles—legislation for survivors' families to receive pensions and health benefits, and now to make sure with the city starting to reopen that our members are kept safe and that as many as possible be allowed to continue teleworking until there is a cure or vaccination.

As if major health pandemic and economic mayhem haven't been enough in 2020,

on May 25, the world witnessed the brutal murder of a then-unknown Black man named George Floyd at the hands (or rather, knee) of a Minneapolis police officer. Enough is enough!

I have cried many tears since March for so many personal reasons, but witnessing George Floyd's death made me weep for this entire nation. This is not the America, despite all the racism I have experienced, that I know and love. As I watch the protests around the country, state after state chanting "Black Lives Matter", Blacks, whites, Asians, Hispanics — this is the America I know and believe in. As a nation we must come together and fight for what is right. One race believing they are superior over ALL others is wrong and inhumane.

What's next you might ask. How much more can this country really take, because it feels like we are already collapsing.

Since the White House is only concerned with "law and order," what's next is that we have what one might call a golden opportunity to make change.

Elections are coming up in November and **now** is the time for Americans to search their hearts and their conscience by voting for change. Change the President and change the Senate. Then after we vote, demand real change. Demand that those who are elected pass laws to promote union organizing, take money out of politics, change the criminal justice system, allocate more education funding to low-income and minority neighborhoods, create fair housing laws, and provide housing for the working men and women of this country.

Sisters and brothers, **the time for change is now.** It's in your hands. Take that moment to self-reflect and see how far we have come as a union, but also look and see how far we can go and how much change we can make if we work together.

Our successes didn't happen just because I am the president of Local 1180. They happened during the time I am the president of Local 1180. That's because it takes a team — and there is no I in TEAM.

But if our small team could accomplish everything I talked about at the beginning of my column, then just imagine what a country-wide labor team can accomplish in November. ■

**The reality is, we really have come so far as a union, and a family, in the last couple of years. Sometimes it takes a moment or two of actual reflection to remind ourselves of all the good we have achieved.**

We successfully got legislation passed that required the City to look at and address wage disparities for all City workers ... protected women's rights ... made it illegal to ask about previous job salaries when applying for jobs ... made sure when someone applies for a job at a certain salary, that's the salary they are paid.

Our Union Benefits Funds, including the Annuity Fund, now have assets of more than \$100 million. Soon, our Administrative Managers will be a part of that Fund with deposits being made into accounts for most of them. Yes, 2019 brought about some changes that made financial differences in our members' lives.





# LGBTQ COMMUNITY

## Gets HUGE WIN During PRIDE MONTH With Supreme Court Ruling

In a win for the LGBTQ community on June 15, the United States Supreme Court ruled that an employer who fires a worker for being gay or transgender violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

Until mid-June, legal equality for LGBTQ people did not extend to the workplace because 29 states still allowed employers to legally fire employees for being gay or transgender. The surprise ruling came during Pride Month, which occurs in the U.S. to commemorate the Stonewall riots that happened in NYC at the end of June 1969.

While the ruling itself is shocking enough, it's the margin in the 6-3 decision and the author of the opinion that are far more astounding—and probably history-making. Justice Neil Gorsuch, a conservative Trump appointee, wrote that the ban on sex-based discrimination in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act protects employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. He was joined in his opinion by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Stephen G. Breyer.

Gorsuch was President Trump's first nominee to the Supreme Court, and has often been described as a "predictably socially conservative judge." Up until now, he had established himself as one of the court's most conservative justices and a reliable vote for Trump-administration initiatives that reached the highest court, such as the travel ban on anyone arriving from predominantly Muslim countries, placing a citizenship question on the census form, and banning transgender service members in the military.

The justice that "conservatives hoped for and liberals feared" made a decision in this case that has left many conservative supporters stymied.

His reasoning, however, has changed how more than 7 million LGBTQ individuals will now be able to work and live in this country, having already been granted the legal right to marry in 2015.

"It's always good when legal protections expand," said Local 1180 Staff Representative Lena Solow, also Co-Chair of the Union's Pride Committee. "This is a welcome win for LGBTQ workers. We should remember, however, that in a country with at-will employment, the best job protections always come from a union."

The Supreme Court case stems from three lower court cases. In one, a Clayton County, Georgia employee was fired from his job as a child welfare advocate for conduct "unbecoming" a county employee soon after he joined a gay softball league. In another, a New York skydiving instructor was fired days after mentioning he was gay; and in the third, a Michigan funeral home worker was fired after she told her employer she would be identifying as a woman six years into her employment.

In all three cases, the employers admitted they fired the workers for being gay or transgender, but argued it did not violate Title VII. The Trump administration argued that Title VII barring discrimination based on sex did not extend to claims of gender identity and sexual orientation. During his time as president, Trump has worked to eradicate protections for LGBTQ Americans wherever he could, including military service and coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Just prior to this Supreme Court decision, his administration undid President Barack Obama's policy that prevented health-care providers from discriminating against transgender patients.

"I feel like I'm more safe at my job now than I was 16 and a half years ago," said Vera Jordan, Co-Chair of the Local 1180 Pride Committee. "This was something else that was voted against so many times. It's a sense of relief because now we don't have to explain ourselves."

### PRIDE MONTH

On a hot summer's night in New York on June 28, 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay club in Greenwich Village, which resulted in bar patrons, staff, and neighborhood residents rioting outside onto Christopher Street. Among the many leaders of the riots was Black trans, woman Marsha P. Johnson, leading the movement that lasted six days with protests and clashes. The message was clear: protestors demanded the establishment of places where LGBTQ people could go and be open about their sexual orientation without fear of arrest.

Pride Month is largely credited as being started by bisexual activist Brenda Howard, known as "The Mother of Pride." A year after the Stonewall Riots, Brenda organized Gay Pride Week and the Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade, which eventually morphed into what is now known as the New York City Pride March.

Although this year's Pride Parade was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic, 15,000 people crowded together in Brooklyn for the Black Trans Lives Matter Rally to commemorate Black trans people who have been killed in recent months.

### In her own words: Vera Jordan on the Pride Committee

"I wanted to start the Pride Committee to provide a safe space for our members who identify as LGBTQ and also include the allies. I have always been a big union supporter and participated in many committees, but felt I didn't have a space where I knew I could celebrate this part of myself," Jordan said.

"Being able to resurrect the Local 1180 Pride Committee was the best thing ever. We had a strategic plan to lead our members right into Pride 2020. However, on March 18, COVID-19 changed the world. We were placed on PAUSE due to rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic that unfortunately placed the CWA Local 1180 Pride Committee on PAUSE, too. Then months later comes another nationwide problem; we lost another African-American male, George Floyd, at the hands of a disruptive cop. A sad moment for the world. His death led to the world coming together to voice again 'BLACK LIVES MATTER.' I also want to commemorate Tony McDade, a Black trans man who was killed by police.

"Being an African-American educated woman, single mother, grandmother of three, union member, and someone who identifies as a lesbian, I must say, our lives matter. During this time, I know the CWA 1180 Committee was to walk in the Pride parade. Instead, we will be virtual, what is now called the new norm. Looking out from the inside, we are all one and no matter what, we will conquer. LGBTQ LIVES MATTER. Happy 2020 PRIDE." ■

// Essential workers who put themselves on the frontlines during this pandemic and paid the ultimate price are just as much everyday heroes as the doctors and nurses who treated patients. //

## Union Urges City Council to Help Families of

# DECEASED

# FRONTLINE WORKERS

## Gov Agrees & Signs COVID-19 Death Benefit Bill

As New York City entered its third month of COVID-19 shutdown, the City Council started the process of providing help for the families of frontline workers who gave their all in the fight against the deadly disease, but didn't survive.

At a May 5 hearing of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor, Council members heard passionate testimony via teleconferencing from several citywide labor leaders, including Local 1180 President Gloria Middleton, as well as city officials on proposed legislation to provide additional protections for workers classified as essential employees during the pandemic.

Just months later, the New York State Senate and Assembly met in Albany to discuss legislation that the City Council was considering: automatically classifying all municipal workers who die as a result of COVID-19 as line-of-duty deaths, and granting accidental death benefits to family survivors of public workers. Another key proposal being examined was for the city to continue health coverage for surviving spouses, domestic partners, and dependent children of public workers who die as a result of a COVID-19 complication.

At the hearing, Middleton said, "I do not feel the need to talk about the merits of either one of these proposals as I don't believe anyone would argue the fact that essential workers who put themselves on the frontlines during this pandemic and paid the ultimate price are just as much everyday heroes as the doctors and nurses who treated patients."

"It is our essential workers who are keeping buses and subways operational so those doctors and nurses can get to work. It is our essential workers inside New York City hospitals who are admitting patients, handing out face masks, cleaning and disinfecting, transporting patients, delivering meals, removing the deceased. Many of these are Local 1180 members. Some are members of other unions. But it does not matter because all are essential workers who daily come face to face with COVID-19. Many survive. Some do not.

"I have essential workers from the Department of Correction who work on Rikers Island ... essential workers who work at HRA/SNAP centers ... and essential workers who every single day work with the escalating number of our city's homeless population who are some of the most susceptible to COVID-19. Our essential workers are the behind-the-scenes heroes. The ones who far too often do not receive the proper respect or accolades. Their deaths should undoubtedly be classified as line of duty and their surviving spouses should be more than entitled to receive their health care benefits as a result."

Shortly after the virtual hearing, Mayor de Blasio followed the lead of city unions and himself called for line-of-duty death benefits for city workers who die of COVID-19. On May 10, the city announced it would pick up the health care premiums for 45 days for the families of civil servants who die from the virus. To date, more than 245 municipal employees have lost their lives to COVID-19, including many Local 1180 members.

On Memorial Day weekend, Gov. Cuomo signed into law the legislation allowing beneficiaries to automatically be entitled to the accidental death benefit, paid through the members' pension. The new law covers workers on the job anytime from March 1, who contracted COVID-19 within 45 days of reporting to work, and then died on or before Dec. 31, 2020, either due to COVID-19, or had COVID-19 as a contributing factor in the death.



President Gloria Middleton testifying virtually before the NYC City Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor.

In determining whether accidental death benefits should be awarded, a deceased member or retiree must have had a positive lab test for COVID-19 within 45 days of reporting to work, or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 from a qualified medical provider, either before or after the member's or retiree's death. The beneficiary would also have to show that COVID-19 was the cause or contributing factor in the death as documented by a death certificate or by a qualified health care provider.

Both the ordinary and accidental death benefit options are based on a member's retirement system. In the case of Local 1180, that is NYCERS. Other factors in determining payouts include a member's tier, years on the job, and salary. With the new law, the designated beneficiary can choose whether to take the one-time, lump sum payout under the ordinary death benefit, or receive monthly payouts for life according to the formula of the accidental death benefit. It will be up survivors' beneficiaries to meet with NYCERS to determine the best option.

"Our essential workers are the ones who stepped forward during this horrifying pandemic and kept the city operational, sometimes sacrificing their own lives in the process. While their spouses and beneficiaries are grieving such devastating loss, they will at least have some comfort knowing they will not have to fight the system to prove the deaths were COVID-related. This is the least we can do for them," Middleton said. ■

# JUNETEENTH

## Finally Getting the Recognition It Deserves



By Marci Rosenblum  
Communications Director

While Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration honoring the end of slavery in the United States, it wasn't until this year that commemorating the day has come with renewed interest.

The annual holiday has been celebrated by African-Americans since the late 1800s. This year, however, spurred on by national protests over the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and others, Juneteenth has resonated in new ways with people of all races, nationalities, and religions who joined together to acknowledge a period in history that continues to influence society.

Juneteenth received its moniker by combining June and 19. The day, also referred to as "Juneteenth Independence Day," "Freedom Day" or "Emancipation Day," commemorates African-American freedom and emphasizes education and achievement. It is often marked with celebrations, guest speakers, picnics, and family gatherings, and is a time for reflection, rejoicing, assessment, self-improvement, and planning the future.

Yet, it wasn't that long ago that Juneteenth was barely recognized outside the African-American community. From its Galveston, Texas, beginnings in 1865, the observance of June 19 as the African-American Emancipation Day now has spread across the country with 47 states and the District of Columbia officially recognizing Juneteenth as either a holiday or celebration. In 1980, Texas was the first state to make Juneteenth a state holiday.

This year, New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed legislation declaring Juneteenth an official holiday for state workers and is on track for it to become a statewide holiday in 2021. The date will also become an official New York City and public school holiday beginning in 2021.

Where is Juneteenth not an official holiday as of yet? In the United States. While Texas Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee has been pushing for decades to make Juneteenth a federal holiday, the Senate has not cooperated.

Former President Barack Obama, the first and only African-American to hold this position, said in a statement that the holiday "has never been a celebration of victory," but is instead a "celebration of progress." "It's an affirmation that despite the most painful parts of our history, change is possible—and there is still so much work to do."

### History of Juneteenth

On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the war had ended and slaves were now free. This was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had become official on Jan. 1, 1863, declaring "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free." Attempts to explain the delay in telling slaves they were free include stories of a messenger who was murdered on his way to Texas with news of freedom; the news was deliberately withheld by owners to keep slaves on the plantations; and

that federal troops waited for the slave owners to reap the benefits of one last cotton harvest before going to Texas to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation.

Former First Lady Michelle Obama, whose own ancestors were slaves, tweeted "what I love about Juneteenth is that even in that extended wait, we still find something to celebrate."

Corporate America also has jumped on the bandwagon, with employees from Nike, Uber, Square, Twitter, Vox Media, the N.F.L., Best Buy, and Target being given a paid day off, while Google asked its employees to cancel non-urgent meetings and "create space for learning and reflection".

In school classrooms, textbooks proclaim Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation as the date signaling the end of slavery, mentioning little or nothing of the impact of June 19. That leaves white children with no knowledge of the day and Black children understanding the importance of it only by what they glean from their older generations.

In a quick, informal poll Local 1180 took in early July on its Facebook page about whether members remember ever learning about Juneteenth in history classes in school, only a couple of responses came back positive, with members saying they learned about the day from either a parent or a work supervisor. Members who answered did not all grow up in New York City either; some were from the south—Georgia, Oklahoma, Alabama—with others in California, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania.

Marilynn Gipson, Administrative Manager at FDNY, attended Colored School #9 in Georgia. She was one of the few who did learn about Juneteenth, but not in a history class. Gipson learned about June 19 in her English class and during lunch time from a teacher who valued the importance of education.

"Several of us always made a point of sitting with our English teacher, and from time to time, she made it a point of even stopping by our home unannounced to just sit and talk with us about everything," Gipson said. "She told us about the news of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. In my history class, I learned about places like Russia, Europe, and Spain, George Washington and Lincoln, and my history book for the first time showed me what a 'PICANNINY' was."

Gipson, whose great grandmother was born a slave, recalls receiving used text books from "the white schools across town, all torn, dirty, and obsolete. Colored students walked to school every day regardless of the distance or the weather, and on cold mornings, only had wood-burning stoves to try and warm up to. White students had the convenience of being picked up/dropped back home on the school buses."

