

In the Past 4 months...

The UMass Labor Extension Program Has Provided Trainings On These Topics...

- **Advanced Bargaining**
Western Mass Unions
- **Balancing Our Work and Our Lives**
Voices of Working Women at UMass Lowell
- **Basic Unionism**
USAS (United Students Against Sweatshops) Conference
SEIU 888 Family Childcare providers
UMD Economics Department students
College of Public & Community Service,
UMass Boston
- **Building Union Power through the Elections**
SEIU 1199-United Healthcare Workers East
- **The Boss Can't Do That, Can He? A Training on Health and Safety & Other Workers Rights**
SABES Central and Western Massachusetts
- **The Boss Can't Do That, Can He?/Introduction to Workers Rights**
Randolph Community Partnership ESOL program
- **Continuous Bargaining**
SUMMUP Convention
- **Fundamentals of Bargaining**
Western Mass Unions
- **Health Care Reform: Labor's Agenda**
PVCLC Education Conference

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UMASS AMHERST ■ UMASS BOSTON ■ UMASS DARTMOUTH ■ UMASS LOWELL

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The Boss Can't Do that—Can He? Using the LEP Workers' Rights Curriculum

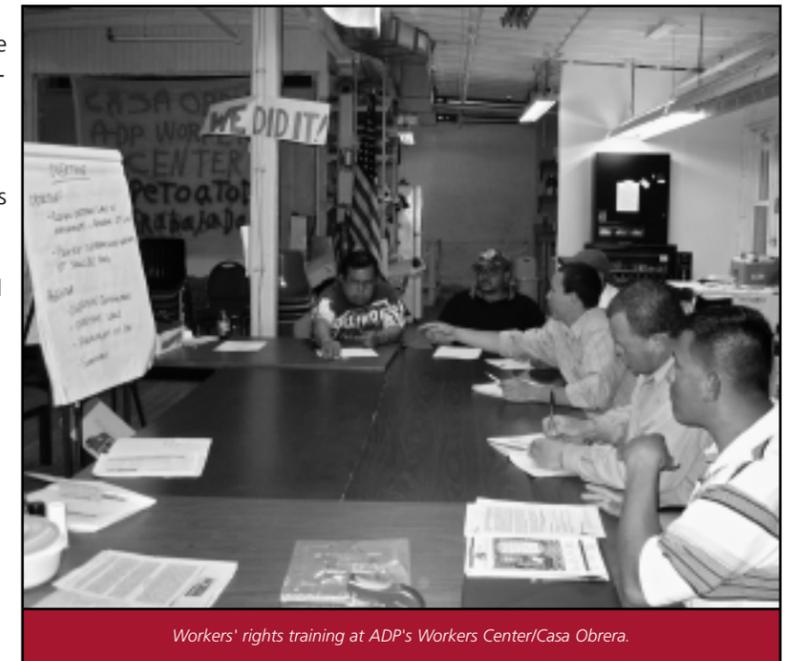
Many workers in the US have only a passing acquaintance with their rights on the job. For longer-term workers, and particularly union members, there is a greater awareness of what the law and their union contract affords them. But newer entrants to the labor force, such as young people and recent immigrants, as well as workers in low-wage jobs where abuses are rampant, often have only a vague sense of what protections they are entitled to. And for many workers there is confusion about when and how to respond to violations of their rights on the job.

What might unions and the labor movement do to increase workers' understanding of their rights on the job and the critical role of unions in enforcing and broadening those rights? One tool is "The Boss Can't Do That—Can He?", Labor Extension's Workers' Rights curriculum. The curriculum is a collection of interactive modules that provides a basic education on workplace rights, including wage and hour laws, paycheck information, laws barring discrimination, and legal protections for health and safety in the workplace.

The UMass Labor Extension Program has been making its Workers' Rights curriculum available by posting all materials on our website www.cpcs.umb.edu/lep/revisions and by doing trainings for a very targeted group—teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs.

The Alliance to Develop Power, in Springfield, has downloaded material and uses the pieces on wage and hour and overtime to run workers' rights trainings through their Workers Center/Casa Obrera. Workers' rights trainings are offered during orientation sessions for new members as a benefit of membership. ADP has also used the curriculum as a way to connect the ADP's larger, housing co-op based membership to the Workers Center/Casa Obrera, by offering workers' rights training at the co-ops.

During the trainings workplace abuse issues are identified and become a springboard for targeting abusive employers. As Francis Boyes, ADP's Community Coordinator, points out, "You can sometimes visibly see the light bulbs go off in people's heads! Then the hand goes up and someone asks for clarification and shares their experience at work and how their employer is not following the law. As an organizer facilitating the training, that is my moment to follow through with that member on that issue and identify more people at the same workplace being abused. So these trainings not only spread much needed infor-



Workers' rights training at ADP's Workers Center/Casa Obrera.

mation to low-wage, non-union, and often immigrant workers, but they can also feed into the organizing campaigns of the ADP."

