

# **UNION SPOTLIGHT**

AFT Washington, AFL-CIO

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September 2019



## **AFT Washington Convention May 18-19, 2019, at Hotel Murano in Tacoma, Washington**

*Photo by Christine Landon*

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## Welcome Our New Staff



Anna-Marie  
Magdalena

Anna-Marie joins the AFT Washington team as a Union Organizing Representative with nearly 20 years of organizing experience. She was a member of SEIU 775 as a hospice caregiver and is a proud Seattle Central College and Evergreen State College graduate. Before joining AFT Washington, she organized hospital and behavioral healthcare workers at SEIU. Anna-Marie was born and raised on Vashon Island and she has traveled in Latin America and the Middle East and teaches English Language Learners in community-based programs.



Irene Morrison

Irene began their work at AFT first as a part-time member organizer, moving to full-time earlier this year, before being hired as a Union Organizing Representative with AFT Washington.

They were first recruited to activism at AFT as an adjunct composition instructor at Pierce College, where they also represented adjuncts on the bargaining team. Irene's first local union was UAW 2865, the union of TAs, tutors, and readers in the University of California System, where they were Southern Vice President. Irene has a PhD in English from UC Riverside, and has published parts of their dissertation on postcolonial science fiction in *The South Atlantic Review* and *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. They fell in love with the Olympics and never want to leave Washington.

## Announcing Our AFT Washington/BIL Scholarship Recipients

By Cris Rice, Support Specialist

We are happy to say we saw a rise in the number of applicants this year – we received six applications! And thanks to all the wonderful support we received from locals at convention this year, we were able to surpass our goal of three scholarships and award four!

One applicant is a first-time scholarship recipient, Nathan Lesure. His mother is an AFT Washington affiliate member – UW English Language Faculty Local 6486. Nathan will be working towards his Bachelor of Science degree with a major in either forestry or environmental

science. The other three recipients are AFT Washington members – Tawny Townsend with AFT Everett Higher Education Local 1873, pursuing doctoral studies in Student Affairs Administration and Leadership; Jessica Weimer with Cascadia Community College Fed. of Teachers Local 6191 is working towards her doctorate in Adult Education; and Joel Ozretich with UW English Language Faculty Local 6486 is going for his Post-Baccalaureate Elementary Education Professional Program.

We wish them all the best!

## AFT Washington Executive Board

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Board meetings are usually held on the first Saturday of the month except for holidays and summer months. Board members are elected to two-year terms. AFT Washington represents over 6,500 members and prospective members in early childhood education, K-12, and higher education in Washington State and is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, which represents 1.7 million members nationwide.

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*Karen Strickland*

## President's Column

# Continuing the Fight

**W**e've done it again – we've launched another school year, embarking on the joys, challenges, frustrations, victories, and laughs that come with working in the field of education. My summer has been especially eventful, having had the privilege of enjoying a trip to England and Scotland for the first time, providing the opportunity for rejuvenation, and having joined a rock band (also a first), which serves as a fabulous de-stressor on a day-to-day basis. I hope your summer has given you a bit of down time too.

The summer wasn't all fun and games for me and our dedicated AFT Washington staff. Following our convention in May we have been moving forward on our resolutions, particularly around developing a student membership program, advocating robust legislation to support contingent faculty, and continuing our [Re]Invest in Our Colleges (ROC) campaign. Additionally, we passed Resolution 2019-01 calling for amnesty for undocumented people in the U.S.A., which was amplified by Resolution 14 on Immigration and the Labor Movement at the Washington State Labor Council convention.

It is certainly no mystery as to why these two strong resolutions were unanimously passed by the labor community. Many of you work with immigrant co-workers, students, and families day in and day out, providing you with an up-close view of the devastation caused by the social and political climate surrounding immigrants right now. We see and hear news reports on a daily basis about families separated, long-time U.S. residents being deported to countries they've never known or haven't been to in decades, workplace raids, inhumane conditions in immigration jails, and the horrific murders of ordinary people doing ordinary things, like shopping for school supplies on a Saturday morning. The human beings who make up the labor movement of Washington State, all of whom (unless indigenous to this land) either arrived or are descendants of someone who arrived here voluntarily or involuntarily from somewhere else, increasingly understand that the quest to uphold the dignity and well-being of all people requires a persistent, proactive, and insistent fight. These resolutions reflect our collective commitment to that fight.