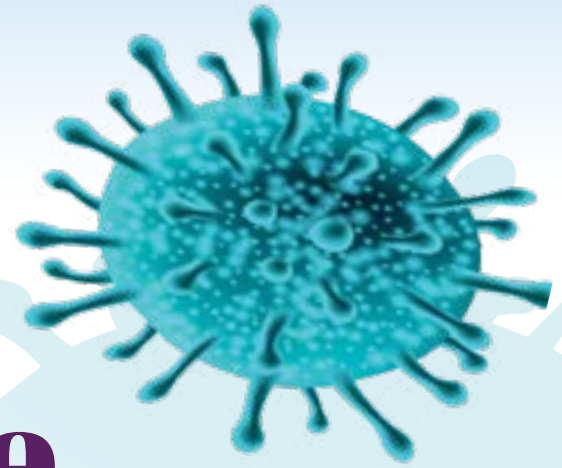
With protests on the rise and a newfound mass understanding and appreciation for Juneteenth, Gipson said she only hopes that mainstream education surrounding not only Juneteenth, but other Black history, is soon included in the teaching of American history. ■



**Editor's Notes:** "Which American holiday, more than any other, is the day that Americans celebrate the deeply held ideals of liberty, justice, and freedom from oppression? The answer depends on whom you ask..."

Four Local 1180 members at The Century Foundation penned a commentary on Juneteenth entitled "Elevating Juneteenth: A Day As Important to America As Any Other." To read the article written by Senior Policy Associates Michelle Burris, Taela Dudley, and Anthony Walsh, and Contributor Roquel Crutcher, visit their website at [www.tcf.org](http://www.tcf.org) and enter "Juneteenth" in the search bar.

By Marci Rosenblum, Communications Director  
Assisted by Staff Representatives Romano Jones, Gregory Smith,  
Desiree Waters, Venus Williams, and Anthony Lewis



# Members on the H+H FRONTLINES

## Shop Stewards Talk About Being Essential Workers During COVID-19

**THIS HAS BEEN A TIME LIKE NO OTHER.** Since COVID-19 first turned the world upside down at the end of last year — and New York in March 2020 — life is now divided into two stages: pre-pandemic and pandemic. For most of the country, that now means extra precautions of more diligent hand washing, social distancing, and wearing masks when outside. For essential workers in hospitals, however, this pandemic has been a defining moment in healthcare and could forever change the structure of their days while on the job.

While Americans are frustrated and annoyed by the inconvenience of wearing a mask for the short amount of time it takes to grocery shop, go to the bank, or pick up a prescription, imagine hospital workers now having to wear masks for their entire eight-hour-plus shifts. In order to understand what it was like to be an essential worker at an H+H hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic, we spoke to several members throughout the city and overwhelmingly heard the same responses: scared, afraid, stressed, nervous, and worried. These are their stories.



**SHOP STEWARD DEBERA TYNDALL** is not only a Coordinating Manager at Kings County Hospital, but also a Supervisor of nine adult specialty clinics at the Brooklyn facility. Her workload and responsibilities escalated in step with the COVID-19 pandemic, all of which led her to feel increasingly overwhelmed.

Tyndall and the five clerks she oversees all scrambled to adjust once the coronavirus made its way to New York City. Patients had to be preregistered, but their phone numbers on file were not always accurate. That meant they couldn't necessarily be reached ahead of time and often just showed up for appointments.

"There was a lot of legwork to be done because we had to make so many adjustments. I worried because I had to have my clerks work overtime to handle the preregistrations," Tyndall said. "Some clerks have underlying health conditions and when one or two were out, I helped at the front desk. I like to see my work get done so I would stay late. I'm not supposed to be at the front desk more than an hour, but I would stay because it's my area and I have to manage it. I was stretched pretty thin, but I'm a trooper."

Trooper would be an understatement when describing Tyndall; maybe more like powerhouse. In addition to all these obligations, she also manages the referral que, which on an average day might have 20 requests, but during the peak of the coronavirus reached as many as 900 because clerks were juggling so much at once.

With all that multitasking, Tyndall said she was concerned about both the physical and emotional health of her clerks and the Local 1180 members she represents as Shop Steward. "I was worried about catching COVID and my clerks were afraid as well. Everyone was very, very nervous. We all got regular masks and gloves, and we had sanitizing wipes, but we couldn't practice social distancing," she said.

While Tyndall herself does not have regular direct patient contact, that doesn't mean she's ignoring safety precautions. Masks and gloves have become part of her every day work attire. When she leaves the hospital, Tyndall leaves behind her work shoes

and whatever else she can so there is less chance of infecting her husband and three children at home.

Changes at the hospital have brought some sense of relief. Plexiglass dividers are being installed at patient registration areas; a command center has been established for disbursement all masks, gloves and sanitizer; social distancing signs are hung throughout the hospital and clinics; chairs in waiting rooms have been removed to limit the amount of seating to adhere to social distancing; and staff is required to wear masks at all times and gloves when dealing directly with patients. Waiting on those changes, however, was a real exercise in patience.

"I was trying to let them know everything was going to be ok, that they'll get to us, they'll get here," Tyndall said as she explained how staff saw dividers initially being installed elsewhere within the hospital but not in her department. "I was upset because patients were coming in coughing and my staff was worried that they were going to catch the virus. I told them I would talk to my supervisor. I did, and they are calmer now."

What has also calmed the workers is not hearing the codes and sounds of COVID-19 on repeat, because during the crisis, "we were hearing at least 10 per day. Code 99. Code 66. It was very tough on everyone because it was never good news," Tyndall said. "I'm glad we don't hear them any more all the time."

Those sounds of the pandemic were a reminder of just how fragile life truly is. Tyndall recalled walking back to her office from another building and instead of taking her regular route, used the basement labyrinth not utilized by patients and visitors. Once there, she saw four stretchers coming toward her and on those stretchers were four white sheets.

"I had run into four dead bodies. I did not want to pass those people. It was scary," Tyndall said. "I knew they couldn't fit into the morgue because it was already full with bodies. These bodies were on their way outside. This reminded me how scary the coronavirus really is. I went by and it was fine and I went back to my building, but this was the worst part of COVID."

"Then one of my union members who was planning a retirement party for another member died from COVID herself. I couldn't believe it. We always kept in touch. Any questions she had, she would call me. We would talk. I'm thankful I was able to reach out to her daughter, though, and tell her to call our union."

"I am so happy that this is all coming to an end. I'm very concerned about all the members. I try to tell them all the time that everything is going to be ok. I'm just passionate like that," Tyndall said. "But this has definitely taken a toll on everyone." ■





**CAROLYN CHAMORRO** definitely knows how to juggle many balls at one time. In addition to working as a Coordinating Manager at Harlem Hospital during one of the worst health pandemics of the century, she is also a Shop Steward for 60 Local 1180 members who turned to her constantly with questions and for reassurance during the COVID-19 crisis.

Chamorro, like all Local 1180 members who work for the Health+Hospitals Corp.'s 11 New York City hospitals, was classified as an essential employee.

She reported to work and was in close contact with some of the city's most highly-infected residents. Her days were "stressful and trying" during the crisis, as she balanced performing her own duties while providing advocacy to the members she represents, and addressing the needs of her own family.

Chamorro's commitment to service is what kept her going most days when fear and anxiety of compromising her own health and well-being could easily have taken hold. Coworkers and friends often shared those same thoughts about the pandemic.

"Although the members of 1180 and I were afraid, we rose as a family and faced COVID head on. That's what CWA 1180 is all about — family," Chamorro said. "Another thing was the sorrow I felt answering incoming calls from crying patients' families pleading not to let their family members die. It was heartbreaking."

While Harlem Hospital has followed regulations in distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) for workers, Chamorro said she also purchases her own as a contingency should the hospital-provided PPE be unavailable due to limited supply. ■



Elmhurst Hospital in Queens was one of the hardest hit H+H hospitals by the coronavirus pandemic. It is also the hospital where Local 1180 has had the highest rate of members test positive—some more than once—and where the union has unfortunately lost members, including longtime Shop Steward Priscilla Carrow. Shop Stewards **JUDY JAQUANA ELDER** and **MICHAEL BISHOP** (both Health Care Program Plan Analysts) said the members have been feeling "anxious, scared, and afraid" from constantly being exposed to the virus, with many having difficulty sleeping. Despite everything, they are still reporting to work, knowing that the hospital can only run if everyone is doing their jobs.

Local 1180 has more than 160 members who work at Elmhurst. Elder and Bishop both said that PPE has been readily available to staff thanks to charitable contributions from a wide range of private and corporate organizations. Even though the hospital is doing its best to enforce social distancing in an ultra-busy hospital environment, members reported that they still felt "hopeless" until patient numbers started coming down from the highs of 450 plus per week in the ER to about 40. ■



**CARLA WORD**, a Shop Steward at Coler Hospital, works within the facility's Occupation Health Services (OHS) department, and was unceasingly reminded of the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the population. Coler has about 30 CWA Local 1180 members at the facility, and fortunately, Word did not come across any who had fallen prey to the virus. That did not, however, eliminate the continued fear she had that this would not always be the case.

Word spoke with a number of members who expressed their stress and anxiety working in a COVID environment, and talked about the fear of transmitting the coronavirus to their loved ones. What they all had in common was that they continued to show up for work and persevere despite the dangers involved.

PPE was given to every Coler Hospital worker on a daily basis, and their temperatures were taken as well to ensure no one was exhibiting COVID-related symptoms. These are precautions that were taken since the pandemic's inception.

Since the ethnicities of the patients at Coler Hospital are so diverse in general, Word said it was difficult to determine which populations being treated at the Roosevelt Island facility were mainly impacted by the virus. ■



**ASSISTANT COORDINATING MANAGER LISA SERRANO JOHNSON** works in the emergency room at Jacobi Hospital and said that when she thinks about COVID-19 and what patients were going through, she is glad to be single. As someone who has worked at Jacobi for nine years, Serrano Johnson thought she had seen almost everything, until the pandemic hit New York City. As a Shop Steward for Local 1180 representing workers in that facility, she said her "coworkers are scared but they have not missed work." She has six members who work directly with her, but said there are about 100 Local 1180 members who work throughout the hospital.

While PPEs are handed out every day as employees come to work, Serrano Johnson was still out of work for 14 days when she contracted the coronavirus, but was thankful for two things — that she did not have family to bring it home to and that she got paid for all the time she missed from work. ■

Woodhull Hospital's **CAROL ADAMS** and **ROSALINE JEAN-PIERRE**, both Coordinating Managers, said the Bed-Stuy hospital was overrun with COVID-19 patients in the earlier stages of the pandemic, making for very stressful working conditions for employees.

Adams, a former union Shop Steward who works in the psychiatry department, said an underlying medical condition makes her more vulnerable to the coronavirus and led her to be "very cautious" with everything work-related, including bringing in her own cleaning supplies that were less harsh than those used by the hospital. She tested negative for COVID-19, but since many others in nearby offices tested positive, she placed red tape on the floor near her office to mark a safe distance.

Adams is in charge of distributing PPE for the staff, which includes 69 Local 1180 members. Employees receive a regular mask every morning, while those in direct patient care get a N95 mask every five days, although it is replaceable if damaged.

Jean-Pierre, who works in the pharmacy, said she tested positive for COVID-19 and was afraid that her elderly parents who had come to see her for Easter would become infected from her; while they did not, her sister did. Rather than rely on the mask given out by Woodhull, she uses one given to her by a friend because she finds it more reliable. ■



**DEV LAWES, STEPHEN MUNROE, and LAVONNE BROWNE** are the Shop Stewards for 81 members working at Queens Hospital. During the initial stages of the pandemic, union members frequently approached them with questions about PPE, working conditions, and guidelines, as well as complaints about being scared, but as time progressed, those questions and complaints eased up. In the early stage of the pandemic, all had issues with obtaining PPE, but said the situation improved in time.

Just like with most H+H facilities, Queens Hospital saw a steady rise of patients starting in mid-March and continuing through to the peak of the pandemic. Browne, Coordinating Manager, said there were so many deceased at one point that three containers acting as makeshift morgues were parked outside the hospital. Once the first two were removed, she said it was a sign indicative of the decreasing number of new patients and a slowdown in the number of deaths.

According to Coordinating Manager Lawes, doctors started treating some patients who were afraid to come into the hospital via telemedicine. Munroe, Assistant Coordinating Manager who works in psychiatry, had no issues himself with working in the hospital, while Lawes, who works in pediatrics, said she would still get anxious when returning to work after the weekend at home.

Browne, who works in family justice, had little fear of working inside the hospital since she had already contracted the virus. Like many, when she got sick she refused to go to the hospital despite being very ill, opted for telemedicine from her doctor, and self-isolated from family for 14 days. She said returning to work was not easy either due to the stigma associated with being a COVID-19 survivor. ■



Coordinating Manager **MILDRED MOTEN** is the Shop Steward at Metropolitan Hospital where Local 1180 has 38 Coordinating Managers and two PAAs. As the pandemic heightened and the influx of patients, mostly of Spanish descent, increased, so, too, did the stress level of those working to make sure hospital life flowed as smoothly as possible.

While many hospitals throughout the city were short on personal protective equipment (PPE), Moten said Metropolitan had an ample supply located at "hot spots" on each floor. Three times a day, hospital workers were allowed to get a new mask, she said, and if staff were seen not wearing one, they were instructed to make an immediate visit to the hot spot.

Morale has been as good as can be expected during a pandemic, and the hospital has provided staff with a respite center area to take break, grab a meal, or just relax and breathe. Moten said there is also a mental health area where staff can go if they need to talk to someone, and that care packages and meals have been delivered for staff. ■

## When You're Put in a Challenging Situation, You Have to Adapt



**Ivan Muñoz-Wilson** is a relatively new Local 1180 member with quite a well-rounded and impressive resume. Now that he has spent the first part of the year working at Metropolitan Hospital in a pandemic, he even has an additional title to place on his resume — patient escort.

Actually, Muñoz-Wilson started working at Metropolitan in 2000 in a title that placed him in a DC 37 local, although he has been with H+H since 1989. He was promoted to Coordinating Manager A in Jan. 2020, responsible for utilization management, dealing with insurance company denials and appeals. He had barely settled into his new job when, on March 25, he was reassigned for slightly more than three weeks to patient escort, meaning he was moving the most critical COVID-19 patients from the emergency room to the ICU and other critical care areas within the hospital. But those weren't the only patients he was moving.

As a patient escort, Muñoz-Wilson was also called upon to move patients who passed from COVID-19 and take their bodies to the morgue. That's a far cry from other jobs he has listed on his resume, including amateur boxer and youth boxing coach.

"I didn't know being a patient escort involved taking bodies to the morgue. I thought it just involved taking patients to the ER and from the ER to xray or MRI or to ICU," he said. "The first few days, it was me and two other PEs. I heard a call for a patient escort needed to a certain unit for a body to be moved, but I didn't know it was a deceased body."

Muñoz-Wilson said in the beginning he wasn't sure how he would handle transporting the deceased, so he watched and learned from the other patient escorts. "I was quiet at first. I would say a prayer because maybe this was someone you knew," he said. "Either way, this just wasn't the norm. You don't wake up one day and say, 'I'm going to see a dead body today,' but I did see bodies. Sometimes you have to open the body bags because the identification tags might be on the inside. These are people. They are someone's family."

It's that caring nature that makes Muñoz-Wilson not only a good boxing coach, but also a compassionate patient escort for scared, coronavirus patients. His first three days as a PE involved back-to-back moving of patients, but that transporting soon became more about supporting. In the earliest stages of the pandemic, patients entered hospitals by the droves—without family or a friend—when not as much information about the virus had trickled down to the masses. With 338 certified beds at the First Avenue facility, every spot was filled with someone sick, anxious, alone, and looking for comfort and reassurance.