LEP has also worked with SABES (System for Adult Basic Education Support), to offer workshops across the Commonwealth on the curriculum and how to adapt it for use in ESOL and basic skills classes. In these workshops educators and staff from career centers, and language and training programs, learn about workers' basic rights on the job and practice using the curriculum modules to develop materials for ESOL and ABE classes. Using workers' rights information to learn language skills or enhance reading, writing and math abilities, students learn about their rights on the job and how to stand up for them. One SABES participant said, "We do a unit on financial literacy/employment. This material can be a wonderful resource."

Are your members enrolled in ESOL and Basic Skills training sponsored by the union and/or the employer? Are you organizing workers or working in coalition with organizations whose members are unfamiliar with their rights on the job? If yes, then consider making workers' rights training a key part of these efforts. We would be glad to help you adapt our curriculum to your members' needs.

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

Once again the summer months will bring some great educational opportunities for union activists and staff.

2008 Elections: What's at Stake for Working Women? is the theme of this year's WILD Summer Institute, June 20-22 at Clark University, in Worcester. This exciting and energizing weekend provides women with the vision, confidence and skills to become more effective leaders and organizers in the labor movement in Massachusetts. The program, in English, Spanish and Portuguese, offers women in unions and workplace focused community groups the opportunity to come together for workshops on skill-building and leadership development, and to build networks around common concerns. Contact WILD at 617-426-0520 or info@wildlabor.org.

The Northeast Regional Summer School for Union Women will be held this year at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, August 3-8. The school's theme is "Union Women Taking Back America," and will also focus on issues raised by the upcoming presidential and congressional elections. This week-long school, similar to WILD, draws women unionists from all over the Northeast. Contact: Dale Melcher (see back page for contact information.)

The Center for Popular Economics is holding their 2008 Summer Institute at Roosevelt University in Chicago, IL, July 27-August 2. This week-long intensive training in economics is for activists, educators, and anyone who wants a better understanding of economics. Trainings are participatory and build on the knowledge and experience of participants. You don't need a background in economics to participate! Contact: 413-545-0743 or programs@populareconomics.org.

Around THE STATE

Merrimack Valley Central Labor Council Legislative Dinner

Friday, May 30, 6-10 pm

Cost: \$40 ticket, \$350 table

Location: Lenzi's Millhouse, 810 Merrimack St. (Rt. 110), Dracut, MA

Contact: Paul Georges, President MVCLC 978-937-9039

Join the Merrimack Valley Central Labor Council as they lay out their legislative priorities and celebrate the legislative victories of the past year. Senator John Kerry will be the keynote speaker at the event.

Hampshire Franklin CLC Legislative Breakfast

Friday, June 6, 9-10:30 am

Cost: \$20

Location: Bluebonnet Diner, 324 King St., Northampton, MA

Contact: Dale Melcher, 413-545-6166 or dmelcher@LRRC.umass.edu

Join area union and community leaders and activists and area legislators in a conversation about labor's agenda for working families and area issues and concerns.

Organizers Roundtable

Tuesday, June 10, 9:30 - 11:30am

Cost: free

Location: IBEW 103, 256 Freeport St., Dorchester, MA

Contact: Bill Corley, 617-436-3710

Roundtable discussions on topics of interest to union organizers.

WILD Summer Institute

Friday through Sunday, June 20-22

Cost: \$200/person for double, \$215/person for single

Location: Clark University, Worcester, MA

Contact: WILD at 617-426-0520 or info@wildlabor.org

Theme: 2008 Elections: What's at Stake for Working Women? (See box for more information.)

UALE Northeast Regional Summer School for Union Women

Sunday through Friday, August 3-8

Cost: \$615/person for double, \$685/person for single

Location: University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

Contact: Dale Melcher, 413-545-6166 or dmelcher@LRRC.umass.edu

Theme: Union Women Taking Back America (See box for more information.)

Program Notes

UMASS AMHERST

Amherst LEP just finished a bargaining series, with two sessions of bargaining fundamentals and two of advanced bargaining. We continued our research on immigrant workers in the Pioneer Valley, interviewing organizers for the Alliance to Develop Power and the director of the Center for New Americans. The Labor Center co-sponsored an event to mark Equal Pay Day—the day in April when the average working woman will have earned what her male counterpart earned by December 31st of the previous year—featuring Evelyn Murphy, Director of the WAGE Project. We continued working with the Hampshire Franklin and Pioneer Valley labor councils and participated in observances of Workers Memorial Day in Springfield and Northampton. Since health care reform will be a key issue in the upcoming presidential campaign, workshops on understanding reform issues and labor's principles for healthcare reform were offered for WILD in the Winter West and the PV AFL-CIO Education Conference, and are available upon request. Finally we continued to plan for both the WILD Summer Institute and the Northeast Summer School for Union Women (see box).

