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Workers at Daniel Boone Regional Library are uniting to gain a voice on the job
The new union would represent over 160 library workers throughout Boone and Callaway counties

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Citing high turnover and increasingly unsafe working conditions, Daniel Boone Regional Library (DBRL) workers announced their plan to form a union as Daniel Boone Regional Library Workers United, under the representation of AFSCME Council 61. The new union would cover workers at Columbia Public Library, Callaway County Public Library, Holts Summit Public Library and Southern Boone County Public Library.

The growing group of staff, librarians and support staff are organizing to secure fair pay, accessible services, advancement opportunities, safer working conditions and a voice when it comes to decisions that affect the library.

According to a letter of intent signed by nearly 50 DBRL employees, organizing efforts began after a small group of them met late last year to discuss the challenges of working as front-line staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. After realizing that the administration had done little to address staff's longstanding concerns over safety, workers decided it was time to take action and unionize.

"As staff, we've experienced so many instances of verbal and physical harassment and discrimination from the public. A lot of these could have been avoided with the right policies in place. But administration continues to respond by doing nothing to keep us safe," explained Rowan Walsh, who works in Circulation at Columbia Public Library.

"Our library is the cornerstone of our community and we want it to be a safe, accessible and welcoming space for everyone," said Bryce Johnsen, who also works at Columbia Public Library as a library assistant. "Forming a union is a way to ensure our safety so we can keep providing an important service to our community."

For updates on the Daniel Boone Regional Library Workers United campaign visit www.dbrlworkers.org or follow @dbrlworkersunited on Facebook and Instagram and @dbrlworkers on Twitter. To sign their community support letter, visit www.dbrlworkers.org/community-letter-support.

"We want a union so we can be as much a part of the community as the public we serve. Having a voice, a seat at the table, helps us serve our community and assert our rights as the workers that make the library run." – Patrick Johnston, Library Assistant

"I support a union at DBRL because library staff serve our community best when we feel safe and valued in our jobs, knowing our own needs are being met. Every employee deserves a living wage and the opportunity for career advancement." – Ida Fogle, Public Services Library Associate

"I support a union at DBRL because I care about this library and I believe that open communication will make our library better for employees, patrons, and the community as a whole." – Dakota Hommes, Library Assistant

"I support a DBRL union because I believe all staff members should be treated equitably and have a seat at the table. Everyone should be able to afford a roof over their head, health insurance, and food on the table." – Chriss Jones, Public Services Library Associate

"For too long my co-workers and I have made appeals to the library administration for change and have received only empty promises. We deserve to be listened to, respected and empowered, and we have the power to make that change." – Tori Patrick, Library Assistant

"The library is a wonderful, inclusive and safe place for so many in our community because of the incredible work we do. The staff that work here deserve to have our needs met so that we can continue to do what we do best, and our union will help make that happen." – Kat Stone Underwood, Public Services Librarian

"I support our union because supporting our co-workers can only strengthen our relationships to the community we serve. By uplifting each other, we uplift our community as well. We are worth investing in, as employees and as members of the community." – Rowan Walsh, Library Assistant

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