With most hospitals short on medical staff and long on hours, Muñoz-Wilson said he would often take the time to talk to those patients who were coherent and ask how they were doing.

"I would try to tell them they were going to be ok. I remember one of my last patients because I got attached to her, even though we weren't supposed to. I happened to get the call to transport her. She couldn't breathe. She was in distress. Her nurse was from out of state and couldn't speak Spanish. The respiratory therapist couldn't speak Spanish. The patient didn't speak a word of English. The woman was saying she couldn't breathe and she was going to die. I talked to her in Spanish," he said.

"She grabbed my wrist and said, 'I don't want to die. Please don't let me die.' I took her up to ICU and she grabbed me by the wrist again and begged me not to leave her, but I couldn't stay with her in ICU. I spoke to her and tried to encourage her. She felt like she was dying. I told her 'you're going to be ok. You're going to be ok.' A few days later she died. She was 49 years old. I'm 51. Do you know how hard that was?" he said.

Transporting patients to the morgue took a harder toll on Muñoz-Wilson than others. His uncle, famous American boxer David Baby Vasquez—winner of the New York Golden Gloves in three consecutive years, former world champion, and Olympic Gold medal winner in the 1968 Olympics—was battling COVID-19. It was his uncle who started Muñoz-Wilson on the path to

# Pandemic

boxing and the man he looked up to for advice and guidance. When his uncle succumbed to the virus, it was like being knocked down in the ring. Muñoz-Wilson said, "it took a toll on me but I didn't let it consume me or control me. I needed my boxing because that's my therapy. It takes away the pain, the emotion."

Boxing has taught Muñoz-Wilson three of life's greatest lessons: how to be humble, how to have compassion, and how to have patience with others—all of which he has applied to his day job.

"When you are in the trenches, you've got to dig deep and fight," Muñoz-Wilson said as he compared the coronavirus battle to being one of the hardest fights he's ever been in. "Seeing patients you don't even know, you think of your family members and it tears me up. It weighs hard on your shoulders and your emotions.

"When you're put in a situation that challenges you, you have to adapt. If you're knocked down, get up and finish. You have to be stronger. This pandemic just makes you put things into perspective. It makes you realize what your purpose is in life. My purpose is what I do now, my work with kids in the boxing ring," he said.

Muñoz-Wilson lives by the motto that you leave an impact by what you do, not what you say, but in the case of his work at the hospital during the pandemic, he clearly leaves an impact by both his actions and his words. ■

*As I tried to help people, I could say, 'I know what you are going through.' You couldn't help but cry with them. But they said, 'thank you, you're an angel.' Losing people is part of a war. Right now, we are just trying to go back to normal.*

# of the epidemic

## We're Fighting This War for People to Stay Alive

**Coordinating Manager Paul Escalante (Bellevue Hospital)** knew what to expect when COVID-19 hit New York City because he was working for H+H during the Ebola outbreak.

"This was way more stressful, but it was the same type of panic as Ebola in the beginning with no one knowing what to expect," Escalante said when talking about COVID-19's early entry in March. "We already knew about COVID, and when I came to work on March 17 and people didn't know that much about what PPE to wear or what to put on, it was like Ebola all over again. Some knew because they were working at that time, but some weren't. I let everyone know that PPE should be available upon request and that they should be allowed to wear it."

Reaching out to his Local 1180 coworkers is part of his job as a Shop Steward, but even if it wasn't, Escalante is still the kind of take-charge guy who steps up to the plate to help out wherever and whenever he can. That's why coworkers who aren't Local 1180 members turn to him as well.

During the pandemic, Escalante's trauma unit was converted into a COVID unit in order to help manage the huge inflow of patients arriving for testing and for those who entered the emergency room with positive signs of the coronavirus.

"It was just crazy. They made the ER into a COVID unit, moved regular patients into the pediatric ER, and moved the pediatric ER into a separate area just to have an entire adult ER as a COVID area. At that point, admissions was up the wazoo with patients," Escalante said. "We had to find a way to put positive patients with positive patients. We opened wings that were closed because admissions had been decreasing before COVID and we didn't have the staff to maintain those units."

Bellevue, which normally has 700 beds including psych, grew to 1,100 beds during the pandemic. The increase in beds to accommodate the increase in patients left Bellevue Hospital extremely understaffed. Escalante said that's when the Marine Corp. arrived to assist, as did doctors and nurses from other states, including Texas, California, and Nevada.

"Everything to me was just very surreal," he said. "Everything and everybody was moving so fast. I just went with the flow. I would think about Ebola and think about how we survived. It was just a race against time. This pandemic was very stressful and was its own race against time just to find beds for everyone."

He said Bellevue at some point was accepting patients from other H+H hospitals like Elmhurst, Lincoln, Queens, and Woodhull that could not accommodate their own patient influx. "Unfortunately, a lot of patients that were transferred to us were also passing away, which only exacerbated the already overly stressful situation."

Escalante has worked in H+H for 16 years at Bellevue, Jacobi, and Lincoln. He works in the Admitting Department managing the ER and the Admitting Office. Since he works the midnight to 8 a.m. shift, he is also the floor administrator for bed placement. Once the pandemic hit, his responsibilities multiplied as the command center opened and additional tasks were assigned to everyone on staff. As Union Shop Steward, he was the point person for members, and others, seeking advice and guidance.

"I have maybe 10 Local 1180 workers at night that I represent, but even non-1180 members came to the admitting office with questions and concerns," Escalante said. "Everyone was asking, 'Where should I go?' 'What should I do?' I had to be the calming voice of reality. I would even try to tell a joke once in a while so there would be a smile, some form of normalcy somewhere. I give my staff a lot of respect, especially the clerical staff. They still came to work when they could have ended up taking this horrible disease home to their families. Some even volunteered for overtime because some of the departments were short staffed."

While doctors, nurses, and the medical staff raced from patient to patient, the non-medical staff was just as overwhelmed, dealing with paperwork, facts, figures, and the myriad tasks that just seemed to accumulate from every nook and cranny. Escalante said everything came down to the numbers—how many patients came in overnight, how many were in any given wing at a time, how many were critical—"the more numbers I gave my supervisor, the more headaches were involved," he said. "I took this personally as an ongoing battle, as if I was at war. I got very sentimental and emotional, especially when one of my nurses passed away. It was heartbreaking. It was my day off, but all the nurses and clerks who knew him went to his room. People forgot about social distancing. Everyone was crying and hugging each other and grieving."

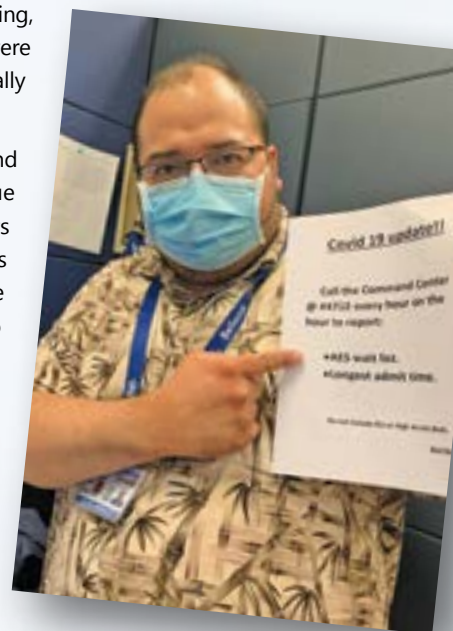
Escalante said the nurse's death, hitting so close to home, was a reminder that "we are all human. we aren't robots. We're fighting this war for people to stay alive." At the peak of the pandemic, however, death was more abundant than anyone wanted to think about, including the medical staff. He recalled how hospital attendings working 60- to 80-hour shifts would come into his office to sign a death certificate and would often stay an extra 15 minutes just to "get away and breathe."

When the number of deaths started decreasing, some of the reopened hospital wings were reclosed, a sign that let hospital staff finally relax, even if just for a second.

While the peak is now clearly in the past—and hopefully stays there—at one point Bellevue Hospital had several refrigerated trailers outside to accommodate the overflow bodies the morgue could not handle. Escalante said he recalls at least 90 bodies waiting to be picked up, and was relieved when that number was down to less than two dozen. Bellevue tried to give families as much time as possible to make arrangements considering the unique circumstances of the pandemic so their loved ones' bodies were not sent to Potters Field.

Escalante knows what that would have felt like as he himself lost someone to COVID-19.

"The experience was horrible. You couldn't even give them a normal burial. You couldn't grieve. You have no opportunity to see your loved one at a normal funeral ceremony. It was emotional. But as I tried to help people, I could say, 'I know what you are going through.' You couldn't help but cry with them. But they said, 'thank you, you're an angel.' Losing people is part of a war. Right now, we are just trying to go back to normal." ■



# COVID-19 Lockdown Leads to Uptick In

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

By Marci Rosenblum  
Communications Director

Strict stay-at-home measures in New York City during the pandemic caused more than cabin fever. They also set off a surge in visits to the city's domestic violence resource website, NYC Hope.

Couples who used to be apart during working hours at a minimum found themselves together 24/7 due to the coronavirus pandemic rules of social distancing and quarantining — and all that togetherness didn't always bode well for women.

In the world of domestic violence, it is predominantly women who are victimized. Being confined to homes with abusive partners who are coercive and physically violent, further inflamed by the stress of a questionable economy, forced an increasing number of women to seek help from NYC Hope during the pandemic.

Further exacerbating the problem is that NYC Family Justice Centers offices, where victims of abuse can physically visit to get assistance, have been temporarily closed since mid-March in an attempt to help stop the spread of the virus.

As the pandemic was just beginning, NYC Hope reported 1,240 visits just during the 13-day period from March 18-30, according to data from the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV). That's an average of 95 visits a day, more than double the 45 visits NYC Hope had this year per day before March 18. During that same time period, they also saw 354 new visitors access their website, an average of 27 daily. The 2020 daily average before that was nine new visitors.

The Family Justice Centers, however, are continuing to provide help to victims via phone, while the city's domestic violence shelters and a 24-hour domestic violence hotline remained fully operational during the pandemic.

Compounding the entire problem is that New York City courts vastly reduced the number of protection orders they were processing as Family Court was virtual and staffing was down to the bare bones essential employees, with just three judges handling all five boroughs via online hearings.

Even before the pandemic hit, data showed one in five women who had ever been in a couple reported experiencing sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner in the last year. Consider, too, that 50% of domestic abuse cases

go unreported. After all, if women are the main victims of domestic violence and they are afraid of their abusers, then they are more than afraid to report the crime for fear of what their abusers will do to them once they find out.

Local 1180 President Gloria Middleton said that no one should ever have to suffer as a victim of domestic abuse, which can be particularly more acute during times of confinement.

"While we hope that none of our own members finds themselves in this situation, we equally hope that if they do, they will reach out and get the help and support they need, not only during a pandemic, but always," she said. "These are scary times for everyone, but 'stay-at-home' does not mean stay-at-home to get abused. Anyone who is afraid to reach out to the police, or NYC Hope, or another agency should at least contact the union and let us help you get the help you need."

During this pandemic, when supportive community ties and in-person family connections are often severed, and emergency services, shelter systems, and social services are either overwhelmed, shuttered, or running on irregular schedules, domestic abuse victims might find themselves without a place to turn.

For victims who cannot make a phone call to get help or access services because their abusers can easily monitor their calls, the state recently launched a new text program and confidential online service. The program is supposed to make it easier for victims in isolation to contact the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and get the help they need.

**New Yorkers seeking help can text 844.997.2121** or chat with a professional on the new confidential website at [www.opdv.ny.gov](http://www.opdv.ny.gov), both of which are staffed 24/7 with OPDV domestic violence experts.

Cecile Noel, ENDGBV Commissioner, said in a statement, "Survivors need us now more than ever in these extraordinary times, and our top priority remains to ensure continuity of services and unwavering support. COVID-19 puts into sharp focus the vulnerabilities that many people in our city face every day, especially gender-based violence survivors; and it highlights the barriers and challenges that we know keep people from seeking help and finding safety." ■

## NYC Domestic Violence Hotline

**1.800.621.4673 (HOPE)**

In an emergency call 911

[www1.nyc.gov/nycchope/site/page/home](http://www1.nyc.gov/nycchope/site/page/home)

## NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

**Call: 800.942.6906 Text: 844.997.2121**

[www.opdv.ny.gov](http://www.opdv.ny.gov)



# Staten Island

# Car Rally

## for Essential & Excluded Workers



Local 1180 joined with CWA Local 1102 and other unions on May 16 on Staten Island for a Car Rally for Essential and Excluded Workers in support of those who have been displaced and put in harms way during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event was spearheaded by Local 1102, which represents mostly Verizon and EZ-Pass workers on Staten Island, but also some nurses and transportation workers statewide. Local 1102 President Steve Lawton said the rally called upon government leaders and private corporations to support essential and excluded workers' demands for the highest level of workplace safety, hazard pay, paid family leave for all workers, adequate safety nets for workers despite immigration status, whistleblower protection for workers, and worker-led safety councils for all New York state employers.

In addition to CWA Locals 1102 and 1180, the rally was attended by a coalition of unions and community organizations such as UFT, AFT, NYSNA and 1199, that led a procession of vehicles through Staten Island in support of workers demonstrating for these demands at Amazon, Verizon, NY E-Z Pass, and other agencies. The event was also broadcast live on Facebook.

Local 1180 members who attended included Rosie Roman, Staten Island Borough Community Coordinating Committee Chair; Monise Etienne, Staten Island Borough Community Coordinating Committee Co-Chair and new Staff Representative; Mason Logie, NYCCRB; Anthony Lewis, Staff Representative; and Gregory Smith, Staff Representative.

Local 1180 President Gloria Middleton said this pandemic brought to light a lot of the problems workers face on the job as well as how unprepared the City was to handle a crisis of the magnitude of COVID-19.

"We cannot just reopen the doors to the city and have more than 350,000 municipal workers show up at the same time without making drastic changes to the infrastructure as it was pre-COVID," Middleton said. "If we do, we are setting ourselves up for a disaster way worse than what we just experienced."

At the same time that unions were rallying for a cautious reopening, business groups were also rallying, but for a speedy return to normal in order to get the economy back to what it was.

The car parade started at Staten Island University Hospital in Ocean Breeze and ended at La Colmena, a job community center in Port Richmond. The rally was created to make sure elected officials would "hear the voices of the workers that were so impacted by the coronavirus before they rush to reopen."

Middleton said she agrees with Lawton that the pandemic exposed a lot of inequalities in our economy and in our society.

"One side of the conversation about reopening is about the science of the virus," Lawton said. "The other part of it's also about [the fact that] we have an opportunity to fix some things that were wrong in the past; the fact that we didn't have enough PPE; the fact that there wasn't enough support for workers; the fact that the virus upended or affected people of color and immigrant workers at a higher rate than other workers. There are opportunities for us to move forward and fix those issues. If we rush forward too quickly to reopen and not care for those issues, we're gonna make the same mistakes." ■



# *Union Saves* **CUNY SLU** *Funding in City Budget*

## State Budget & 22,000 City Jobs Hinge on Washington Taking Action on HEROES Act

Just minutes before the clock struck midnight on July 1—the deadline for a new city spending plan—the New York City Council passed an \$88.1 billion budget for the 2021 fiscal year. The 32-17 vote (one member was absent) came after hours of contentious hearings that centered mainly around how much would be trimmed from the New York City Police Department (NYPD).