When AFT Washington creates convention themes like "Fighting Forward, Strengthened by Our Past," "Standing Together, We Move Forward," or "Fighting for Justice: We Won't Back Down," what we are saying is that we need to act together in order to improve people's lives. We need to join together to amplify our voice and achieve our goals. When things get rough, when we are up against a mighty foe, we stay the course with clarity and commitment to what is right. We take actions that contribute to the

well-being of our co-workers, students, neighbors, and friends, actions like offering "Know Your Rights" workshops or passing laws like the 2019 SB 5497, the Keep Washington Working bill, which promotes safety, economic growth, and employment stability while reducing discrimination, hate, trauma, and wasted local resources. We do not simply say what needs to be done, we do what needs to be done.

As a labor movement we have the potential of a great deal of power and influence and we need to understand that the struggle for human rights, dignity, equality, and inclusion is not a struggle that will end. We also must not forget that this struggle is born of a history that has put us on this path and which can't be forgotten if we are to fulfill our aspirations. The labor movement's history is one of great successes and terrible lessons, and we have learned lessons about welcoming immigrants into our ranks.

As you gear up for another school year, as you perhaps experience "compassion fatigue" or hopelessness, as you see in front of you so many threats to our collective well-being, I know it can be overwhelming to consider taking on another responsibility. I also know, however, that our movement will only thrive when more of us take an active role in it. In addition to bargaining contracts, handling grievances, talking to new members, and more, we have the task before us of making our voices heard. Wherever you stand on immigration, the practices followed by ICE are threats to every single one of us, particularly those of us who look "different" from

*(continued on pg. 6)*

# Major Legislative Wins This Session

By AFT Washington staff

In the 2019 Legislative Session, we faced huge obstacles – the [Re]Invest In Our Colleges campaign looked too expensive for our upside down tax code to fund, to say nothing of our other constituencies' priorities – but looking over the list of achievements in this legislative session, it's clear we made significant gains. Our constituencies are all represented in the gains from this session!

The best part is that we laid a foundation for a highly engaged membership that is ready to influence the Legislature in the next two sessions. We showed the Legislature that educators meant business. The Legislature created the

Workforce Education Investment fund, set up some progressive revenue sources to fund it, and took education seriously at all levels.

Our key wins include:

\$35 million Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program increase.

\$341 million increase for School Employees Healthcare Benefits.

Two days of paraeducator training fully funded.

Creation of the Workforce Education Investment Account funded with a

progressive revenue source (HB 2158).

Creation of a task force to set standards and ratios for CTC counselors (EHB 1355).

6% COLAs fully funded, starting in July 2019.

Overall CTC funding increase of 11%.

Full funding of the Washington College Grant.

Regional pay for members who work in King County.

## Update From The Washington State Labor Council Convention

By Karen Strickland, AFT Washington President



Convention delegates rally beside Providence employees in Renton

Photo by Christine Landon

I have been attending the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) convention for many years and each year I meet new people, get excited about new ideas, and get smarter about strategies for achieving our goals. This summer I was especially intrigued by a workshop on union-driven, worker-led training of new employees. The panel discussion on intergenerational communications was thought-provoking and I

felt empowered as one of the hundreds of people who rallied outside the Providence healthcare headquarters urging them to provide healthcare workers the working conditions that support patient healing....I think we can all get behind that notion! The Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) launched its phone-friendly worker rights website – <https://rightsat-workwa.org> – and the WSLC announced

an opportunity for union members in recovery - Couples in Recovery. This mix of topics represents the role of the labor movement in supporting the whole person, from wages, hours and working conditions, to our general health and well-being.

