



2022 Second Calendar Quarter Newsletter

Hello Brothers & Sisters,

A lot has happened since the last newsletter and it's nice to be able to share some positive news with all of you among of all the struggles.

We seem to continue to move in the direction of the “new normal” with the pandemic, which while not easy is encouraging.

At Vision works, we have gone through the first quarter under the new incentive, and in the big picture, about 40% of all workers are seeing an increase to their commissions by about 10%. 30% are breaking even and the jury is still out for the remaining 30%, but long-term projections forecast that most should see small gains or break even, and for the few that may still see losses, it should be very minimal. We will continue to monitor the incentive and plan to ask for information after the second quarter soon.

We're also very excited that OTX training is beginning and we are really hoping that the new system will make all of your jobs easier. I know the training itself is not loved by all, being on a few Sundays, but sometimes you have to make some sacrifices for the long-term gain that you will get. The good news is the Sundays are spread out, you're getting time and half for that training, it is very easy work and most of you are still getting 2 days off on those weeks. Additionally, 2 days of the “bootcamp” training will be on regular store days that the company is closing the doors to the public for. We hope as a result this training is minimal inconvenience for all of you.

We are also starting to see the stores slowly return to normal operation, and while mask wearing tends to bring viewpoints from both sides, any sight of returning to normal is positive.

Also, let's not forget, raises are coming in July.

Finally, I would like to welcome Joe Rizzo as the new Steward in the Buffalo area for the Western Region. He is a Licensed Optician and works in the Hamburg store. Joe comes to us from Value Vision, where he previously served as a Steward there, so he comes already trained and ready to help.

At Value Visions, I am told that the raises that took place in March, some raises exceeded the raises listed in the contract.

At Versant Health (both Lab and Call Center), Raises went into effect in April, Additionally the union was able to bargain an additional Floating holiday as of June 1st. We are still working through the details of that holiday, but know that it is available for you to use.

At Versant Health Latham, I am pleased to share that we worked with the company to slightly change the metrics in the call center for the positive. This announcement isn't all we wanted, but any gain for the workers is always good and something we were strongly pushing for in the contract. (Sometimes the company just has to see for themselves when their ideas don't work.)

Finally, at Balester, Surveys were passed out and we are in the beginning steps of planning for the upcoming contract negotiations in the fall.

Internationally, we have a lot of great news to share.

In April, Steve Poston of Versant Health Latham, went to the IUE Diversity Ambassador meeting in Atlanta and brought home some excellent ideas for our Diversity Committee.

In June, Carmel O'Hanlon of Vision works, went to the IUE National Women's Program meeting in DC and has brought back some ideas for our Woman's Committee.

I am also very pleased to share that Jose Taveras of Versant Health Latham and Michelle Fielding of Vision works were selected to be part of the IUE Mentorship Program (Jose a mentor and Michelle a mentee) This program is an extremely competitive program and only about 24 people are selected throughout the entire IUE to be part of this year long program. Their first meeting was in June in Dayton OH.

In June, I attended the CWA Presidents Meeting and Legislative Political Conference. At the Presidents meeting, I was selected as 1 of only 2 Delegates to sit as an Observer at the Presidents meeting. This is an extremely high honor as our name will go in the record of the minutes of the meeting showing that I served in that role.

Our local was also singularly pointed out at the IUE meeting, for the work we were doing in assisting the IUE, whether it comes to organizing, or getting volunteers to attend the Diversity and Woman's Programs, etc.

Finally at the Political Legislative Conference, I was able to meet with members of congress and/or senators and candidates for the upcoming election and discuss workers right bill we would like to see passed, (like the Pro Act, Call Center Bill and the Stop Union Busting bill)

As far as organizing goes, the IUE with our help continues to try and organize the Vision works stores in PA, and recently we have begun talking to the Optical Workers at Ohio State University about their desire to organize. Many details are still being worked out, but it's all exciting news.

Next Month, most of the members of the Executive Board will be going to Vegas to the IUE Divisional Meeting, where they will attend the IUE Divisional meeting and get training in the areas to help make them understand their roles better, including safety training for those on the Safety Committee and more.

In August, I will be sending all the Stewards in every bargaining unit to the IUE Steward Training in Springfield MA.

I also would like to welcome back Catherine Mann of Versant Health, Latham to the Women's Committee.

Finally, we are in the beginning phases of planning the next GMM in October in Saratoga N.Y. (tentative date is 10/9/22) When the details are finalized (Hopefully mid-July) the call letter with all the details will go out. I am hoping to see many of you attend this year's meeting, as its always a great time, to see what's going on in person and meet your Brothers & Sisters, all while having a little fun together as well.

I hope everyone has a wonderful Summer and I look forward to seeing many of you in the fall.

In Unity
Jason