The final budget is a far cry from the initial \$95.3 billion executive budget proposed by the mayor in January before the deadly coronavirus cast its grip on the city, shuttering businesses and wreaking economic havoc. In order to make up for billions in lost tax revenue, the city was forced to cut back.

With the Black Lives Matter movement in high gear and the recent death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer taking center stage, there was tremendous pressure on the Council to reduce the size of the city's police force and cut its budget by at least \$1 billion. However, not all politicians stand on the side of "defund the police," which resulted in the hostile budget debate.

While there were plenty of reductions and cuts, funding for the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies (SLU) was restored at \$1.02 million. Local 1180 President Gloria Middleton said the union was the leading voice on behalf of 22 unions and community organizations that serve on the SLU Advisory Board.

**With the Black Lives Matter movement in high gear and the recent death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer taking center stage, there was tremendous pressure on the Council to reduce the size of the city's police force and cut its budget by at least \$1 billion.**

"SLU provides educational and occupational opportunities for poor and working-class people to prepare the next generation of civic and labor leaders so they can serve the labor community and the communities in which they live and work," Middleton said. "SLU has an important mission and a stellar record of success in serving student of color in overwhelming numbers. We had to make sure the funding for such important education was not on the chopping block."

The budget agreement did save \$115.8 million for youth summer jobs programs,

which, given the dire state of the local economy, provides needed experience and income for the city's disadvantaged youth, and funding for broadband in NYCHA.

While the overall Parks Department budget was cut by an estimated 14%, \$9.9 million was allocated for reopening a quarter of the city's pools. The mayor's office said three pools in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens are slated to be open on July 24, with 12 more opening on Aug. 1. The city's beaches, including Rockaway, Coney Island, and others in the Bronx and Staten Island, opened on July 1.

The budget includes many reductions to services by the city's agencies and cuts \$65 million from the Fair Fares program that provides half-price Metrocards to low-income city residents. Outreach services for the city's homeless will now be conducted by social service agencies.

With the budget now passed, the city still faces a huge obstacle as the scene shifts to Washington D.C. where Congress is working on a stimulus package that will help bail out municipalities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the HEROES Act as a critical part of the COVID-19 recovery effort, but the U.S. Senate has failed to take similar action on the bill that would provide more than a trillion dollars in much-needed aid to state and local governments.

New York City is counting on its share of that money, plus help from Albany, to prevent any further reductions in service—and possibly as many as 22,000 layoffs of public workers—if Congress and Albany fail to act.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has said that New York State needs \$61 billion in new federal funding from the HEROES Act to avoid massive cuts in the state budget and has warned of billions in further cuts without it.

On the state front in Albany, the 2019-2020 legislative session will go down in history as anything but typical. During this two-year session alone, legislators passed close to 5,000 bills—five times the amount of a regular two-year session.

In addition to heavy negotiations surrounding the state budget, many bills were passed and signed into law, including Local 1180's bill that guarantees equal pay for equal work, and CWA District 1's flagship bill, the New York Call Center Act.

Other important legislation that passed included a list of regulations for the limousine industry, keeping young people who are arrested from being held in maximum security prison while awaiting arraignment, licensing elevator repair technicians, giving strikers unemployment insurance after two weeks instead of seven, prevailing wage for utility workers, WTC health coverage, domestic violence protections and support, a study of mandating women on corporate boards, prohibiting pelvic exams when a patient is unconscious and cannot consent, and various provisions that improve retirement, benefits and protections from *Janus* or similar cases.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic upheaval at the capital, the legislature still managed to pass the state budget on time, but allowed for adjustments during the year in case of severe revenue shortfalls and lack of emergency funding. Once the budget was enacted, the legislature left Albany and conducted business remotely; bills were introduced, negotiations were ongoing, and some bills were actually signed into law.

During this period, the legislature even introduced new bills related to COVID-19, including preventing evictions and other rent and mortgage relief; emergency loans and unemployment insurance protections; allowing pharmacists to administer COVID-19 vaccines; requiring contact tracers to be culturally and linguistically congruent with the neighborhood; prohibiting price gouging; whistleblower protection for healthcare workers; extending timelines for the Child Victim's Act; extending the filing deadline for NYS taxes; extending the expiration date of local building permits; and requiring healthcare facilities to have a pandemic disaster plan.

The most notable was the bill establishing that the family of an essential worker who reported to the job and then died from COVID-19 would no longer be required to prove that the illness was contracted on the job in order to receive the accidental death benefit (see page 10).

Legislators returned to Albany the week of May 26 to process all the newly-introduced bills, pass the critical COVID-related bills to allow the state to function through the pandemic, and prepare for future crises—and then George Floyd was killed. Both the Senate and Assembly immediately tackled legislation that will impact how communities are policed. After one week, they passed a group of bills related to police conduct and protections of civil and constitutional rights, including requirements to repeal 50a and make law enforcement disciplinary records public; make false 911 calls a civil liability; create the "Eric Garner Chokehold Act"; require law enforcement officers to report when they discharge a weapon; require body cameras on NYS police; require law enforcement to provide medical treatment for persons under arrest; create a special investigations unit within the Attorney General's office; and create a law enforcement misconduct investigating unit. Most of these bills now have been signed into law. ■



# Festival of Cultures

## CELEBRATING OUR DIVERSITIES & CULTURES

Local 1180 Civil Rights and Equity/Community Services Committee members joined with the Hispanic Committee for this year's Festival of Cultures that provided a platform for members, their families, and friends to celebrate each other's cultures, embrace diversities, and satisfy their pallets with food from different nations.

Hazel O. Worley, Chair of the Civil Rights and Equity/Community Service committee, said she was impressed by the way members worked together to exude the committee's and union's mission of recognizing the diversity of the Local 1180 membership.

WBLS's radio personality Dr. Bob Lee was the MC and DJ for the day. President Gloria Middleton opened the event by introducing the committees and welcoming members and their guests. She also took the honor and introduced the first thespian, Alexis "Lexi Alon" Brute as she performed her latest release. "It was awesome to have her return and do what she does the best, 'sang,' Worley said. "This young lady has been performing at our committee events since she was nine years old. Her honeyed voice had guests off their feet and dancing along with her to the beat."

Even though it was Saturday, Local 1180 Secretary-Treasurer Robin Blair-Batte and her church, Calvary Baptist Church of Jamaica, New York, along with Vision of Praise Dance Ministry, took guests to church to celebrate a time of worship.

Another stellar performance was executed by Isabella Rios, "Little Miss Puerto Rico" of Fairfield County, who won the competition for the Stratford PAL in 2019. This young lady's voice stunned many of the guests and

brought many to tears with her rendition of "How Great Thy Art". She was introduced to Local 1180 by Your Network Caring Community Advocates (YNCCA), which the Local partnered with in February on a mission trip to help brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico who were devastated by the earthquake. Local 1180 donated 141 personal care items and more more linen items.

Another exciting part of celebration was commemorating Black History Month and the achievements of African Americans in dance and spoken word. ACS Bronx Family Court Shop Steward Darlene Scott's granddaughter D'iara Washington, a communications major at Morgan State University, did an exceptional job in dance performing to "Freedom" by R&B recording artist Beyoncé. Her dancing brought everyone to their feet.

Another returning guest who performed in celebration of Black History Month was committee member, Kings County Hospital Shop Steward, and fashion show moderator Debera Tyndall's daughter Tiffany who is known for her love of performing the "Art of Drama". She is also recognized by her friends as a social worker who did a great job in her rendition of the "Black and Unapologetic." She reminded and challenged everyone to remember the Civil Rights Movement and the challenges we still face today.

The final performer helped guests celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. Mohamed A. Amin "Zaman" — the first openly gay Indo-Caribbean dancer artist and an international dancer — performed with so much vigor and vibrancy that he left the crowd in a dancing mood. His performance was a fusion of Bollywood, Soca, and Chutney, and was totally amazing.



Each year, a committee member is selected as member of the year, and this year, to her surprise, the honor went to Dana Holland.

"It is an honor to award a committee member for his or her commitment and dedication to the union and loyalty to the committee," Worley said. "In the face of Dana's personal life changes, she has been a constant with committee events inside and outside of the Local. She is also noted for securing the venue for this year's event and is one of the longest standing committee members."

The day ended with an extravagant fashion show, thanks to the board members, committee members and retirees who were models, showcasing clothing from Africa, evening wear, sportswear, casual attire, and CWA swag wear.

Special thanks to PS 21 principal Leslie Frazier, Assistant Principal Carla Arnold, and Secretary Maritza DeLeon for allowing this celebration to be held at their school. PS 21 is one of the recognized African-American Heritage schools in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. Thanks also to the Executive Board members for their support and approval, and to CWA Local 1180 support staff and general services staff for assisting in making the Festival of Cultures an amazing event that celebrates the union's diversity. ■



# SPECIAL AWARDS

## Staff Rep Monise Etienne Recipient of Prestigious Joseph S. Murphy Scholarship for Diversity in Labor

Local 1180 Staff Representative and PAA Monise Etienne was the recipient of the prestigious 8th Annual Joseph S. Murphy Scholarship for Diversity in Labor, 2020 Morton Bahr Award, from the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies.

This year's celebration, virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic, was dedicated to promoting excellence and diversity in union leadership and the field of labor studies, and honored rising leaders in the labor movement. She is an undergraduate in the Urban Studies program where she is minoring in Public Policy. In 2019, she completed the School's Certificate program in Labor Relations. In accepting her award virtually, Etienne said:

"It is with great gratitude and appreciation to be a recipient of and accept the Morton Bahr Award. President Emeritus Morton 'Morty' Bahr was elected President in 1985 and served for more than 20 years leading CWA during the most turbulent years. He made the union a powerful force for working men and women. He will be remembered as a members' president who loved fighting alongside members in organizing drives and the picket line.

"Being recognized to receive this scholarship is a true honor with a sense of pride and yet of humble humility, which will be with me always. I would also like to thank the CUNY School of Labor & Urban Studies, Joseph S. Murphy, for the scholarship of Diversity in Labor, my mentor, my mother Claudette Calypso, who taught me to value a strong work ethic and to always GIVE to your community and all people; my children Tatiana, Meghan, Kadeem, Sarah, Danny and Lucy; the love of my life, my fiancé Anthony Ermilio; my beautiful grandbabies Ja'liyn, Tariah, Roselle and my first grandson, Jahsir. Thank you so much for pushing me to follow my dream. I will do my best to succeed, for you guys are my biggest and best motivators. I would also like to acknowledge my boss at the NYC Comptroller's Office, Nicole Dupree, for all her wisdom and inspiration; the first black female President of CWA Local 1180 Madame Gloria Middleton, for making history; and a special thanks to Cher Mullings and Rose Imperato from SLU for being a breath of fresh air, positivity, and making it possible for me to receive this scholarship.

"United States Supreme Court Justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., once said 'Greatness is not where we stand, but in what direction we are moving. We must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it, but sail we must, and not drift nor lie at the anchor.' As to whether there is an opposition that can provide the



alternative. The question is whether the opposition can afford to stay on the fringe and cry foul about bad governance. We don't have a choice! The world is on fire and it is in desperate need of our help! Indeed, what we need is a movement, a movement beyond parties and platforms that can rescue our country. We all have a generational responsibility to make this world a better place, and building our community is how we change the world.

"My advice to young people is to work hard in your education, never stop learning, and you'll surely get noticed. Don't think it could never be you. It can be you. You never know who's watching." ■

## Son of PAA Elin Wilder Receives CWA Joe Beirne College Scholarship



Samuel Melcher, son of Local 1180 **PAA Elin Wilder** (Department of Education), was a recipient of the CWA Joe Beirne College Scholarship.

The \$4,000, two-year scholarship was awarded to Melcher to help him meet the financial needs of attending Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, an internationally recognized leading liberal arts college. Bates is known for its inclusive social character and progressive tradition, and is rightly celebrated as one of the first U.S. institutions of higher learning to admit women and people of color.

Melcher, 21, is double-majoring in history and political science and is just completing his junior year. He is one of 16 to receive scholarship assistance from CWA, "chosen on a nationwide basis from a substantial number of highly qualified and deserving applicants."

Melcher has worked at both the Museum of Natural History and the New York Historical Society in New York City, as well as the Museum L-A in Maine when he is at college. He had hoped to work on political campaigns this year as well, but those plans got sidetracked due to the coronavirus.

Proud mom Elin said they found out about the Joe Beirne Scholarship from the Local 1180 website. The scholarship was established in October 1974 by the Communications Workers of America Executive Board to honor the name and memory of the founding President of CWA, who served for more than 30 years. In his capacity as the first CWA President, Joe Beirne took great pride in the roles he played in the fields of education and learning and other areas of social concern. ■

# President Middleton Honored with Humanitarian Award

The Manhattan Borough Community Coordinating Committee presented President Gloria Middleton with the Humanitarian of the Year Award on June 7 near her home.

The presentation was supposed to take place in March at the Kennedy Center in Harlem, but due to COVID-19, that meeting was canceled. Committee Chair Patti Jacobs (pictured at right with Middleton) said she was not going to let the coronavirus stop the committee from honoring Middleton for all she does for Local 1180 and its members.

Keeping safe distancing in mind, Jacobs made arrangements with Middleton and several committee members to meet outside, on the street, for the presentation. "Good afternoon Madam President and the esteem members of CWA Local 1180 Manhattan Borough Community Committee. On this day, June 7, 2020, the MBCC is proud to present you with the Humanitarian of the Year Award. In honor of your dedication and commitment to quality of life for all your members, your kindness, ability to listen, to understand the problems, and your empathy for others, we say thank you!" Pictured below is the team that assembled for the honor:

Brenda McDonald, Deborah Kellman, Julia McCraw, Otissa Dillard, Denise Davis, President Middleton, Patti Jacobs, Deborah Paylor, Edward Yood, Brenda Simmons.

Not pictured but part of the team: Veronica Windley. ■



## Just Call Him Dr. Arthur Cheliotos



Local 1180 Business Manager and former President Arthur Cheliotos was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the City University of New York at the School of Labor and Urban Studies' virtual graduation ceremony on June 3. SLU Dean Gregory Mantsios, in a letter to the CUNY Chancellor, wrote "The School's entire faculty met and approved the candidate, agreeing that Mr. Cheliotos exemplifies the qualities that are an inspiration

to the graduates of the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies." The formal resolution accompanying the honorary degree read, *in part*:

**WHEREAS**, Distinguished labor leader and union president emeritus Mr. Arthur Cheliotos has utilized his public platform to effectively champion the rights and welfare of poor and working-class people on the job and in their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Cheliotos has been active in local and national politics, and in his international union ... and has used his influence in union halls, legislative chambers, academic settings, and mass gatherings to confront racial, gender, and class inequities and to advocate for social justice; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Cheliotos, as a tireless defender of civil service as a system that promotes democracy, equal opportunity and fairness ... has championed policy proposals for civil service reform as well as tax reform, the expansion of public housing, and economic development that serves the interest of poor communities; and

**WHEREAS**, For 39 years, from 1978 to 2017, Mr. Cheliotos served as President of Local 1180, Communications Workers of America, which represents primarily women of color ... ; and

**WHEREAS**, Under Mr. Cheliotos' leadership, Local 1180 worked tirelessly to advance the careers of its members. Among his most significant accomplishments: exposing a massive pattern of race and gender job discrimination ... that led to back pay settlements for hundreds of members and achievement of pay equity moving forward. He also implemented development skills based training and critical thinking courses as well as higher education programs that have provided

opportunities to thousands of members each year and have served as a model for other unions; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Cheliotos, a proud graduate of Queens College, and an enthusiastic proponent of The City University of New York and public higher education in general, served as Chair of the Labor and Community Advisory Board of the Joseph S. Murphy Institute and led the campaign to raise the public support and funding that elevated the Institute to a self-standing School within the University. His voluntary service to and leadership of what was to become the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies spans a 36-year period; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Cheliotos has provided 36 years of service and leadership to worker education, culminating in the establishment of the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies...and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Cheliotos' notable accomplishments, life-time commitment to public service, and tireless advocacy for public sector employees make him an ideal candidate for an honorary CUNY degree from the School of Labor and Urban Studies; now therefore be it

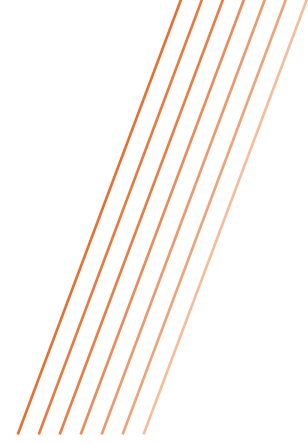
**RESOLVED**, That the School of Labor and Urban Studies of The City University of New York award Mr. Arthur Cheliotos the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, in June 2020.

