

New York City Thrift Store Workers Vote to Join RWDSU



Unique Thrift store workers in New York City voted to join the RWDSU for better wages and working conditions.

This week, workers at Unique Thrift in the Bronx, New York, voted to join the RWDSU. All 64 workers at the Bronx store will be part of the bargaining unit. The workers who sort through the donated goods and staff the Unique Thrift stores in the Bronx, and other parts of New York and New Jersey are speaking out about their working conditions. Workers are paid low wages, receive no paid sick days or vacations, are verbally abused by managers and are often hurt on the job.

“As a single mom living in New York City, it is extremely difficult to survive off \$7.50 an hour,” said Joanna Carrillo, Unique Thrift employee. “I was proud to vote yes to join the RWDSU because we deserve respect, better wages, and basic benefits such as health care and paid time off.”

Unique Thrift is a for profit thrift store which contracts with the Lupus Foundation. The company solicits donations in the name of the Lupus Foundation, sells the clothes for profit and sends the charity a comparatively small contribution. **OP**

UFCW Locals 876 and 951 Lobby to Increase the Minimum Wage

UFCW Michigan members recently gathered at the State Capitol in Lansing to lobby their state legislators about increasing the minimum wage.

More than 100 members from UFCW Locals 876 and 951 participated in UFCW Michigan’s seventh annual Lobby



UFCW Locals 876 and 951 travel to Lansing to lobby for an increase in minimum wage.

Day. Members met with legislators and staff in support of SB 203 and HB 4554 which would raise Michigan’s minimum wage in stages to reach \$10 an hour by 2016.

UFCW 2013 Scholarship Program

The June 15 deadline for 2013 UFCW Scholarship Program is approaching. A break room flyer with additional application information is attached to the end of *On Point*. The application is also available online at www.ufcw.org/scholarship.

2013

UFCW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. —Nelson Mandela

In 2013 the UFCW will award several SCHOLARSHIPS, up to \$8,000 each, to UFCW members or their unmarried dependents.

For more information, and to find out if you're eligible, please visit:

www.ufcw.org/scholarship

The scholarship application will be available online from March 31 - June 15, 2013.

UFCW

If you are unable to apply online, you may request an application by writing to:
UFCW International Union, Attn: Scholarship Program, 1775 K Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006.
If you need the scholarship rules or an application in another language, please contact us at 1-800-551-4010 and we will obtain assistance for you.

After “Ride for Respect” Caravans, OUR Walmart Members Submit Resolutions at Shareholders’ Meeting



OUR Walmart member Janet Sparks hands Walmart’s CEO a petition calling on Walmart to stop the retaliation against workers who speak out on the job.

Last week, more than 100 Walmart workers from across the country went on strike and joined the nationwide “Ride for Respect” caravan to Walmart’s annual shareholder meeting held on June 7 in Bentonville, Ark. There, OUR Walmart members and community allies held rallies and spoke out against Walmart’s illegal retaliation directly to executives and shareholders.

At the Walmart shareholders’ meeting, Walmart associate and OUR Walmart leader Janet Sparks and former Bangladeshi garment worker Kalpona Akter presented resolutions in front of an arena of thousands of shareholders.

Janet Sparks, who works at Walmart in Baker, La., presented a shareholder resolution to tie the interests of Walmart executives to the interests of shareholders by requiring that senior executives hold on to a large portion of their shares until they reach retirement age.

“Most of the \$20 million you received came from bonuses,” said Sparks, addressing Walmart CEO Mike Duke. “But at the store where I work associates have only received two quarterly bonus in the past five years and one was only \$26.17. The bonuses you and I get are supposed to be tied to the performance of our stores and our company. But we all see the understaffing of our stores and the out of stocks that result. I think we can do better, and the first step is to remember what Sam Walton said: Listen to the Associates!”

Kalpona Akter, an internationally recognized sweatshop critic and former child garment worker, presented a resolution that would allow shareholders to call meetings as needed to respond to critical issues such as the recent tragedies at factories producing goods for Walmart in Bangladesh. Akter was able to travel to the United States after hundreds of supporters raised funds to bring her to Walmart’s annual shareholder meeting to share her concerns with executives and shareholders.

“What happened at Rana Plaza and Tazreen should never have happened, and we can never let it happen again,” said Akter, the executive director of the Bangladeshi Center for Worker Solidarity. “Time and again, Walmart has broken its public commitments to workers throughout the supply chain. If the world’s largest retailer refuses to improve the state of workers’ rights and labor standards, things will not change.”

Despite Walmart workers’ struggle to support their families, plummeting customer service ratings, weak store sales due to understaffing, and preventable tragedies in the supply chain, Walmart has attempted to silence these voices through illegal retaliation, meritless lawsuits, and even firing workers. But support for workers’ calls for change has only grown since the historic Black Friday strikes and protests at 1,000 Walmart stores last fall.

With community supporters echoing their calls nationally, members of OUR Walmart have been calling on the nation’s largest private employer to publicly commit to creating better jobs. A growing number of associates and supporters nationwide are calling for the company to end retaliation against employees and for the company to publicly commit to providing full-time work with a minimum salary of \$25,000 a year so workers don’t have to rely on tax-payer funded programs to support their families. A new report released by the Democratic staff of the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce found that the costs to taxpayers at just one store as a result of Walmart’s inadequate wages and benefits is about \$1 million. **OP**

OUR Walmart Members "Ride for Respect" Caravan and Walmart Headquarter Actions

For more photos and video of strikers and their community supporters, visit <http://changewalmart.tumblr.com>. Additional information and photos can be found on Twitter at [#Walmartstrikers](https://twitter.com/Walmartstrikers).



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