As an organization, we are missing out on the full value of the WSLC. Every one of our 39 locals is affiliated with the WSLC, but only AFT Washington (Jaeney Hoene, Jim Howe, and I were state federation delegates, joined by staff Sandra Toussaint and Bob Downing) and AFT Seattle 1789 (delegates were Annette Stofer and Natalie Simmons) were represented at the convention. This means that just a tiny portion of our members had the chance to speak to the various resolutions that were considered. Just a few of us learned from the panels and workshops ideas and strategies for meeting the

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# Political Action and Your Union

By Sandra Toussaint, State Affiliate Political Organizer

**A**t our Powerful Locals training earlier this month, we talked about the importance of being politically active in your union. Being politically active for your union is crucial to not only maintaining our rights, but also to building our strength. We are public employees for the most part, and this means that the people elected and legislation passed directly affects our workplace and how we bargain. If we don't have a say in how these things happen, we're at the mercy of those who do. We know this, and so do our opponents. Imagine what would happen if your administrators, the Chambers of Commerce, or other private interests were the only entities endorsing candidates and writing legislation. Do you think we'd have such strong bargaining laws? Would we have professional development for paraeducators? Could faculty at CTCs bargain for local funds? Would we have an account solely meant for post-secondary education?

No, we absolutely would not.

The work we do with candidates and legislators is essential, but that work can only be effective with you and your fellow members taking up the charge. Fortunately, we have so many opportunities for you to do exactly that!

Currently, our biggest project is the [Re] Invest in Our Colleges (ROC) campaign, which is a big lift, not only for staff, but for you as well. We started this work, and are continuing this work, not only because it directly benefits our members by increasing the state funds sent to our CTCs, but because it's good for our communities. A fully funded CTC system can only make our state stronger. This work is year-round and requires every level of participation.

Even though the ROC campaign is our main focus, it's not our only focus. We

are also working in tandem with our national affiliate on the Fund Our Future campaign, a campaign focused primarily on K-12 and secondarily on higher education. We have made some amazing gains for K-12 in Washington, but there is still much to do, especially regarding improving the lives of our classified members. Supporting and advocating for our K-12 members has always been an equally important part of our political work, but now we are coordinating more closely with other states to make improvements in our own.

We cannot move this work forward without you. We, as staff, have a lot of sway as your representatives, but nothing, and I mean nothing, beats hearing the same message from the people who live or work in a candidate's or elected official's district. We will bang that drum until it falls apart, then we'll build a bigger and louder drum and keep banging that one too!

Here's what we need to keep this work moving:

1. **Contribute to the Committee on Political Education (COPE) Fund** – This is the simplest way to be involved. We ask that each member contribute at least \$5 per paycheck - this way, when you aren't getting a paycheck, you're not contributing.
2. **Join COPE** – Wonder how candidates are endorsed? It's through COPE! I work with the committee, but the committee decides who we endorse and how much money we contribute to electoral candidates. Each local is allowed two committee members, and almost no local takes advantage of this. We need everyone's voice to make sure we endorse the best candidates possible.

3. **Join the Legislative Affairs Committee** – Want to help build our legislative agenda and decide what policy to write? This is the committee for you! Every year the committee meets to research possible policies and determine what our focus should be for the upcoming legislative session.
4. **Attend a Political or Legislative Event Every Quarter** – We are regularly hosting or being invited to various meetings and events, but we need you to attend with us. There are meetings with legislators and candidates, internal planning meetings, community organizational dinners, and several coalition events and meetings, and many others. You'll have your pick! You can pick more than one, too!
5. **Host an Event or Training at Your School** – There are several trainings we can do for you and your local. A lot of them are essential trainings such as how to host a meeting or treasurer training, but there are other trainings as well (Union 101, Unemployment, Student Debt, Digital Communication Tools, etc.) and political trainings (How to Lobby, Canvassing, Campaign Planning). You can also host your own trainings and events at your schools, like union or activist focused teach-ins, voter registration weeks, elected official days, and so many others.

There are many ways, big and small, to be involved, and every little thing helps us move forward. Head over to our websites below and sign up! You can also reach out directly to me, your Political Organizer, at 206-427-8107 (you can text this number if you want!) and at [stoussaint@aftwa.org](mailto:stoussaint@aftwa.org).