**EXPLANATION:** By awarding Mr. Arthur Cheliotos the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, the School will recognize his unwavering commitment to social justice, diversity, equality, and education, which are values reflective of the School's mission of public service and social justice. ■



# GINA STRICKLAND

## First Vice President



### Labor Has a Win, and a Win, and Another Win

June has been quite the month for labor. In fact, I can't remember any month where the labor movement has had so many consecutive successes when we weren't expecting any of them.

The first one, which really wasn't in the month of June but was so close that I'm including it, came on May 30, when a federal court ruled against the National Labor Relations Board's new set of regulations that modifies how union elections are conducted.

The proposed rules would have allowed more time between when a union files a petition to an agency to hold an election and the date when workers are able to vote to unionize. This would have provided more opportunity for management to challenge the process at different stages and make it harder for workers to unionize.

**This second Supreme Court announcement in just one week — and third win for the labor movement — sent literal shock waves through both sides of the aisle in Washington and around the country, especially considering election day is just months away.**

The time between filing the petition and the actual election is crucial for unions because it represents the peak of our efforts in getting workers to unionize and the time we have to reach out to the workers and talk to them. Employers clearly want that timeframe to be as short as possible with the hope that unionization among the workforce will fail.

This ruling in favor of labor came as our first pleasant surprise as the month of June was just beginning.

Then, the middle of the month arrived and the Supreme Court of the United States handed the LGBT community a long-sought but totally unexpected victory with its landmark civil rights decision that protects gay and transgender workers from workplace discrimination.

To say this was a huge surprise would be a real understatement. This is one of the most conservative sitting Supreme Courts ever thanks to our current president who made sure his appointments would always vote in his favor, or at least he thought.

Until this most recent decision, it was legal in more than half of the states to fire workers for being gay, bisexual, or transgender. The court's decision extended workplace protects to more than seven million people across the country despite the fact that President Trump stacked the court with two of his own appointees since he has been in office.

"An employer who fires an individual merely for being gay or transgender defies the law," Justice Neil M. Gorsuch wrote for the majority in the 6-to-3 ruling.

This ruling was labor's #2 victory this month, as organized labor believes that every victory in the fight against any form of oppression is a huge step forward.

Then, just three days later, the Supreme Court handed the Trump Administration yet another blow that came as a third shock — but again, a pleasant surprise — to the labor movement.

The Court blocked the Trump Administration's attempt to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), an Obama-era program that protects hundreds of thousands of immigrants from deportation who were brought to this country as children.

The 5-4 ruling was written by Chief Justice John Roberts who sided with the liberals in this momentous dispute and emphasized that the president's administration failed to provide adequate reasons to justify ending the DACA program.

Local 1180, CWA, and the labor movement in general have long been proponents of immigration reform in opposition to the Trump agenda that has targeted immigrants since he took office almost four years ago. His never-ending tweets about wanting to build a wall on the Mexican border are a prime example of his beliefs about immigrants.

This second Supreme Court announcement in just one week — and third win for the labor movement — sent literal shock waves through both sides of the aisle in Washington and around the country, especially considering election day is just months away.

Doing what he does best, #45 immediately took to Twitter when he heard the news. "These horrible & politically charged decisions coming out of the Supreme Court are shotgun blasts into the face of people that are proud to call themselves Republicans or Conservatives," he tweeted. He continued tweeting that "tell

you only one thing, we need NEW JUSTICES of the Supreme Court."

Wait a minute Mr. President. Two of the justices on the Supreme Court **ARE** new and they are **YOUR** appointees. Just because they didn't side with you, **now** you want to get rid of them and put new justices on the court?

He can try, and he probably will, but we do have an election coming up in November and by all counts, one would think that someone whose name is on the ballot would focus on getting re-elected. For now, that means the Supreme Court decision allows Dreams to breathe at least a temporary sigh of relief in what has been a years-long battle.

So yes, June has been a good month for the labor movement, but it's not over yet, and neither is the rest of the summer. With election day coming up quickly, we have no time to rest. As a union, we need to stay involved in the political campaigns of those candidates we are supporting and help them get elected. We need our members to get involved, play a role, do what it takes to effect change, for without change, we will stagnate as a country, and we see where that has gotten us.

The political landscape we now face is reason enough for us to discuss how we can build a stronger worker base and engage as many of our members as possible. We have to continue fighting for justice, for democracy, for the change we want to see.

We have seen what can happen when we all stick together and fight for what's right. Let's not lose the momentum we have built so far. The support we have shown one another during the COVID-19 pandemic, during the killing of George Floyd, during the ongoing police brutality, and during the rallies and protests shows the strength and resilience of our Local 1180 family.

How we continue to respond to this pandemic as New York City begins to open and moves from phase to phase, and how we engage for the 2020 elections will help shape and define our country for the rest of this decade and beyond. We just all need to do our individual parts to make a collective difference. ■

# Meet Our Newest STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

## Monise Etienne



**Monise Etienne**  
Principal Administrative Associate  
Office of New York City Comptroller

Monise Etienne started her civil servant career with The Corporation Counsel/NYC Law Department as a Claims Specialist in 2001 as a member of DC 37 Local 1549. As part of that union, she was elected as a Shop Steward, and was very involved, serving as vice chair of the Scholarship and Women's Committee, as well as an active member of both the African and Asian & Pacific committees.

In 2004, Monise was hired as a Clerical Associate with Fiscal Services in the NYC Comptroller's Office. In 2013, she was promoted to a Principal Administrative Associate, working as Central Timekeeper, and became a member of CWA Local 1180. She was elected as a Union Shop Steward in 2015, and initiated grievances and defended members at supervisory conferences, hearings, and special investigations.

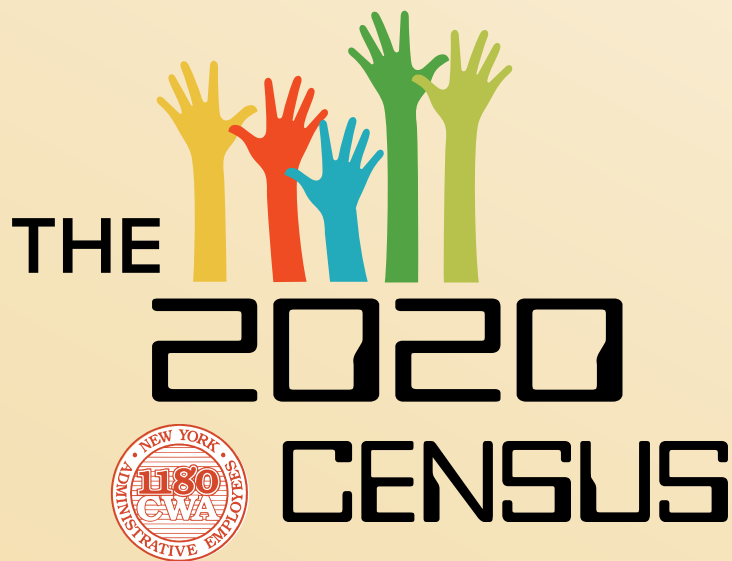
Monise also has participated in the Equal Pay rally on the steps of City Hall, conducted a General Membership meeting presentation on "Vote No for CON-CON" and conducted phone banking for NYC Councilwoman Debbie Rose in Staten Island.

In 2019, she was involved in helping elect New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, who won her unopposed re-election bid; two top legislative leaders, Assemblyman Carl Heastie and Governor Andrew Cuomo; former New York City Public Advocate Letitia James as New York State Attorney General in 2013; and former New York City Comptroller John Liu when he ran for Senate in 2012.

Monise currently serves as Vice Chair of the Staten Island Borough Community Coordinating Committee (SIBCC). In 2018, she was selected by the Trustees of the Education Fund to participate in the first Labor Leadership program with CWA Local 1180; and in 2019, she completed the Certificate Program in Labor Relations and graduated this past June. Monise is now working on her Bachelor's Degree in Labor and Urban Studies with a minor in Public Policy at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies.

"Unions provide a pathway to the middle class for all Americans. I strive to do better than my parents and want my children and grandchildren to do better than me. A union is important to me and my family because it has provided us with a platform to advance and have the life we live today," Monise has said about the value of unions. ■

## Have YOU Filled Out the 2020 Census?



**10 Minutes...**

**10 Questions...**

**It's the Law**

**[my2020census.gov](https://my2020census.gov)**

**1.844.330.2020**

**THERE IS NO CITIZENSHIP QUESTION ON THE 2020 CENSUS!  
EVERYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD MUST BE COUNTED**

# Local 1180 Elections

## Nominations Due by Sept. 1, 2020

Elections for Local 1180's officers, executive board, and convention delegates will be held this October by mail ballot.

The positions to be filled are:

- President
- First Vice President
- Second Vice President
- Secretary-Treasurer
- Recording Secretary
- Nine At-Large Executive Board Members

The five officers and nine at-large members together form the union's executive board, which constitutes the governing body of the Local and meets monthly. The executive board members are also elected as the Local's delegates to the biannual CWA convention. All terms are for three years, beginning Jan. 1, 2021. Any member of Local 1180 in good standing may nominate herself or himself or may nominate another member in good standing.

To make a nomination, you must submit a letter to Secretary-Treasurer Robin Blair-Batte by Sept. 1, 2020 by certified mail, return receipt requested. Send the letter to: CWA Local 1180, 6 Harrison St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10013. All nominating letters must include the name of the person you are nominating, the position you are nominating that person for, and must be received by Sept. 1, 2020. Ballots will be mailed in October to all CWA Local 1180 members in good standing and will be due back in two or three weeks. As in past years, the American Arbitration Association will handle the receipt and counting of the ballots under the direction of the Local 1180 election committee.

The pertinent sections of the Local 1180 by-laws governing nominations and elections are as follows:

### **ARTICLE XVIII — NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

A. Nominations for the officers and members of the executive board of the Local are conducted beginning in October 1972 and every third year thereafter in the following ways:

1. Any member in good standing may nominate himself/herself or another Local member to be a candidate for Local officer or Member-at-Large of the executive board by mailing to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Local a letter of nomination sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.
2. A letter of self-nomination shall state the member's desire to be a nominee for a single specified office.
3. A letter of nomination of another member shall be accompanied by a written acceptance by the individual nominated, which acceptance shall be witnessed and signed by either a notary public or a third member.

4. A member may nominate one individual for each post of Local office and no more than nine individuals for the posts of executive board Members-at-Large.
5. Each letter of nomination must reach the Local on or before Sept. 1 of the year prior to the beginning of the new term of office. Failure of the postal service to deliver the letter by Sept. 1 shall not constitute reason for acceptance of a letter of nomination received after the Sept. 1 deadline for the receipt of the nomination letter. Self-nominees and nominators of other members should take this provision into account in determining when to mail their nominations to the Secretary-Treasurer.
6. The Secretary-Treasurer may confirm the desire of any member not self-nominated to run for office in such manner as he or she deems appropriate.
7. No member may be a candidate for more than one post.
8. If a member is notified by the chairperson of the election committee that he or she has been inadvertently nominated for more than one post, the candidate shall immediately state his/her choice of post for which he/she wishes to run to the chairperson of the election committee in writing or be disqualified from running in the election. The candidate's written selection of the post for which he or she wishes to run must be received on or before Sept. 15.
9. Candidates must make the address and telephone numbers where they can be reached during the first two weeks of September of an election year known to the chairperson of the election committee so they can respond immediately to communications from the election committee.
10. Nominees and nominators are obligated to fully acquaint themselves with the provisions of these bylaws and the rules of the election committee and to comply with them as well as all proper directions of those running elections in the Local.

B. The Local shall notify the membership in July of an election year of the provisions of this ARTICLE XVIII by publishing them in the Local's periodical. The Local shall also notify the membership of the tentative nomination and election schedule at the same time, the offices to be filled by election, the date and time for submitting nominations, and the place for submitting nominations.

### **SHOP STEWARD ELECTIONS**

According to the Union's by-laws, every Local 1180 shop must hold a Shop Steward election each September. You can hold the election in whatever way accurately reflects the will of the members in your shop. ■



# RETIREE REPORT

## Director's Column



**Suzanne E. Beatty, LMSW**  
Retiree Division Director

The Retiree Division has wasted no time in living up to our "We do it all" motto. Immediately upon finding out that we would be required to shut down in response to COVID-19 for an undetermined amount of time, we didn't slow down, but rather stepped into high gear! We created an online program that provides retirees with events accessible through cell phone, computer, tablet and even landline phone.

Our technology-filled world means that retirees need to be kept updated on the latest knowledge related to cell phones, computers and tablets, various apps, websites, and computer issues — and they need to do it easily and safely from home. This has been accomplished by providing five different, online computer seminars per week. Through YouTube, retirees can access our training opportunities and if you have

an account, you can even chat live with other retirees. What a way to stay connected and informed! On Thursdays, we offer a narrated photo slideshow through a recent trip to one of the many interesting and beautiful sites in the tristate area that retirees attended. Maybe you'll see someone you remember from work in the pictures. It's like taking a sightseeing trip with friends from home with a tour guide.

Additionally, every Tuesday and Friday we now have benefit seminars that help retirees understand the comprehensive benefits available as a retiree of 1180 and NYC. This is an excellent forum for any retiree seeking to better understand and make use of this valuable benefit. Members on the call learn from the speaker and from each other and get a chance to chat with fellow retirees.

Information related to all events are sent weekly on either Thursdays or Fridays through your email. If you have an email address but are not receiving our updates, please send us your email address to [retireedivision@cwa1180.org](mailto:retireedivision@cwa1180.org) so we can update your account.