UMASS BOSTON

The UMass Boston Labor Resource Center held a very successful week-long intensive training called *Popular Education for Labor Educators* in March. Nineteen participants from a range of unions took part in the course. Since the response was so positive, we plan to offer the course again in the future. We are also planning to offer a series of classes in the fall on *Popular Economics for Working People*. The details will be printed in the fall issue of this newsletter. Another LRC project that has just been completed is a study comparing union apprenticeship programs with those run solely by employers. One finding of the study is that non-union apprenticeship programs often pop in and out of business; they lack the stability over time of union programs. The entire study will soon be available on the LRC's website: www.cpcs.umb.edu/lrc.

UMASS DARTMOUTH

This spring the UMD Labor Extension Program has been busy with a two-month long series, one for new stewards in USW Local 1357 in New Bedford and a region wide health and safety class, co-sponsored with MassCOSH. The culmination of this class was a Worker Memorial Day observance which raised public awareness through local press coverage and gave voice to the daughter of a fisherman lost at sea. We are actively recruiting students for our Labor Studies minor and encourage anyone interested to contact us. This semester we sponsored four lectures and discussion sessions to promote the program and get people talking about labor issues on campus. Topics addressed included FMLA, changes in women's employment, history of slavery, and green jobs. In our ongoing work, we continue to do education around immigrant worker rights through collaborations with community organizations and MassCOSH (see this month's Spotlight for details).

UMASS LOWELL

This spring we completed a successful series of open enrollment classes - with over 80 participants attending sessions led by labor attorney Bob Schwartz, on Legal Rights of Union Stewards and Introduction to FMLA, and by Mark Brenner, economist and co-director of Labor Notes, where participants discussed what is happening with the economy and what we can do about it. Spring and summer is the busiest season for women's programming and we are working with both WILD and the Northeast Women's Summer School to develop curriculum, recruit and train teachers. We are broadening our research into work restructuring, new technologies, and how those are affecting workers and unions. With the Merrimack Valley CLC we started interviewing building trades reps and asking how worksite changes have affected the work members do, the demand for labor, and union leverage. Another new project, Working Alone, is looking at the increasing isolation and individualization at work and its impact on solidarity.

SPOTLIGHT

MASSCOSH IMMIGRANT WORKER INITIATIVE

The Immigrant Worker Initiative, a project of the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), works to build the power of immigrants and workers of color to mobilize for safe and healthy work conditions. As part of the initiative, Mass COSH created an Immigrant Worker Center two years ago to provide training on workplace health and safety rights, identifying and protecting workers from hazards, and organizing for a safe and healthy workplace. Most importantly, the project encourages and supports collective action by workers from the same workplace or industry and links workers with unions and community groups to support workplace organizing efforts and to address gaps in government protections for immigrant and low-wage workers.

MassCOSH also offers a two-day intensive training that gives Worker Center members the opportunity to develop teamwork, leadership and organizing skills with special emphasis on how to have influence on the law-making process. One to two hour interactive health and safety training sessions are also offered at ESOL/ABE/GED centers, religious institutions, community organizations and unions. For more information visit <http://www.masscosh.org>.



The Resource Corner

In this issue we highlight organizational websites that provide information on the rights of immigrants in general and immigrant workers in particular.

CASA of Maryland, a community organization founded by Central American refugees and North Americans, posts popular education curricula (Spanish and English) including advocacy, leadership, and labor history, which can be ordered from their website: <http://www.casademaryland.org>, then click on "Resources."

The Fair Immigration Reform Movement, a coalition of immigrant rights, faith-based, and multi-racial organizations fighting for comprehensive immigration reform, offers a *Know Your Rights* fact sheet (English): <http://www.fairimmigration.org/learn/know-your-rights.html>.

Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO, a "social movement and a labor union," offers a fact sheet on *Immigrants' Rights in the Workplace* (English and Spanish): <http://www.floc.com/documents/IRWorkingRights.pdf>

National Employment Law Project (NELP), a national advocacy organization for employment rights of lower-wage workers, posts the following fact sheets at their website: www.nelp.org:

Immigration Status and Your Rights as a Worker [English]: <http://www.nelp.org/docUploads/pub146%2Epdf>

Social Security No-Match [Spanish]: <http://www.nelp.org/docUploads/ss%20no%20match%2011%2D2005%20sp%2Epdf>

Hoffman Plastics [Spanish]: <http://www.nelp.org/docUploads/pub133%2Epdf>

The immigration page of the **National Immigrant Law Center (NILC)**, a national support center protecting and promoting rights of low income immigrants and families, <http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/index.htm>, posts materials from the recent NILC Low-Income Immigrant Rights Conference, including downloadable workshops *Immigrant Workers Rights 101* and *Employment Related Enforcement Tools*: http://www.nilc.org/DC_Conf/dc-conf2007/wkshp_descriptions_07.htm

The National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild, a national membership organization of lawyers, law students, legal workers, and jailhouse lawyers working to defend and expand rights of immigrants, has a general *Know Your Rights* pamphlet in many languages: <http://nlg.org/resources/kyr.php>.