# Powerful Locals Conference Sparks Big Ideas

By Irene Morrison, Union Organizing Representative



The Powerful Locals training held in August was a resounding success, with participation from more than 50 leaders representing 17 AFT Washington locals. We here at the office have compiled the feedback we've received and are excited to report that our primary goals appear to have been achieved: to energize local leaders, build on and hone some of the skills they need to strengthen their unions, and build AFT Washington as a community of dedicated educational workers.

One of the messages we shared across seminar tracks and sessions was a big-picture philosophy of how elements such as member engagement, grievances, contract negotiations, and social events all work together as a larger strategy for building union power, not just at the bargaining table, but as a movement of education workers more broadly. A contract, for example, is more than just an agreement on wages and working conditions; it is a reflection of the power of a union at the time of ratification. A

grievance can be part of a larger effort to put pressure on an employer for a better contract. And, to build a sense that "we are the union," rather than having members consider unions as merely an insurance policy, leaders should have a strategy for building community outside of work and have a strong communications plan across platforms.

Feedback from the conference was overall positive, and we are glad to have seen so much energy for bringing back what you learned and applying it at the local level. Members indicated at points that they felt a bit overwhelmed with new information, so we are working on getting attendees the PowerPoints and other presentation materials electronically, which will give attendees a reference as they move the work forward. We are also looking into how best to have more, smaller regional trainings so leaders can continue to build skills (we heard you about having more group activities geared toward specific situations in local contexts!). First on deck for these trainings will likely be grievance workshops; please stay tuned! And we're sorry about the blankets, but hey, that curry was great!

## President's Column

(from pg. 3)

what the current administration imagines American citizens to look like.

There are groups dedicated to telling ICE that we will not, as Americans, stand for their abusive violations of human rights and basic dignity, and those groups are also now facing reprisals, as the truck attack in Rhode Island shows. When guards at private prisons feel they have the right to attack human

beings for exercising their right to free speech, that goes beyond politics. No matter where you stand on immigration, I hope you'll join me in taking the words of our resolutions extremely seriously and fighting for justice. There are opportunities all over the state to make your voice heard, from contacting your congressional representatives to attending protests.

It is no longer enough to work quietly to grow the labor movement's power. Our siblings in the movement are under attack, and, as always, we will stand up and fight back. Our community is composed of many voices, and when one of us is silenced we are all silenced.



*A Union of Professionals*

## AFT Washington Retiree Chapter Local 8045R

# Spotlight on Retirees in Action

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** The AFT Washington Retiree Chapter wants to hear from YOU. To submit articles for the chapter newsletter, please email Sandy Grape or Cortney Marabetta ([cmarabetta@aftwa.org](mailto:cmarabetta@aftwa.org)). You can send an update at any time; we'll hold onto it for the next issue.

**KEEP IN TOUCH:** AFT has been updating its database to a system called Connect. It's a great opportunity for AFT Washington to update your information in that system. If you want to keep informed of Retiree Chapter happenings and need to update your mailing or email addresses, please contact Christine Landon ([clandon@aftwa.org](mailto:clandon@aftwa.org) or 206-432-8075) so we can update your information for you.

### WELCOME TO A NEW MEMBER:

Hi! My name is Sandy Grape and I am a newer member of this chapter. I worked at Tacoma Public Schools as a paraeducator for 18 years, retiring on November 1, 2017. I found in retirement, it was easy to continue to be active in the para union, Local 461.

Last summer, I joined the Pierce County School Retirees' Association and was a recent delegate to the state convention. Being the daughter of two union members, you would think I would join a union right after high school. Well, that didn't happen. I was married, a mom, and in my 20's before I had my first union job, UFCW 367. This was in about 1973. I stayed with that union until 1996. Too young to retire, I found myself volunteering in classrooms at University Place Elementary and Lake Tapps Elementary. I became a paraeducator with Tacoma in

1999. I have served on their Executive Board and on the Advisory Committee.

I have lived in Washington State since I was 2, moving from Minneapolis. I'm also mom to my son Doug, 50 yrs. old, and to my fur babies, Lucky, who is 14 yrs. old and Sox, who is 6 yrs. old. I love working out at the gym, yard work, volunteering, music, doing research, and walking. Even joined a "Walking Club" this year in the local area.