## BENEFITS WORKSHOPS

### Tuesday Benefit Workshops are @ 2:30 p.m.

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android

<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1487568522>

#### Or Telephone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

- US: +1.470.869.2200 (US East)
- +1.623.404.9000 (US West)
- +1.720.902.7700 (US Central)
- +1.773.231.9226 (US North)
- +1.469.445.0100 (US South)

**Meeting ID: 148 756 8522**

### Friday Benefit Workshops are @ 2:30 p.m.

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android

<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1498331113>

#### Or Telephone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

- US: +1.623.404.9000 (US West)
- +1.720.902.7700 (US Central)
- +1.773.231.9226 (US North)
- +1.469.445.0100 (US South)
- +1.470.869.2200 (US East)

**Meeting ID: 149 833 1113**



## HOW TO SIGN IN & ATTEND LIVE ONLINE EVENTS

1. Follow the link, phone numbers, and login information in the emails you receive.
2. Sign in directly by going to [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and typing in **1180 Retiree Classes at Home**.
3. Call us at 212.226.5800 and we will give you the phone number to call in.
4. Find us on Facebook at **CWA Local 1180 Retiree Division**. Follow the link and login information in the event detail.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT RETIREE BENEFITS

1. The filing date for submission for reimbursement has been extended to Sept. 30, 2020.
2. Call the Retiree Division at 212.226.5800 to set up an appointment for a phone call review of documents required for filing.
3. Our phone lines are open and fully staffed. Any question that you would have stopped by the office to ask, you can call and ask.
4. Completed reimbursement forms can be faxed to the Security Benefits Office at 212.219.2450.
5. Completed forms and documentation that is in PDF form can be emailed to the Security Benefits Office at [benefits@cwa1180.org](mailto:benefits@cwa1180.org)
6. If you have completed your forms and want to personally deliver them, drop them in a sealed envelope in the Reimbursement Claim Form Drop Box at the security desk in the lobby of our building at 6 Harrison Street, New York.
7. Our mailroom is open. You can mail in your claim and any correspondence to us through regular mail.
8. Email communications is available to all retirees with known email. If you do not have email, you can get one or ask a family member to help. Send us your updated contact information to [retireedivision@cwa1180.org](mailto:retireedivision@cwa1180.org)
9. If you need additional help, call for a one-on-one phone consultation about organizing your papers for reimbursement. We can help you. Do not wait for the office to open for a one-on-one sit down.
10. While our country is reopening and social distancing and masks remain in effect, retirees still may choose to spend more time indoors due to the recognized health risk. Finding ways to stay interested and involved is very important. Make an effort. Don't expect to become a specialist in the events we offer, but look at it as an opportunity to diversify your interests, increase your skill level, and keep yourself alert and active whether that be with Local 1180 classes or in some other way. Look for ways to continue to be your best self.

# PRIVATE SECTOR SHOPS

## THE CENTURY FOUNDATION SETTLES OVERTIME GRIEVANCE WITH RAISES

In January 2019, a new threshold was set for overtime eligibility in New York State. Some Century Foundation employees fell below that threshold and were therefore subject to a new policy set by management. When management refused to meet to bargain over the policy, the union filed a grievance. In February 2020, the grievance was settled by raising all salaries above the threshold — a raise for six employees, in some cases more than \$5,000.

Jonnea Herman is the Senior Graphic Designer and Production Associate at TCF, who started shortly before these changes went into effect. “I love being in a union and feeling like my coworkers and I have each other’s backs. We were able to negotiate salaries where me and some of my coworkers got significant pay raises, and there’s no way that could’ve happened without the union,” Herman said.

Pictured below: Members Casey Berkovitz, Amanda Novello, Jonnea Herman, Souleo Wright, and Taela Dudley celebrating their win. ■



## SMALL CONTRACT PROVISION WITH BIG WIN

### Open Society Foundation Secures Raises For 69 Members With Job Descriptions Grievance

Members at Open Society Foundations had been working to push management to provide job descriptions for the unit members, but with no luck. Even though it’s required by the contract, management kept pushing them off.

So members decided to file a group grievance. However, they took things a step further and instead of just filing the grievance, they had small group meetings across the departments, and got sign-on from more than 100 members. This really showed management their strength and members were able to reach an agreement with management that provided for not only new job descriptions, but a salary review for anyone whose job description had changed, with back pay to the date that they should have had their description reviewed. So far, 69 people have received raises due to these reviews, and several more are still pending.

Jessica Greenspan is a Senior Program Specialist in the OSF Baltimore office who worked with her fellow Shop Stewards on the grievance.

“We were able to win this through significant engagement across the units. Instead of just acting on their behalf, we were all acting together. This win shows that enforcing even a small part of the contract — something as simple as job descriptions — can actually lead to fair and equitable salary increases for our colleagues,” Greenspan said. ■



### A CHANCE MEETING

When the Toy Expo came to the Javits Center earlier this year in January, StoryCorps was asked to host a booth, so our StoryCorps Shop Steward Luigi Villanueva (left) got to meet Javits Shop Steward Jose Martinez for the first time. “It’s always great when Shop Stewards from different locations get a chance to meet, as it helps build our Local 1180 family,” said Private Sector Staff Rep Lena Solow. ■

# EDIBLE SCHOOLYARD STOPS LAYOFFS WHILE BARGAINING REMOTELY

Edible Schoolyard workers had just started getting their bargaining demands together when suddenly life changed.

They were teaching gardening classes remotely and the organization had to cancel its Spring Gala, meaning a huge loss in funding. Suddenly, what would have been bargaining for a first contract was bargaining to save their coworkers jobs, as management wanted to cut four positions.

Staff Rep Lena Solow said, "I'm so impressed with this team. Some groups might have just cut their losses and given up, but these members insisted on pouring over the budget to find any places to make cuts. They stayed connected with their coworkers, and ultimately we were able to save three out of the four jobs. This wouldn't have been possible without collective sacrifice. Every single member was willing to take longer furloughs to save their coworkers' jobs. And they did all of this without being able to meet in person at all."

The members had to get creative with actions. In order to show their unity, they all changed their zoom profile pictures to their union logo.

For all of these members, it was their first time bargaining at all, and they rose to the challenge. Rosa Maruffo, a Program Manager at Edible Schoolyard, "The cool thing about being behind the scenes is seeing the power and the influence that a union can have. All the work that we put in was really moving, something clicked for me where I understood that this matters. Is not just about saving jobs, but it's about our collective power and voice when we all come together."

Sheynor Hall, a kitchen teacher, agreed. "As a member of the ESYNYC bargaining committee, it was an honor to be voted to represent the collective interest of my peers. Having some negotiation and bargaining experience from my previous career, I felt confident in our ability to articulate our needs to management. Together we were able to prevent three of four proposed layoffs and end bargaining in a way that felt mutually beneficial for everyone and the organizations," he said. ■



Just prior to the COVID-19 shutdown, the bargaining committee met at Local 1180 — Cecilia Galarraga, Dan Feder, Rosa Marruffo, and Sheynor Hall.

## PRIVATE SECTOR SHOP STEWARDS

### ALIGN

Jake Streich-Kest

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Daphne Eviatar

Philippe Nasif

Kristen Velloza

Emily Walsh

### ASPCA

Danielle Delfino

Melanie Glass

### BOOKS & RATTLES

Tanzeem Akhtar

Hameeda Bano

Bonnie Eng

### HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST

Scott Johnston

Kaitlin Locascio

Ana Ortega

### HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Ariella Hohl

Ashley Persaud

Delphine Starr

Jessica Story

### JAVITS CENTER

Jose Martinez

Philip Slattery

### OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

Ramzi Babouder-Matta

Stephanie Boarden

Katy Caldwell

Samantha Costello

George Davis

Jessica Greenspan

Giovana Margo

Renata Peralta

Christopher Thomas

Michelle Torres

Jillian Winkler

### STORYCORPS

Jey Born

Zazil-xa Davis-Vazquez

Luigi-Angelo Villanueva

### THE CENTURY FOUNDATION

Amanda Novello

Anthony Charles Walsh

### TYPE MEDIA CENTER

Remy Cawley

Taylor Eldridge

### NONPROFIT STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

Lena Solow

[lsolow@cwa1180.org](mailto:lsolow@cwa1180.org)

### NONPROFIT ORGANIZER

Leslie Fine

[lfine@cwa1180.org](mailto:lfine@cwa1180.org)

# CWA LOCAL 1180 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

## February 26, 2020

Meeting called to order at 6:15 p.m.

Executive Board Members in Attendance:

**Officers:** Gloria Middleton, President; Gina Strickland, First Vice President; Gerald Brown, Second Vice President; Robin Blair-Batte, Secretary-Treasurer; Lourdes Acevedo, Recording Secretary

**Members-at-Large:** Hilary Bloomfield, Denise Gilliam, Helen S. Jarrett, Lisa Lloyd, Debra Paylor, Gregory Smith, Venus Colon-Williams, Hazel O. Worley

Absent: Lenora Smith

Minutes from the January 22, 2020, meeting were presented. Motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the minutes with necessary corrections.

### President's Report

President Middleton suspended the Executive Board meeting to introduce Kathy Pappas, representative of National Income Life (NILCO) for the purpose of discussing CWA Local 1180's Accidental Death and Disbursement Benefit for members.

President Middleton discussed highlights of her schedule since the last Executive Board Meeting.

Jan. 23 — Attended SSEU Local 371 Scholarship Dinner honoring Arthur Cheliot. She was accompanied by First Vice President Gina Strickland, Secretary-Treasurer Robin Blair-Batte, Recording-Secretary Lourdes Acevedo, and Executive Board Members Hilary Bloomfield, Hazel O. Worley and Helen S. Jarrett.

Jan. 27 — Met with Secretary-Treasurer Robin Blair-Batte to discuss CWA Local 1180 finances. That evening, attended the City & State Award Ceremony honoring Helen S. Jarrett.

Jan. 28 — Chaired the weekly consultants' meeting. That afternoon, she chaired the CWA Local 1180 weekly staff meeting.

Jan. 29 — CWA Local 1180 members overwhelming ratified the CWA Local 1180 PAA et al bargaining contract balloted by American Arbitration Association (AAA). The break-down is as follows: 4,586 yes to 33 no. More members voted on this contract than ever before, showing how well-received the terms and conditions are. Thanks to the bargaining committee for seeing through the contract from beginning to end. Ratification May 2018, 2%; May 2019, 2.25% compounded; and Oct. 2, 2020, 3% compounded. The payout dates are as follows: Mayoral and Department of Education agencies March 20, 2020; New York City Housing Authority March 27, 2020; Tentative H+H and Coordinating Managers, April 3, 2020. Paid Family Leave will be effective May 1, 2020.

Feb. 4 — Attended the NYS Public Employee Conference, discussing the Legislative Agenda for 2020.

Feb. 5 — Chaired the CWA Local 1180 Board of Trustees meeting. That afternoon, John Balboni presented the Joint Venture Purchase and Sales Agreement and Lease documents to CWA Local 1180 Trustees for approval.

Feb. 6 — Reviewed next steps on Citywide Health and post *Janus* issues with the MLC's attorneys.

Feb. 11 — Chaired weekly consultants' meeting. That afternoon, she chaired the CWA Local 1180 weekly staff meeting. That evening, chaired the General Membership meeting, which was highly attended.

Feb. 13-20 — Attended the National Labor Management Conference discussing benefits planning. AFA-CWA President Sarah Nelson was one of the key-note speakers.

Feb. 24 — Met with Erin Mahoney, CWA District 1 Organizer, regarding where we are going with the Growth Fund. That afternoon, met with First Vice President Gina Strickland, Grievance Consultant Gwen Richardson and Assistant Supervisor of Staff Representatives Teesha Forman to discuss the Administrative Manager level appeals submissions.

Feb. 25 — Chaired weekly consultants' meeting. That afternoon, chaired the CWA Local 1180 weekly staff meeting.

Feb. 26 — Chaired the CWA Local 1180 Executive Board meeting.

President Middleton distributed and discussed the status report dated Feb. 1, 2020, from the Law Offices of Mirkin & Gordon, P.C. listing legal matters being handled on behalf of CWA Local 1180. She also distributed the Collective Bargaining Update and the Second Round Contract Expiration Dates of New York City Municipal Unions and update on the New York City Economy reports submitted by the Policy Research Group.

A motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the President's Report.

### First Vice President's Report

First Vice President Gina Strickland reported the following:

Jan. 23 — Attended a walk through for new HEAP location. She was accompanied by Staff Representatives Desiree Waters and Anthony Lewis. That evening, she attended SSEU Local 371 Scholarship Dinner honoring Arthur Cheliot.

Jan. 28 — Attended the MLC Steering Committee meeting regarding Health Insurance for members. Members are now able to be treated at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and the Hospital of Special Surgery.

Jan. 30 — Attended a meeting at the Queens District Attorney's Office, accompanied by Staff Rep Romano Jones, regarding the Administrative Manager appeal.

Feb. 3 — Represented President Middleton at the Municipal Labor Committee meeting.

Feb. 5 — Participated in the CWA Local 1180 Board of Trustees meeting.

Feb. 10 — Reviewed the PowerPoint presentation for the upcoming General Membership meeting.

Feb. 11 — Participated in the CWA Local 1180 General Membership meeting.

Feb. 12 — Conducted a conference call with Staff Representative Desiree Waters and Kings County Hospital members to discuss outstanding issues.

Feb. 20 — Represented President Middleton at the CLC Executive Board meeting, accompanied by Business Manager Arthur Cheliot, who gave a Supplemental Insurance Benefits Presentation. Representatives from every union and agency attended. Discussions of the potential impact to members and agencies of the coronavirus pandemic were covered. Executive Board member Debra Paylor stated H+H has identified isolation rooms for each unit. Once a COVID-19 case has been confirmed, patients will be transported to Bellevue Hospital, which is better equipped at handling these cases.

Feb. 24 — Met with President Middleton, Grievance Consultant Gwen Richardson and Assistant Supervisor of Staff Representatives Teesha Forman to discuss the Administrative Manager level appeals submissions. To date, 27 were received, eight appeals were granted, seven were denied, five were returned, and the remaining seven are being reviewed.

First Vice President Gina Strickland reported the following Staff Representative activity for the month of January 2020:

Activity	October
Agency Walk-Throughs	1
Appointments	4
Arbitrations	2
Command Disciplines (CD)	0
Counseling/Warning Sessions	3
EEO Investigations/Interviews	4
Emails	1,952
G.O. 15 - NYPD	2
Health & Safety Meetings	1
Hearing Preparations	4
Hearings	8
Hiring Pools	0
Investigative Hearings/Meetings	5
Labor Management Meetings	4

### Activity

New Hire Orientations	2
Oath	3
OSI Interview (DOE)	0
Off-Site Member Meetings	2
Phone Calls	542
Shop Steward Trainings	2
Site Meetings	14
Supervisory Conferences	5
Staff Rep Services Emails	135
Walk-Ins	5

### Site Meetings

NYC Administration of Children Services (ACS)  
150 William Street, New York, NY

Bronx District Attorney  
265 E. 161st Street, Bronx, NY

Brooklyn District Attorney  
350 Jay Street Brooklyn, NY

NYC Comptroller's Office  
1 Centre Street, New York, NY

NYC Department of Education  
335 Adams Street, Brooklyn, NY

NYC Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street, New York, NY

HRA Halsey Center  
2500 Halsey Street, Bronx, NY

HRA HASA  
95 Evergreen, Brooklyn, NY

HRA ICP/OCP/Mailer & Match  
95 Evergreen, Brooklyn, NY

HRA SNAP 02  
2322 3rd Avenue, New York, NY

H + H Morrisania Clinic  
1225 Gerard Avenue, Bronx, NY

OATH  
100 Church Street, New York, NY

NYC Parks Department  
1 Bronx River Parkway, Bronx, NY

Queens District Attorney  
80-02 Kew Gardens, Queens, NY

A motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the First Vice President's Report.

