Why Union Matters?...

“New Friends”

“Without a union, workers will be taken advantage of”

“A voice in the workplace”

“Strength in Numbers”

“I just want some RESPECT!”

“Protecting workers rights and a solid middle class”

“Equality”

...Because YOU Matter!
Enough is enough -
It's time to fund our future!

On April 1, 2016 Local 943 representatives, Laura Kies and Bob Goldsbury joined thousands of members from the Chicago Teachers Union (Local 1) along with other IFT union members, parents, students, and community groups for a “Day of Action” held at the Thompson Center in Chicago, Illinois. Folks from Lake County to Belleville banded together in a show of strength, unity, and commitment to demand that Governor Rauner drop his irresponsible political priorities and pass a budget that serves all Illinoisans, not just the wealthy few. From every corner of the state and in one loud voice, an undeniable message was sent to the Governor: Enough is enough - it's time to fund our future!

The “Day of Action” was a remarkable demonstration of collective action that garnered national and social media attention, as thousands of members protested and rallied at neighborhood Chicago schools, in workplaces like O’Hare Airport, and on college campuses throughout the state.

As one of the oldest locals in Illinois, we have a proud history. Since December 19, 1946, AFT Local 943 has been protecting worker rights, providing resources to our members, defending those in need, and advocating for our schools, students and their families. Local 943 represents “Unity in 3-D” by being diverse, dedicated, and determined.

In order to celebrate our 70th year anniversary, we want to include as many of you as we can in planning a variety of celebration opportunities. Please be sure to check your personal email throughout the summer for notification of planned events, as well as important information from your Union.

To start joining in the fun and to share in our noble mission of “Always Reppin’ You” consider ordering your own “March Madness” inspired t-shirt (see the order form below).

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**Always Reppin' T-shirt Order Form**

Name (please print):  ________________________________________
Council or District: _________________________________________
Building (if applicable):______________________________________
Phone Number:_____________________________________________
Home Email:  ______________________________________________

Cost: $10 per T-shirt - Blue Print on White T-shirt – available in crew neck only. Sizes run big and the cotton is preshrunk.

Return your order form and payment to AFT Local 943 by Friday, May 20, 2016.

T-shirts will be distributed at the August 2016 Presidents/Treasurers Workshop.

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Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers-AFT Local 943 ● 15521 S. 70th Ct., Orland Park, IL 60462 ● 708-633-0943 ● fax 708-633-0944

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Legislative Update
By: Karen Kendall, Vice President for Political Activities

After a ten month budget impasse, we are still presented with no budget partly because of a revenue problem. When the temporary income tax rate went from 5% to 3.75%, it made things worse – a loss of $1.8 billion yearly.

There are some ideas being considered:

- Fair tax measure. A proposed amendment to the Illinois State Constitution that would change the income tax rate from a flat tax to a graduated or fair income tax. It would have to be approved by 3/5ths vote in both Houses and by voters in November. It would generate over $1.9 billion in new revenue. (At press time, the house and senate are considering legislation in order for the Constitutional Amendment to be on the ballot in November.)
- Illinois Senator Andy Manar’s school funding bill is a school formula re-write. We are waiting to receive the financial impact this bill would have on our school districts.
- Retirement Tax – Out of all the states that have an income tax, we are one of three states that do not tax retirement income. Indiana taxes retirement income. This idea has been proposed before and is coming up again. The proposals being talked about vary but one would exclude any retirement income under $50,000 from being taxed. There is also a debate whether it would require a constitutional amendment. Would this cause more people to leave Illinois? An AARP survey of 1000 Illinois residents age 50 and up said:
  ~ 89% would oppose proposals to tax retirement income,
  ~ 72% said a tax would have a “major impact” on their ability to plan for a secure retirement,
  ~ 40% were not aware that retirement income is not currently taxed (Now you are aware!), and
  ~ 60% said they would consider moving to a more tax-friendly state.

No matter how this all works out, our state needs to commit to supporting a quality education for all and finding the necessary resources to support it.

Invest In Yourself
By: Daniel Leib, AFT Local 943 Treasurer

As warmer weather approaches, my thoughts tend to drift towards different opportunities that are available in the summer. As a teacher with a contract that rewards earning credit hours, I always look to sign up for a class or two. Not only do I get to learn new strategies and share ideas, moving on the salary schedule is a financial benefit that pays off every year.

If you consider taking a class this summer, check to see if your contract allows for tuition reimbursement. Districts that invest in their employees through continuing education see several benefits including a higher retention rate and overall job satisfaction. If your district does not offer some type of incentive for continuing education, make a note of it for the next time your union is negotiating.