I love retirement!!

### CONVENTION BUSINESS AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The annual meeting of the Retiree Chapter Local 8045R was held in Tacoma at the Hotel Murano on Saturday, May 18, 2019. Our business began at 11 AM and we had quite an array of items to discuss. Breaking for lunch at 12:30 PM; we were able to conclude our business and wrap things up by 2:30ish.

Our next meeting date will be announced soon.

New Executive Board officers were nominated and elected for the 2019-2021 term:

President: Burt Weston

Vice President: Glenda Hanson

Secretary: Renee Potter

Treasurer: Carla Shafer

Director: Jonathan Betz-Zall

Director: Debby Dodd

Director: Sandy Grape

Director: Jani Greer

Director: Merrilee Miron

The director positions have a variety of responsibilities, ranging from legislative work to new membership. Keep your information updated so we can keep you informed as the Board gets down to business!

### ANNOUNCEMENT:

The retiree chapter is an advocate for PSARA (Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action). For over a quarter century, PSARA has been fighting for older Americans and their families. There is an event coming up that you may want to participate in:

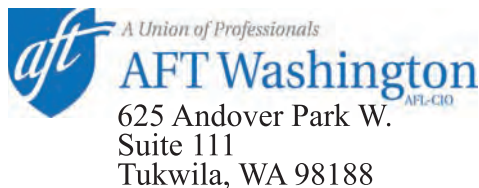
**Birding With PSARA:** Billy Frank National Wildlife Refuge, Nisqually Delta. Leave West Seattle at 9 AM, Tuesday, September 24. Email Karen Richter at [kerichter100@gmail.com](mailto:kerichter100@gmail.com) or call her at 206-679-3295 for more details.

**2020 Labor History Calendar:** Time to Order – 2020 PNLHA Labor History Calendar. For pricing and to order, email [pnlha.calendar@gmail.com](mailto:pnlha.calendar@gmail.com) or go to [https://pnlha.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/2020-labor-calendar-flyer\\_final.pdf](https://pnlha.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/2020-labor-calendar-flyer_final.pdf).

### TAKE ACTION – SIGN UP:

Want to know what's happening politically with the AFT Washington legislative and political agenda? Sign up for the AFT Washington *Legisletter* by contacting Sandra Toussaint (206-427-8107 or [stoussaint@aftwa.org](mailto:stoussaint@aftwa.org)).

Subscribe to AFT National Retirement newsletter at:  
<https://www.aft.org/action/subscribe-aft-e-newsletters>



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## Update on the WSLCC

(from pg. 4)

needs of our members and building our movement. Only a handful of people were able to make connections with members and staff from other unions and to enjoy the camaraderie at the BBQ, the banquet, the healthcare workers action against Providence, and the Labor History jeopardy game.

Similarly, the Central Labor Councils (CLCs) exist throughout the state and offer union members the chance to work collectively to share information, coordinate activities and action, and build the relationships that translate to power in our workplaces and communities. Here again, only a few of our locals participate in CLC meetings or

other activities such as the candidate endorsement process. CLCs are a key element in the democracy of our movement and we need to be a part of it.

We are forfeiting the benefits of active affiliation with the CLCs and the WSLC, and I would like to see our locals benefit through their affiliation. That requires involvement. If you're curious about this, talk to your local president about representing your local. The power of our movement lives within the people, and the power of the people lives within our relationships to one another. Let's build these relationships and achieve our movement's goals.



## AFT Announces Newest Free Benefit to all Active and Retired Members

**A**FT is proud to announce the newest member benefit: Identity Theft Protection that offers a comprehensive suite of identity theft benefits featuring a \$10,000 ID theft expense reimbursement along with an assisted restoration and recovery service.

In order to enroll, visit [aft.clcidprotect.net](http://aft.clcidprotect.net)