### Second Vice President's Report

Second Vice President Gerald Brown reported the following:

Discussed the March 24 upcoming Special Election for Queens Borough President; the April 28 Super Tuesday Democratic Presidential Primary in 13 states, including New York; special elections to fill vacancies in the NYS Legislature and in the NYC Council; candidate screening that will be held at Local 1180 membership level making recommendations to the Executive Board for approval.

Jan. 23 - Feb. 7 — Gave orientation to 60 Local 1180 members attending CUNY SLU for Spring 2020.

Provided exam prep instruction at the NYC School Construction Authority for members who are taking the Administrative Coordinator exam in Feb. 2020.

Feb. 11 — Attended the General Membership Meeting.

Second Vice President Brown also discussed:

- June 23rd General Election for the 15th Congressional District seat held by Council Member Jose Serrano who is retiring and Local 1180 has endorsed Ritchie Torres to succeed him.
- The 2020 Census. Helen S. Jarrett and Deborah Valentin are aggressively working on having members and retirees complete their census forms.
- March 3, 2020, there will be a rally in Albany regarding the NYS Budget due April 1. There is a \$4-\$6 billion deficit coming from Health Care Agency.
- CWA District 1 Annual Lobby Day scheduled for March 10, 2020, has been canceled due to the pandemic.

Feb. 20 — Represented President Middleton and CWA Local 1180 at the CLC Executive Board Meeting. Healthcare was discussed.

Motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the Second Vice President's report.

### Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Secretary-Treasurer Robin Blair-Batte presented the CWA Local 1180 Transaction Detail and Income and Expenditures Reports for January 2020. She advised that the T.D. checking account has a balance of \$651,781.94 as of C.O.B February 26, 2020.

### Activity for January 2020

New Member Enrollments	56
Terminations	0
Retirements	0
Deceased	0
Total Active Members	8,276
Total Retired Members	6,611

Motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the Secretary-Treasurer's Report.

### Recording-Secretary's Report

Recording-Secretary Lourdes Acevedo joined the CWA Local 1180 Board of Trustees meeting. She also participated at the CWA Local 1180 General Membership meeting.

Motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the Recording-Secretary's Report.

### Members-at-Large Reports

**Venus Colon-Williams** announced there were 141 items donated to the Puerto Rico Relief Drive. Some of the items donated included towels, toothbrushes/toothpaste, comforters, bed sheets, Depends, etc. Tomorrow she will arrange for shipping of the items to Puerto Rico. She also announced that next week she will participate in this year's SOMOS Albany.

**Hazel Worley** announced the Civil Rights and Equity/Community Service Committee made the presentation at the CWA Local 1180 General Membership meeting celebrating Black History month. It was well received. Additionally, she announced final preparations are ongoing for the upcoming Feb. 29, 2020, Festival of Cultures being held at P.S. 21, 180 Chauncey St., Brooklyn NY, 11233.

**Debra Paylor** attended the CBTU meeting. She announced that Patti Jacobs made an excellent Black History Month presentation at the Manhattan Borough Community Coordinating meeting, and that the NAACP will be honoring President Middleton at St. Stevens Church Kennedy Center on March 29, 2020; the U.S. Postal Worker's Union will be having a meeting on March 28, 2020; and that there will be a Valiant Women of the Crown Event on March 21, 2020, where all women will be wearing hats.

**Greg Smith** announced the School Construction Authority meeting will be held on March 13, 2020.

**Lisa Lloyd** announced the Civil Service Committee meetings continue going well.

**Hilary Bloomfield** attended Governor Cuomo's state census event on Jan. 23, 2020. On Feb. 6, 2020, she attended the AARP meeting; and from Feb. 14-17, she attended the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus in Albany. On Feb. 20, she attended the CLUW monthly meeting; on Feb. 21, she attended the North Central Bronx Hospital meeting; on Feb. 22, she attended the Democratic Club meeting; and on Feb. 25, she attended Community Board 12 meeting.

**Helen S. Jarrett** announced she was honored on Jan. 27, 2020, at the City & State Award Ceremony. She also announced she is working with Deborah Valentin on mobilization for the 2020 Census.

Next meeting date of the Executive Board March 31, 2020.

Motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lourdes Acevedo  
Recording Secretary

# CWA LOCAL 1180 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

## April 14, 2020

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Executive Board Members in Attendance:

**Officers:** Gloria Middleton, President; Gina Strickland, First Vice President; Gerald Brown, Second Vice President; Robin Blair-Batte, Secretary-Treasurer; Lourdes Acevedo, Recording Secretary

**Members-at-Large:** Hilary Bloomfield, Denise Gilliam, Helen S. Jarrett, Lisa Lloyd, Debra Paylor, Gregory Smith, Venus Colon-Williams, Hazel O. Worley

Absent: Lenora Smith

Minutes from the February 26, 2020, meeting were presented. Motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the minutes with necessary corrections.

### President's Report

President Middleton opened the meeting with a moment of silence for the loss of seven CWA Local 1180 members due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including beloved Shop Steward Priscilla Carow. President Middleton has been working with New York City Office of Labor Relations in order to ensure safety measures are being taken to protect Local 1180 members at various city agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic. She is asking for assurance that all members who deal directly with the public be provided with Protective Personal Equipment (PPE). HRA employees working in SNAP and Job Centers are exposed and the Mayor's Office is working to shut down sites and have the work done online. The NYC Department of Correction has a high number of people infected and CWA Local 1180 Legal Coordinators working inside the prisons are exposed to COVID-19. President Middleton and Staff Representative Gregory Smith have been working with Shop Steward Sandra Sheard on coordinating with the DOC Deputy Commissioner to ensure our members are set up to work remotely from home in order to protect them from additional exposure. NYPD 911 Operators are also experiencing similar exposure issues at the precincts due to tight spaces and areas not being cleaned and disinfected. H+H has on-going problems regarding where they are placing our members.

President Middleton discussed highlights of her schedule since the last Executive Board Meeting:

Feb. 29 — Participated in the CWA Local 1180 Festival of Cultures celebration held at PS. 21.

March 2 — Met with Greg Mantsios, Dean of the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, regarding funding and plans for the future.

March 4 — Held CWA Local 1180 Trustee's meeting. That evening, met with DC 37 Executive Director Henry Garrido and Local 1180 Business Manager Arthur Cheliotas to discuss coordinating strategy with the City Council on public worker issues and other MLC issues.

March 5 — Met with Joel Spivak, Esq. to discuss legal matters being handled on behalf of CWA Local 1180 members. She held a Fund Trustees meeting to review fund appeals. That evening, held a Pivotal Planning conference call.

March 6 — Attended a Labor Management meeting for those who work in ADVENT receiving the assignment differential.

March 10 — Chaired the Local 1180 weekly staff meeting.

March 12 — Met with NYC Transit Authority Shop Stewards to discuss the contract.

March 17 — Held CWA Local 1180's management team and officers meeting to discuss plans regarding staff duties and assignments for working remotely during the pandemic.

March 20 — Held conference call with Margaret Cook, CWA District 1 Sector VP of the Public Healthcare and Education Workers (PHEW), to discuss COVID-19 pandemic and how it impacts CWA Healthcare and Education Workers. Today, Gov. Cuomo signed the "New York State Policy Assure Uniform Safety Everyone (PAUSE)" Executive Order, a 10-point policy to assure safety for everyone during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to help flatten the curve.

March 23 — Held conference call with New York City Central Labor Council regarding the impact on public sector unions from the COVID-19 pandemic.

March 25 — Held staff meeting conference call.

March 30 — Held conference call with NYCCLC to further discuss COVID-19 pandemic.

April 1 — Held staff meeting conference call.

April 2 — Held Legal Coordinator follow-up call with Daniel Pollak, Assistant Commissioner of NYC Office of Labor Relations.

April 6 — Held conference call with NYCCLC regarding COVID-19 pandemic.

April 8 — Held virtual staff meeting.

April 9 — Held virtual CWA Local 1180 Trustee meeting to review fund appeals. That evening, participated in the Front Lines Flight webinar.

April 13 — Held conference call with NYCCLC regarding COVID-19 pandemic.

April 14 — Held conference call with Michael Desmond and Dan Limmer regarding 1180's retirement plan. Then held conference call with Dermot Shea, NYC Police Commissioner, John Beirne NYPD Deputy Commissioner, and civilian union leaders regarding COVID-19 pandemic's impact on workers. That evening, chaired the CWA Local 1180 executive board virtual meeting.

President Middleton distributed and discussed the status report dated Feb. 1, 2020, from the Law Offices of Mirkin & Gordon, P.C. listing legal matters being handled on behalf of CWA Local 1180. She also distributed the Collective Bargaining Update and the Second Round Contract Expiration Dates of New York City Municipal Unions and update on the NYC Economy reports submitted by the Policy Research Group.

A motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the President's Report.

### First Vice President's Report

First Vice President Gina Strickland reported the following:

Feb. 28 — Attended NYCHA site meeting with Assistant Supervisor of Staff Representatives Teesha Foreman to discuss the contract.

March 3 — Held a COVID-19 pandemic update conference call with H+H.

March 4 — Attended CWA Local 1180 quarterly Trustee's meeting.

March 5 — Attended the School Construction Authority Employee Recognition Ceremony. Shop Steward Myra Manigult was recognized for 20 years of service and Maritza Morales for 30 years.

March 13 — Held an updated COVID-19 pandemic conference call with H+H.

March 17 — Participated in management team and officers meeting. Plans were discussed regarding staff duties and assignments for working from home during pandemic.

March 25 & April 1 — Staff meeting video conference calls.

April 6 — Know Your Rights Eviction Moratorium Webinar by NYCCLC.

April 7 — Know Your Rights Mortgage & Foreclosures Webinar by NYCCLC

April 8 — Staff meeting video conference call.

April 14 — Executive Board virtual meeting.

HEALTH & HOSPITAL NEW CONTRACT PAYOUT DATES: There is a delay in processing the increases. Here's the new schedule:

4/17: All members will receive retro  
4/17: About 2,000 members will receive the 2%  
5/01: Expected remaining 500 will receive the 2%  
5/01: Expected all members to receive the 2.25%

If anything changes for 5/1, members will be notified immediately, but the 5/1 date is expected to be firm.

First Vice President Strickland reported the following Staff Representative activity for March 2020:

Activity	March
Agency Walk-Throughs	0
Appointments	2
Arbitrations	0
Command Disciplines (CD)	2

### Activity

Counseling/Warning Sessions	0
EI Investigations/Interviews	2
Emails	3,047
G.O. 15 – NYPD	2
Health & Safety Meetings	0
Hearing Preparations	6
Hearings	6
Hiring Pools	0
Investigative Hearings/Meetings	1
Labor Management Meetings	8
New Hire Orientations	1
OATH	2
Off-Site Member Meetings	6
OSI Interviews (DOE)	0
Phone Calls	571
Shop Steward Trainings	0
Site Meetings	8
Supervisory Conferences	2
Staff Rep Services Emails	311
Walk-Ins	2

### Site Meetings

DEP	
71 Smith Ave., Kingston, NY	
DYCD	
2 Lafayette St., New York, NY	
H + H Cook Hall	
599 Kingston Ave., Brooklyn, NY	
H + H East New York	
2094 Pitkin Ave., Brooklyn, NY	
H + H Queens	
82-68 164th St., Jamaica, NY	
HRA OSCE	
60 Lafayette St., New York, NY	
HRA SNAP 79	
219 Beach 59th St., Far Rockaway, NY	
School of Construction Authority	
30-30 Thomson Ave., LIC, NY	
Site Meetings	Meetings Rescheduled
	Due to COVID-19
Gregory (1)	Venus (3)
Romano (3)	Desiree (3)
Anthony (3)	Gregory (2)
Teesha (1)	

### Second Vice President's Report

Second Vice President Gerald Brown reported:

Feb. 29 — Attended Annual CWA Local 1180 Festival of Cultures.

March 10 — Attended CWA Local 1180 Staff Meeting.

March 13 — Attended site meeting at the NYC School Construction Authority to discuss exam for Administrative Coordinator.

March 17 — Attended staff meeting to discuss working under COVID-19. Also in the next several days participated in numerous conference calls to discuss the workforce under COVID-19.

Participated in virtual staff meetings on March 25, April 1, and April 8, and every Wednesday thereafter.

April 6 — Participated in a NYCCLC webinar on Know Your Rights: Eviction Moratorium.

April 7 — Participated in a NYC Central Labor Council webinar on Know Your Rights: Mortgages and Foreclosures.

April 9 — Participated in virtual Trustee meeting, and also chaired virtual Education Fund meeting.

April 14 — Attended the virtual Local 1180 Executive Board Meeting.

Administrative Manager Exam filing scheduled for April 1-21, 2020, has been postponed until further notice.

CWA Local 1180 Workplace Literacy classes have been cancelled.

School Construction Authority Exam for Administrative Coordinator given in February. CUNY School of Labor Studies has gone remote. NYC Department of Aging put out a recruitment flier for an experienced Administrative Manager to function during COVID-19.

Coordinated efforts of Helen S. Jarrett and Deborah Valentin as they reached out to members age 60 and older during COVID-19 pandemic.

June 23 Special Elections and Primary. Presidential primary: none for NYS if only

one active candidate is campaigning, election doesn't have to be held.

NYS budget passed.

Motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the Second Vice President's report.

### Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Secretary-Treasurer Robin Blair-Batte advised that the T.D. checking account has a balance of \$438,925.60 as of C.O.B April 12, 2020.

### Member Activity for February 2020

New Members	73
Termination	0
Retirees	30
Deceased	1
Total Active Members	8,306
Total Retired Members	6,627

Motion was duly made, seconded, and carried to accept the Secretary-Treasurer's Report.

### Recording-Secretary's Report

Recording-Secretary Lourdes Acevedo reported DOT employees are currently teleworking from home, as they have been advised to stay away from 55 Water St. due to COVID-19 concerns.

### Members-at-Large Reports

**Venus Colon-Williams** announced that she participated in this year's SOMOS Convention in Albany from March 5-9. The topic discussed was COVID-19 and the potential impact it will have throughout the United States.

**Hazel O. Worley** announced domestic violence, divorces, and criminal activities are on the rise, and people are going into depression due to COVID-19.

**Debra Paylor** announced many people are passing away due to COVID-19. She announced Councilmen Andy King and Jamal Bailey distributed food to the neighborhood. NYC Housing is hiring to clean buildings at \$17-\$19 per hour. Additionally, she announced the March 21, 2020, Valiant Women of the Crown Event was cancelled.

**Greg Smith** announced he organized a site and bargaining meeting at the School Construction Authority for March 13, 2020.

**Lisa Lloyd** announced the Civil Service Committee meetings have been cancelled. She also announced two grievances' back money stipulations will be paid this pay period.

**Personal Privilege:** President Middleton thanked everyone who had her and her family in their thoughts and prayers over the sudden death of her brother Norman Middleton. Whether you sent a card, or gave her a call, she thanks you all from the bottom of her heart. Death is part of the circle of life, but when it comes unexpectedly to someone so young it takes a toll on the family. President Middleton appreciates all the support that was given to her and her family from her 1180 family! Remember tomorrow is not promised to any of us, so enjoy the gift of life today!

Next meeting date of the Executive Board May 19, 2020.

