

## AFSCME Member Foils Countrywide Financial

The owner of an apartment building where tenants were residing lost the property in foreclosure. The day after foreclosure, the mortgage holder, Countrywide Financial told the tenants that they had thirty days to get out of the building and once they moved, they would give them \$1,000.00, minus any damages that "they deemed" to the property, or eviction proceedings would commence.

The tenants had paid their rent up to date and were upset because the former owner refused to return their phone calls, to have their security deposit returned, so they could move.

Tenant's contacted the City's Housing Department and discovered that the property was under the City's Rent Control Ordinance and foreclosure was not listed as a reason to evict tenants, so they filed a complaint. The Ordinance states that if new owners wanted tenants out of the property, they had to give the tenants a "relocation allowance," which is a minimum of \$6,800.00 and could be more, depending on the number of "legal" occupants in the apartment.

The tenant's contacted the City Attorney's office to find out what their tenant rights were, but unable to get through to a live person. One of the tenant's knew that Business Representative, Dolores Spears, represented LA City employees and called for assistance. Dolores knew that AFSCME represented Legal Assistants in the City Attorney's office and contacted Local 3090 Shop Steward, Yolanda Estrada. Yolanda immediately went into action. Upon consulting an Attorney in her office, the tenant's learned that Countrywide was evicting tenants in foreclosed property all over the city, but no one had come forward to complain. The City Attorney's office was ecstatic to finally have a case to move forward with an investigation.

Even though it was not part of her duties, Yolanda took all of the intake information and assisted the tenant's in gathering supporting documentation to begin the investigation. The City Attorney's office notified City Councilman Bernard Parks, who represents the 8<sup>th</sup> District, Eric Garcetti, President of the City Council, General Manager of the city's Housing Department and City Attorney, Rocky Delgadillo. They all contacted Countrywide Financial, notifying the company that it was in violation of the City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance and demanding that the eviction be rescinded.

The politicians held a press conference in front of the tenant's apartment, to announce that Countrywide had rescinded the eviction notice and apologized for any inconvenience to the tenants.

At the press conference, the tenant's spoke with the City Attorney, praising Yolanda for her fast action and assistance.

## Scholarship Applications Open August 2008

Looking for financial support for college? Each year the AFSCME Family Scholarship Program provides at least 13 \$2,000 to high school seniors scholarships that will be renewed for \$2,000 each year for a maximum of four years, provided the student remains enrolled in a full-time course of study. The scholarship may be used for any field of study.

### Are You Eligible?

To be eligible, you must:

- Be a graduating high school senior in 2009
- Be a daughter, son or financially dependent grandchild of an active or retired AFSCME member.
- Be an applicant to an accredited college or university and subsequently accepted as a full-time student in a four year degree program.

### To Apply:

The time to submit applications opens in August. For more information go to <http://www.afscme.org/members/880.cfm> on the web.

## Hats Off to Top PEOPLE Person

AFSCME Local 3302 activist Vorie Clements was awarded \$1000 from the PEOPLE program for her success. Her ticket was picked in a random drawing of members that recruited 20 or more PEOPLE participants.

PEOPLE is a voluntary check off which funds AFSCME's political program. We participate in politics to win the best contracts possible and to win legislation to aid the middle class.



### Steward Training Rescheduled

The Level II Steward Training scheduled for July 12, 2008 in our South Bay office has been rescheduled to Saturday August 9, beginning at 10 AM at South Bay office.  
500 Carson Plaza Drive, Suite 107

## Los Angeles Apollo Alliance Puts Forward Green Policy Framework

The Apollo Alliance is one of the more interesting environmental organizations in the country. Founded in Wisconsin in 2004, in the wake of the 9/11 tragedy, they have successfully bridged the gap between sometime adversarial organizations to win green legislation. Their mission is to build a coalition of business, labor, environmental, and community leaders. This broad coalition is working to catalyze a clean energy revolution in America and reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, cutting the carbon emissions that are destabilizing our climate. Their plan includes expanding opportunities for American businesses and workers. AFSCME District Council 36 is one of over 100 endorsing organizations.

The Alliance's current effort is to encourage the City of Los Angeles to retrofit city-owned public buildings to solar or other environmentally-friendly energy sources. At the same time the City will develop a job creation and workforce development strategy to connect the unemployed and underemployed residents to green career paths. The program includes partnering with labor unions in creating pipeline for "green careers" by providing training inner city youth.

The recommendations are working their way through the City Council. If you live or work in the City of LA we are asking you to fill out an endorsement card which can be found on our website (<http://afscme36.org>)

## AFSCME Strikes at the University of California

AFSCME Local 3299, service workers at UC campuses throughout California went on a 5 day strike July 14 - 18 after 11 months of negotiations stalled. The central issue is the poor wages service workers receive. The service workers are fighting to be treated like their peers who are doing the same jobs at other hospitals and colleges across the state, who earn substantially more money.

The worker's pay is so low, at \$11.50 per hour; they often live in poverty, relying on public assistance just to survive. Yet the university is not guaranteeing any raise for all of the jobs represented by the union.

The service workers striking are custodians, food service workers, cooks, groundskeepers, bus drivers, building maintenance workers, parking representatives and security guards.

## AFSCME Joins Coalition to Fight for Affordable Quality Health Insurance.

AFSCME health care activists participated in press conferences held simultaneously in 52 cities to announce the formation of labor and community coalition called Health Care for America Now (HCAN) Its purpose is to advocate for affordable, quality health care for all. AFSCME President Gerald McEntee explained that AFSCME is basing its support on the coalition adhering to the following core values:

- [Guaranteed choice of plans](#)
- [Employers pay their fair share](#)
- [Government must be an advocate for us](#)
- [Choice of a public plan](#)
- [Guarantee high quality coverage for everyone](#)

The coalition plans to participate in demonstrations, grass roots lobbying and visits with legislators. The effort kicks off with a petition drive to show the breadth and depth of the coalition. Sign on by going to <http://healthcareforamericanow.org>.

Here in California, the District Council is playing a leading role in the effort to transform the state's health care system into a single payer, universal health care system. Senator Sheila Kuehl's bill, SB840 is the vehicle containing the healthcare reform. It includes removing private for-profit insurance companies from the health care business. 17% of the healthcare dollar currently goes to administration, primarily accrued to insurance companies. In contrast, in the countries that have single-payer systems administration is only 3%. Lt. Governor John Garamendi pointed out at the HCAN press conference, America already has a single payer health care system that works, called Medicare, but it is only for senior citizens. So it can be done.