While I’m taking a class I try to find one activity or idea to use in the upcoming school year. Although the class may offer several great ideas and activities, committing to one helps me to focus on how to apply what I am learning. I know we also have members who do not get the summer off. I would suggest to try to find some opportunities that can work with your schedule throughout the year. Community colleges offer classes at night or on the weekend that can lead to personal or professional growth.

How does the Union make political endorsements?
How can the Union get the community to support our issues?
How can I get more involved in my Union?

Learn the answers to these questions and more.
Join us Wednesday, May 18th for the “Political Activities and Community Engagement” module of the Union’s Worksite Leader (Building Rep) Training

This training is open to all interested Union members including teachers, paraprofessionals, building reps, and Union leaders, and Union volunteers.

Training will be held on Wednesday, May 18, 2016, from 4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at the Local AFT Local 943 Union office, 15521 S. 70th Ct., Orland Park.

For more information or to reserve a seat, please call 708.633.0943 x221. Your Union needs you. Please join us.

May, 2016
**PSRP Perspective From a First Time Attendee**

By: Elvis Slaughter, Thornton Fractional Support Staff SD215

First, let me thank AFT Local 943 for inviting me to attend the AFT Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel and Higher Education Joint Conference in Las Vegas, March 31–April 3, 2016.

The educational conference experience and camaraderie among its members were enlightening and much appreciated.

The AFT is one of the most coveted unions of teachers in the country, and since its creation in 1916, it has continued to inspire and help American teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, and higher education.

In its quest to help them achieve greatness, it continues to provide great conferences to improve their skills and offer kids from all over the country the education they need.

In addition, I was impressed by the generosity of AFT leadership and staff in making this conference a great success. The choice of using Bally’s was another blessing in itself. Bally’s provided excellent hospitality, service, and care.

The agenda book and learning materials were professionally done and offered many workshops that can be used at work and in many areas of personal life.

My favorite workshops were on Union Organizing, Community Engagement, and the ALICE concept—an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate—the words that describe what students are taught to do when there is a threat of school violence.

All the guest speakers were phenomenal, including Travon Martin’s mother, AFT Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Loretta Johnson, and AFT President Randi Weingarten. For more on issues important to Paraprofessionals, visit www.aft.org/PSRP.

-Staffer Dr. Loretta Johnson, and AFT President Randi Weingarten.

**What is Workplace Stress and What Can I Do About It?**

By: Mari Jayne Tittle, Orland Council of Educators SD135

Stress is a part of everyday life; we all experience it to one degree or another.

Although it is an unavoidable part of many activities at work and at home, stress becomes harmful when it reaches an intensity that impairs daily activities. Too often, we think of workplace stress as a “psychological” problem of an individual that can be controlled by will. But research tells a different story. High levels of stress at work can be toxic and a danger to your health. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median number of days absent from work for 1,997 cases of occupational stress was 23 days—four times the median absence for all other non-fatals work-related injuries and illnesses. Occupational stress has become a real and valid concern in today’s workplace.

When you perceive that you are under enormous stress at work and are feeling overwhelmed, certain biological/hormonal reactions are triggered in your brain, possibly causing a secretion of cortisol, which in part maintains blood pressure and cardiovascular function. Chronic stress causes too much cortisol secretion. Some everyday signs of too much cortisol: rapid weight gain, especially around the middle; mood disturbances, irritability, anger; high blood pressure; excessive fatigue.

So what can I do?

- Get more sleep - strive for 7-8 hours per night.
- Lose a little weight
- Get some exercise – at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise four-five days a week.
- Find social support at work and in your family.
- Map out alone time, especially if you are a woman. Working moms need time that belongs strictly to them.

And remember, your union can play a powerful role in reducing the toll of workplace stress on its members, by reminding its members of the power that the contract gives them to protect their rights, dignity and control at work.
Summer Training for All Union Members in Lake Delavan, Wisconsin

Summer is just around the corner, and it's time to apply for this great union training opportunity available to teachers and paraprofessionals!

Great Lakes Union Leadership Institute (ULI)
June 26-30, 2016 Don't miss this popular annual training and union leadership development program held at beautiful Lake Lawn Resort in Delavan, Wisconsin.

Great Lakes ULI is co-sponsored by the Illinois Federation of Teachers and American Federation of Teachers and is specially designed to address the needs of members in the Midwest region. In addition to hands-on learning, participants have the chance to network with fellow union members in a relaxed setting. Learn valuable skills to help strengthen the Union in your school district.