Motion was duly made, seconded and carried to adjourn at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lourdes Acevedo  
Recording Secretary

# COMMITTEES

## Caribbean Heritage Committee

Gina Strickland, Chair  
[gstrickland@cwa1180.org](mailto:gstrickland@cwa1180.org)  
Meeting: 3rd Wednesday of each month

## Civil Rights & Equity/Community Service Committee

Hazel O. Worley, Chair  
[hworley@cwa1180.org](mailto:hworley@cwa1180.org)  
Meeting: 3rd Tuesday of each month

## Civil Service Committee

Lisa Lloyd, Chair  
[llloyd@cwa1180.org](mailto:llloyd@cwa1180.org)  
Meeting: 4th Tuesday of each month

## Editorial Committee

Marci Rosenblum, Chair  
[mrosenblum@cwa1180.org](mailto:mrosenblum@cwa1180.org)

## Education Committee & Book Club

Lenora Smith, Chair  
[lsmith@cwa1180.org](mailto:lsmith@cwa1180.org)  
Meeting: 2nd Monday of each month

## Hispanic Committee

Venus Williams, Chair  
[vwilliams@cwa1180.org](mailto:vwilliams@cwa1180.org)  
Meeting: 2nd Thursday of each month

## Legislative and Political Committee

Gerald Brown, Chair  
[gbrown@cwa1180.org](mailto:gbrown@cwa1180.org)

## Organizing Committee

Leslie Fine, Chair  
[lfine@cwa1180.org](mailto:lfine@cwa1180.org)

## People with Disabilities Committee

Edward Yood, Chair  
[envpush.yme@verizon.net](mailto:envpush.yme@verizon.net)  
Meeting: 1st Wednesday of each month

## Pride Committee

Vera Jordan & Lena Solow, Co-Chairs  
[isolow@cwa1180.org](mailto:isolow@cwa1180.org), [vjordan@health.nyc.gov](mailto:vjordan@health.nyc.gov)  
Meeting: TBD

## Women's Committee

Denise Gilliam, Chair  
[dgilliam@cwa1180.org](mailto:dgilliam@cwa1180.org)  
Meeting: 2nd Tuesday of each month

## BOROUGH COMMUNITY COORDINATING COMMITTEES

### Bronx BCCC

Carolyn Chamorro, Chair  
[carolynchamorro@hotmail.com](mailto:carolynchamorro@hotmail.com)

### Brooklyn BCCC

Verna Finley, Chair  
[jeanwf50@gmail.com](mailto:jeanwf50@gmail.com)

### Manhattan BCCC

Patti Jacobs, Chair  
[manhattanbcc1@gmail.com](mailto:manhattanbcc1@gmail.com)

### Queens BCCC

Flaubert St. Hilaire, Co-Chair  
[flaubert79@yahoo.com](mailto:flaubert79@yahoo.com)

### Staten Island BCCC

Rosie Roman, Chair  
[rosieroman800@gmail.com](mailto:rosieroman800@gmail.com)

All meetings start at 6 p.m. and are held at  
Local 1180, 6 Harrison St., New York, NY 10013

with the exception of the Borough Community Coordinating  
Committees. For their locations and start times, contact the  
respective Borough Chair.

Where meeting date is not listed, contact Chair directly.



# RETIRED MEMBERS CLUB

## SAVE THE DATE

First Retired Members Club (RMC) Virtual Meeting

Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020

12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.



Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android

<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1498947890>

For the best audio experience, please use computer audio



Join from Telephone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US:	+1.646.357.3664	+1.720.902.7700 (US Central)
	+1.470.869.2200 (US East)	+1.213.250.5700
	+1.773.231.9226 (US North)	+1.346.980.4201
	+1.312.263.0281	+1.469.445.0100 (US South)
	+1.650.242.4929	+1.623.404.9000 (US West)

Meeting ID: 149 894 7890

## REACH THE RETIRED MEMBERS CLUB

**Adele Rogers**

718.529.3577

**Adeline Bunch**

718.647.6302

**Marlene Ramsey**

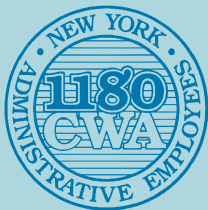
212.368.3195

**Olivia Livingstone**

718.286.9915

## NOTICE REGARDING DUES PAYMENTS

Due to the coronavirus and the subsequent closing of the CWA Local 1180 office, the Retired Members Chapter has not had access yet to dues checks mailed in from members. However, all mail is being held in a secure location by essential Local 1180 mailroom employees and will be processed and deposited as soon as the RMC is permitted to re-enter the building.



## COMMUNIQUE

### Official Publication

New York Administrative Employees Local 1180  
Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO  
6 Harrison Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10013-2898

[www.cwa1180.org](http://www.cwa1180.org)

Phone: 212.226.6565

Security Benefits for Active and Retiree Members:  
212.966.5353

Claim Forms Hotline: 212.925.1091

Retiree Division: 212.226.5800

### For Out-of-Town Retirees

Retiree Division: 800.801.2882

Retiree Benefits: 888.966.5353

### Executive Board

Gloria Middleton, President  
Gina Strickland, First Vice President  
Gerald Brown, Second Vice President  
Robin Blair-Batte, Secretary-Treasurer  
Lourdes Acevedo, Recording Secretary

### Members-at-Large

Hilary Bloomfield, Denise Gilliam,  
Helen S. Jarrett, Lisa Lloyd, Debra Paylor,  
Gregory Smith, Lenora Smith,  
Venus Williams, Hazel O. Worley

### Communications Director

**Communique Editor/Designer**

Marci Rosenblum • Tricomm Creative, Inc.  
[www.tricommcreative.com](http://www.tricommcreative.com)

### Communique Facilitators

Gerald Brown, Gloria Middleton

**Editing Assistant:** Shannon Malcolm

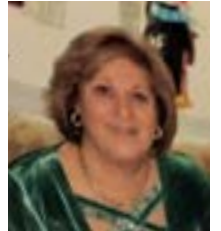
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# IN MEMORIAM

NAME	AGENCY	DECEASED
Anita Adams	Department of Buildings	4/3/2020
Hyacinth Ali	Dept. of Social Services	4/11/2020
Mostafa Arafa	Department of Education	4/20/2020
Jannie Armstrong	Dept. of Social Services	3/26/2020
Victor Awad	Police Department	4/24/2020
Gloria Barnard	Dept. of Social Services	3/20/2020
Alice Bender	Dept. of Social Services	5/16/2020
Rita Bile	Administration for Children Services	4/13/2020
Esther Bromberg	Finance Administration	3/17/2020
Diane Buscetta	Police Department	4/12/2020
Linda Carr	Department of Transportation	3/29/2020
Kellie Childs	Fire Department	4/7/2020
Leona Cohen	Administration for Children Services	3/28/2020
John Cortez	Dept. of Social Services	4/13/2020
Sharon Cumberbatch	Bellevue Hospital	4/2/2020
Trevor Cunningham	Bellevue Hospital	3/15/2020
Selisha Curry	Woodhull Medical Center	3/31/2020
Judette Edwards	Bellevue Hospital	3/18/2020
Marilyn Engel	Brooklyn Borough President	5/6/2020
Iona Ferguson	Department of Transportation	5/9/2020
Camelia Francis	Finance Administration	3/21/2020
Stephanie Gaston	Administration for Children Services	4/1/2020
Sylvia German	Housing Preservation & Development	4/24/2020
Beryl Godfrey	Dept. of Social Services	4/2/2020
James Green	Parks & Recreation	3/30/2020
Josephine Hill	Police Department	4/25/2020
Beulah Ingram	Dept. of Social Services	3/10/2020
Fredrica Johnson	Finance Administration	4/20/2020
Otis Johnson Jr	Dept. of Sanitation	5/15/2020
Stephen Karlin	NYC Housing Authority	4/2/2020
Beatrice Kurtz	Dept. of Social Services	2/8/2020
Joan Larmond	Kings County Hospital Center	4/22/2020
David Lui	NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission	4/3/2020
Desiree Maple	Department of Transportation	3/28/2020
Geneva Mayo	Health & Hospital Corp	4/16/2020
Jean Mc Kelvin	Dept. of Social Services	5/1/2020
Steven Michael	Housing Preservation & Development	4/4/2020
Alice Miller	Manhattan District Attorney	2/3/2020
Robert Moody	Dept. of Environmental Protection	4/1/2020
Willie Moore	Dept. of Social Services	4/11/2020
Judy Moore Browne	Administration for Children Services	2/4/2020
Darrell Murray	Teachers Retirement System	4/2/2020
Marius Narcisse	Dept. of Social Services	3/27/2020
Jessie Perrella	Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene	2/13/2020
Winsett Perry	Elmhurst Hospital Center	4/9/2020
Willie Petteway	Finance Administration	3/17/2020
Sylvia Raffelson	NYC Housing Authority	5/7/2020
Swapan Rahman	NYC Housing Authority	3/31/2020
Helen Rapkiewicz	Finance Administration	4/8/2020
Beulah Richardson	Dept. of Social Services	5/30/2020
Mary Rizzo	Police Department	4/22/2020
Gloria Saccone	North Central Bronx Hospital	4/19/2020
Pandora Sanders	Dept. of Social Services	3/27/2020
Ruth Schreiber	Dept. of Correction	3/30/2020
Winifred Shur	Dept. of Social Services	2/17/2020
Constance Simmons	Administration for Children Services	3/30/2020
Donald Speight	Dept. of Social Services	4/10/2020
Eva Stollak	Dept. of Social Services	4/17/2020
Gervin Straker	Department of Buildings	4/10/2020
Annie Tindal	Dept. of Social Services	4/29/2020
Gwendolyn Turner	Finance Administration	4/11/2020
Emma Washington	Dept. of Social Services	4/15/2020
Barbara Waters	Dept. of Social Services	3/29/2020
Dora Wharmby	Health & Hospital Corp	5/31/2020
Denzil Wills	Dept. of Social Services	3/18/2020
Yuet Chi Ying	School Construction Authority	5/22/2020
Richard Young	DCAS	4/30/2020

## about our members

Congratulations to **Josephine Scavone** (Assistant Coordinating Manager, Jacobi Medical Center) who retired on June 19 after 36 years of service. She served as a Local 1180 Shop Steward for 21 years.



Congratulations to **Shop Steward Myra Manigult** and Administrative

Coordinator **Maritza Morales**, both from School Construction Authority, who were recognized in March at the Employee Recognition Ceremony for their 20 years and 30 years of service, respectively.

Condolences to **Retiree Carolyn Bass** (Admin Manager, Department of Sanitation, Sept. 2019), who lost her mother, Bertha "NANA" Harden Murphy, on April 28, 2020, at the age of 105.

Condolences to **Sharon Reese** (PAIII, DOHMH) on the passing of her father, Deacon James B. Reese Sr., on March 27, 2020. Deacon James B. Reese Sr. was also a Missionary at St. Paul Baptist Church of Harlem, where the Rev. Dr. V. DuWayne Battle is Pastor. He was a Mason with the Fitzpatrick Brotherhood of Brooklyn for more than 40 years, earning his 33rd Degree status as a Master Mason and becoming Illustrious James Reese Sr. He had five children, two sisters, one brother, four grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. "He loved God, his family, and his friends, and will be missed greatly," Sharon said. "He was considerate, kind, and helpful, often considered as a gentle giant. He was the father of more than his biological children, he gave guidance and leadership whenever he could. I could go on and on. He will be truly missed and forever in our hearts." Pictured below with Sharon Reese (far left) are James Reese Jr, Eunice Reese, Brenda Reese, LaToya Reese, and Deacon James B. Reese Sr. ■



### FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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CWA LOCAL 1180

**Communications Workers  
of America, Local 1180**6 Harrison Street  
New York, NY 10013-2898

# Hatred Has **NO PLACE** in America Today

Gloria Middleton, President

I am a mother and grandmother of a Black son and grandson, and I have never been more afraid for their future than I am right now. The recent, blatant killings of both Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd for no reason other than the color of their skin, and the white woman in Central Park who told police a Black man was attacking her when he was simply asking her to obey the park's dog leash law, have stirred up with new intensity the internal rage I felt as a young, Black girl growing up in white America.

I remember watching the civil rights movement on television with my parents who had migrated from South Carolina to New York to give their children better lives. The tv footage showed, in horror, protesters being chased by dogs and water hosed as they marched for civil rights. I could not quite understand what was happening because in my young world, I had not experienced racism growing up in Harlem, a community at the time of only Blacks and Hispanics, not the gentrified neighborhood of today. In those days, Harlem was a community of family; we looked out for one another.

My parents explained to me what was happening and told me about their experiences in the south. My father was born in 1912, my mother 1916; both had no more than a third-grade education. I never forgot their stories, living through segregation laws of the south.

The murder of George Floyd incenses every fiber of my soul. As President of CWA Local 1180, where 90% of my members are people of color, it has been my mission since I first became an activist more than 40 years ago to fight for the civil rights of all who have been disenfranchised in this country.

America is in trouble. The outright, horrific brutality that we see some police officers repeatedly impose on Black men is despicable. Yes, we have a huge problem with our country's police force. When cops believe they are the judge and jury, the be-all-and-end-all of the American justice system, there is clearly a problem. They have no right to take matters into their own hands and kill Black men and women "just because" and then think they can get away with it since they are law enforcement. This shows how little value is placed on the life of a Black person – someone who just might be your neighbor out for a jog. Someone's child, brother, husband, father.

But the real problem is that America does not have a plan to correct these 400-plus years of disparate treatment on all levels for Black Americans. Our country has a deep-rooted systemic problem going back as far as slavery when Blacks were bought and sold as free labor to build this country. Black men and women have been killed for no apparent reason for decades. The only difference now is that everyone has a smart phone and records it. The proof lies in the video – and that's what is so maddening!

Even with hardcore proof in cases like Rodney King and Eric Garner, the justice system still does not work for Black Americans. We see this time and time again.

Today, as I watch young people rallying, crying, screaming, and unfortunately sometimes even acting violently and looting – neither of which I condone – I understand their rage. When you live every day knowing that the color of your skin makes you a second-class citizen and puts a target on your back to be treated differently, it adds tremendous stress to your life. Black youth are educated differently. We earn less than our white counterparts doing similar jobs. Blacks do not have equal access to quality healthcare or housing, and clearly the justice system works against anyone whose skin is not white.

However, I believe America is about to reap what it sows. I worry about the future for generations to come, including that of my grandson. We are tired of hearing the promises of politicians who are beholden to corporate America and refuse to do what is needed to bring about real change. It's one thing to talk the talk; it's another to walk the walk. Martin Luther King Jr. knew it in the 1960s when he said, "Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity."

We have been living under a stay-at-home mandate since March, and now millions of Americans are unemployed. That's millions of people who don't know what their future is going to look like post pandemic. What we do know, however, is that restlessness and boredom and uncertainty and confinement are all taking their toll. Anxiety and stress are at their peak. America is sitting on a powder keg that is beginning to explode because we have no real leadership coming from the top and in absence of that leadership, Americans are running amok.

Black Americans are tired of hearing that all lives matter because if that were true, then Black lives would matter, too. And they don't. As a country, we need to recognize the problem and stop the lynchings. That knee on George Floyd's neck only replaces the rope they used to hang us with. These inequities must end. The White House must stop painting us as thugs, and so, too, must the media. America must understand that Black people are tired of sitting back, being quiet, and going along with the status quo. It's not going to work anymore.

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter," Dr. King said. And I agree. So, it's time to **#speakout**, **#standup**, and let the world know that while **#alllivesmatter**, so, too, do **#BlackLivesMatter!** ■