Courses to be held:
• Union Leadership Skills
• Effective Grievance Administration (Part 1)
• Introduction to Negotiations and Contract Campaigns
• Communicating Our Union Message to Others

Detailed course descriptions are available online at www.ift-aft.org. All AFT-Local 943 members are encouraged to apply for this union-sponsored opportunity. A conference application can be found at AFT-Local 943’s website www.aff943.org. Applications must be in by Wednesday, May 25. Selection of participants will be according to AFT-Local 943’s Senate and Executive Board policy. Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. For more information, call the AFT-Local 943 at 708.633.0943.

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Professional Development
Earn 1 Licensure Credit Per Hour for Summer PD Courses

These class offerings are the final installment of the courses presented throughout the 2015-16 school year. Topics will be reviewed and any additional information will be presented. Any questions regarding course descriptions or offerings, please contact Mary Stockwell at 708.429.0980 or slcmry@sbcglobal.net

• No Cost to Local 943 members
• Courses held 8:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m. at the Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 943 office, 15521 S. 70th Ct., Orland Park (155th Street and 1.5 blocks East of Harlem Ave.)

Beginning Reading Instruction
July 25th, 26th, and 27th—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Presenters: Julie Bentley and Kim Waters
Focuses on how children learn to read and the best ways to teach beginning reading from kindergarten to the end of the primary grades. This course is also useful for teachers and support staff working with older students who still are having difficulty with decoding and fluency. Strategies include phonics/decoding skills, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Working With Anti-Social Students and Beginning of the Year Classroom Management
July 28th, July 29, and August 1st—Thursday, Friday, Monday Presenter: Mary Stockwell
This course presents research on emotional and behavioral problems of students who consistently act out. Participants will learn strategies to reduce and/or prevent the occurrence of disruptive outbreaks in the classroom. This course is relevant for teachers and classroom paraprofessionals in all grade levels and subject areas and especially helpful to 1st and 2nd year teachers and paras.

Reading Comprehension Instruction
August 2nd, 3rd, and 4th—Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday Presenters: Linda and Ivory Manney
Focuses on the research and exemplary practices that help students acquire strong reading comprehension skills and is appropriate for all K-12 teachers and support staff. The RCI course content supports teachers’ abilities to meet the criteria of the following Danielson Framework: Planning and Preparation; The Classroom Environment; Instruction; and Professional Responsibilities.

Strategies for Student Success
August 8th, 9th, and 10th—Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday Presenters: Ann Francis and Mary Stockwell
Ideal for both new and veteran teachers. Topics include: Setting Measurable Objectives, Engaging Students Long-term Memory, Questioning Techniques, Gaming, Social Media, Bullying, and Managing Stress.

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Registration Form—Summer 2016 Professional Development Courses
Mail/email/call/fax to: AFT Local 943, 15521 S. 70th Ct., Orland Park, IL 60462; Email JSpirakes@ift-aft.org; Call 708.633.0943 x 225; Fax to 708.633.0944

NAME:_________________________________________________________________________ School District #:________________________
Home Email :__________________________________Home Phone :________________   Cell Phone :____________________
Select Course(s): ___Beginning Reading    ___ Anti-Social Behavior    ___Reading Comprehension    ___Strategies for Success
Don’t forget to renew your license by June 30th!

Log on to your ISBE account and make sure you have all your professional development courses and workshops listed. EVERYONE needs 120 hours of professional development (PD) in order to renew (unless under the old system). Check the total number of hours listed at the BOTTOM of your PD column and make sure you have 0 hours due. If you have any questions or concerns about your PD credits, contact the South Cook Illinois Service Center at 708/754-6600.

Need a new union membership card?

Contact AFT Membership
On the web: http://www.aft.org/members/
By phone: 888/238-5646 By email: membership@aft.org
For further assistance, call AFT Local 943 at 708.633.0943 x221

Retiring this Year?

Join the IFT/Local 943 Retirees Council of the Northern Illinois Retiree Action Committee. The Retirees Council provides:

- Informational workshops and presentations
- Group rates at Drury Lane musicals
- Continued Union membership
- IFT/AFT membership benefits and discounts
- Local 943 AFterthoughts and IFT publications
- Legislative/Pension updates
- Low $20 annual fee

(Sep. 1, 2016-Aug. 31, 2017)

Join Today! Questions? Call Judy Spirakes at 708.633.0943 x225
Mail $20 check payable to AFT Local 943, 15521 S. 70th Ct., Orland Park, IL 60462

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone #:

Personal Email address for future notices:

Current School District: