





### John R. Durso

President of Local 338

#### Fighting for Working People

At the end of April, Local 338 attended the 9th Regular United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Convention, where we proudly reelected our international leadership, President Marc Perrone Secretary-Treasurer Shaun Barclay. Local 338 has worked closely with our international union for decades and they have always been a good source of guidance for our union. Their presence and help during the pandemic were essential, as it allowed us to support our members and keep them safe. I look forward to working with them during their next term!

Along with President Perrone and Secretary Treasurer Barclay, the UFCW's senior leadership were reelected, including myself as an At-Large Vice President. I am extremely proud to represent our union on the international level and promise to continue to serve as a voice for our members on the issues that matter most.

Our national union, the Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Union (RWDSU), played a critical role in the 2023 convention. In addition to being vocal supporters of constitutional amendments that will support our members, representatives from

**RWDSU** contingents nationwide were active participants and helped week run smoothly. Local staff participated on panels, chaired committees, and read at the convention, sharing their valuable experience at Local 338 to educate the rest of the international body. I am proud of all of them, and they did an excellent job representing our members and their values at the convention!

The 2024 State Budget was passed on May 3rd, with several important benefits for New York's working families. In one of the biggest wins for human services workers, including our members at IRI, IAHD and Community Resources, there will be a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) of 2.5%, giving the workers who care for some of our most vulnerable a much-needed raise! New York's minimum wage was also raised in this budget and for the first time, it was indexed to keep up with inflation.

The Office of Cannabis Management received \$67 million in funding, which will support their efforts to establish regulations for the adult-use market, which is expected to take off this year, as well as continue to provide support for the medical cannabis industry

that has supported patients since 2016. Governor Hochul's budget also made childcare more accessible with additional funding for state childcare programs and lowered the child tax credit to include children between the ages of 0-4.

Everything working people received in this year's budget is evidence of the impact of union members getting out and voting in our local, state, and federal elections. Policies, funding, and laws are put into place to improve your quality of life because you elected candidates who understand the struggle and needs of the working class. These elected officials are going to work to ensure that union members have a voice in government, and they aren't overlooked.

That is why it is essential that Local 338 members vote in June. The 2023 Primary is on June 27, with early voting open from June 17-25. I encourage you to vote, and to reference the list of endorsed candidates in your My Local 338 account. If we hope to continue to improve the lives of workers with the support of legislation, we need candidates in office who will fight to pass it.









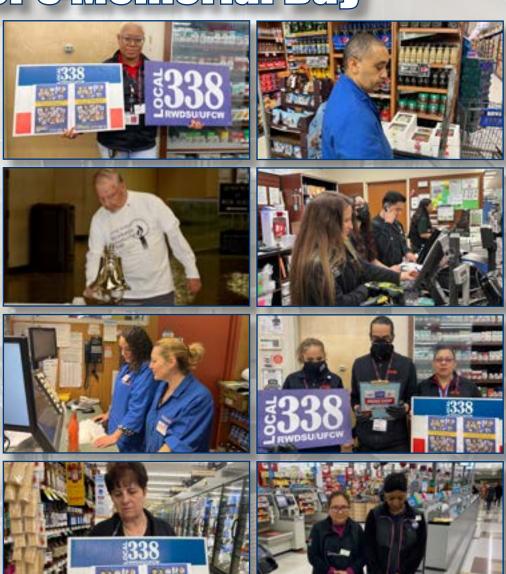




### Honoring the Workers We Lost on Worker's Memorial Day

Worker's Memorial Day is dedicated to workers who were killed, injured or made ill on the job—it is also a chance to renew our commitment to creating safe workplaces for all working people. Every worker has the right to a safe job, and that right is protected by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, which dictates critical health and safety standards across our workforce.

This year, Local 338 members and representatives gathered in stores across New York to commemorate the workers we lost over the last year. We stood together in solidarity during a moment of silence at 10 AM in Local 338 shops across New York to honor the people who went to work and never came home. The labor movement has played an important part in fighting for safe jobs for every worker, and we remain focused on continuing that work this Worker's Memorial Day. The pandemic has only reinforced the need to ensure there are procedures in place to keep working people safe.



The last three years have been incredibly difficult for essential workers, including our membership, all of whom worked on the front lines of the pandemic to support their communities and ensure they were able to continue to buy groceries and essential resources, refill their medical prescriptions, or receive the critical care they needed. We thank them for serving their communities throughout such a difficult time.

On Workers' Memorial Day and beyond, we honor the sacrifices of those lost by continuing the fight to ensure that all workers have access to safe working conditions. We will ensure our elected officials, employers, and the public remember and respect the risks and sacrifices our members have taken.















### Happy Mother's Day to all of our Local 338 moms!

Union moms keep their communities running while going above and beyond to support their families. We admire your hard work and dedication! Thank you to all of our proud union moms—we hope you enjoyed your day!



Ana Calderon, Maria Perez, Heidy Melgares & Elvira Beneitez | ShopRite



Yvette Guzman | Gristedes



Diane Guest | ShopRite



Joanie Smith | Stop & Shop



Emma Gochis | Duane Reade



Julia Sarante, Rosa Silverio & Natividad Hidalgo | Morton Williams



Etelvina Velasquez | ShopRite



Flore Melgarez | ShopRite



Maria Syetta | Stop & Shop



Victoria Delfino | Stop & Shop



Alycesyn Siler & Mia Serrano | PharmaCann



Taina Curry | ShopRite



Ronni Malanik | ShopRite



Trinity Adams & Gloria Martinez | Stop & Shop



Mariel Tejada | Morton Williams



Mariem Niass | Gristedes



Mary Lou Bautista | Stop & Shop



Olga Arroyo | Stop & Shop



Maria Mejia | Morton Williams





The Importance of a Political Action Committee

As we approach the 2023 primary elections, it is an important reminder of the role politics play in our day-to-day lives. As we all know, elections have consequences, and it is important to support candidates who are going to fight for and protect the rights of New York's working people. Local 338 is hard at work supporting candidates who will support policies and legislation that will improve the lives of our membership and all working people.

One way we can do that is through your voluntary support of our Political Action Committee. The Local 338 Political Action Committee (PAC) is an organization that works to support candidates running for local, state and federal office. We work in the best interests of our members to ensure that their rights as union members and working people are protected—and the best way to do that is by providing support to candidates running for office.

In 2023, we fought for Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) and funding in the state budget for wage increases for direct service providers, including our members at IAHD, IRI and Community Resources, who provide care for some of New York's most vulnerable men and women. Our previous political advocacy has helped support candidates who supported legislation to legalize medicinal and recreational cannabis, creating thousands of new, unionized jobs for working men and

women across the state.

With so much at stake for working families today, it's critical that we have a strong voice in the political process. By donating to the Local 338 PAC, you'll be helping to ensure that we can continue to fight for fair wages, safe working conditions, and a better future for New York's working people. We will be able to continue our efforts to work with our partners in government to pass meaningful reforms and protections for working New Yorkers.

If you haven't done so yet, I encourage you to sign up to contribute to the Local 338 PAC. For as little as a weekly contribution of 25 cents, you can make a huge difference in the lives of your coworkers and fellow Local 338 members!



















### Introducing Our New PAC Representative, Pablo Jarama!



Pablo Jarama

Local 338's new **PAC Representative**  Pablo Jarama is Local 338's new PAC Representative! He will be visiting stores across New York to educate members on the value of donating to Local 338's Political Action Committee. The Local 338 PAC is funded entirely by voluntary contributions and supports our political and advocacy work focused on creating policies, laws and budgets that directly support Local 338 members and their families.

Pablo was brought on to the Local 338 team to help educate members about our PAC and what kind of impact it can have. He is working primarily on Long Island and in Queens, and will eventually expand his area to the rest of New York. Before working for Local 338, Pablo was a member of DC37 Local 1911 when he worked for the New York Public Library!

He now works part-time for the Queens Public Library as technical support and is a member of DC 37's Local 1930. At the library, he helps catalog books and does some customer service. Pablo is bilingual, and he helps review the Spanish collection of books at the Queens Public Library. He also helps curate their collection to ensure it has a wide variety of Spanish-language books available for the local community. Pablo is the proud father of his 15-year-old daughter, who he loves to go hiking with and go on road trips together. He says that mountains are his favorite place to hike and visit, and he enjoys mountain biking.

The next time you're at work, keep an eye out for Pablo—he will be able to answer any questions you have about our Political Action Committee! Thank you for supporting our work to better the lives of our members through political action and advocacy!

















As we know, the outcome of an election can be won by a small margin, meaning every vote counts when we're fighting to protect our rights as working people! Union members have a unique perspective on the issues that affect their lives and can bring this experience with them when they go to the ballot box this Spring. Your vote can help support candidates who will fight for policies that benefit workers, such as raising the minimum wage and strengthening workers' rights on the State and Federal level.

Primary Day is on June 27th, and early voting is open from Saturday, June 17th, to Sunday, June 25th. You will have plenty of time to head to the ballot box and cast your vote! If this is your first election season, we encourage you to register to vote—every ballot counts, and working people have a responsibility to participate in elections! The Board of Elections must receive your voter registration by Saturday, June 17th if you want to participate in the 2023 Primary Election. Voting is free, easy, and makes a difference in the lives of working people—get out to vote!

We have endorsed a full slate of candidates from the local, state and federal level who we believe are the best choices for New York's working families and the members of Local 338. To view our endorsements, please visit the Local 338 Member Portal: <a href="mailto:mylocal338.org">mylocal338.org</a>

To register to vote online, visit: <a href="https://voterreg.dmv.ny.gov/MotorVoter/">https://voterreg.dmv.ny.gov/MotorVoter/</a>.

To find your early voting location, visit: <a href="https://www.voteearlyny.org/">https://www.voteearlyny.org/</a>.

To find your Primary Day polling place, visit: <a href="https://www.vote.org/polling-place-locator/">https://www.vote.org/polling-place-locator/</a>















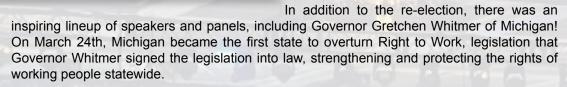
### Marc Perrone Re-Elected as UFCW International President

This April, Local 338 attended the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Convention! This convention is held every five years to elect our international union's leadership and set goals for our union.

This year, we proudly re-elected the leadership team, President Marc Perrone and Secretary-Treasurer Shaun Barclay. Local 338 President John Durso was re-elected as an International Vice President. President Perrone and Secretary-Treasurer Barclay's guidance and leadership. have ensured that we can be the best representatives possible for our members, and we're thrilled to have them for five more years!

Before swearing in the newly-elected leadership, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler spoke at the convention, touching on the important work that the UFCW has accomplished in creating unionized cannabis industries nationwide.

"For the past decade, you have been laying the groundwork for this moment. State by state. From seed to sale. UFCW workers are leaders in that industry."



Local 338's Director of Cannabis Services, Saul Guerrero, spoke on a cannabis panel, where he discussed organizing workers on the ground and how our members are invested in their patients and care about social equity in New York's cannabis industry. UFCW Legislative and Political Action Director, Ademola Oyefeso, gave a speech on the legislative work the organization has accomplished to improve the rights of our members nationwide.

"I have been lucky to have a front row view of UFCW members fighting to enact policies that would help us in negotiating powerful contracts for our members. Politics is not about the politicians, it's about making workers' lives better."

Union Representative Christine O'Reilly spoke on a panel on workplace violence, where she talked about the union's responsibility to support our members when they experience workplace violence. She shared her experience helping members at the West Hempstead Stop & Shop in 2020, after a shooting that took the life of Local 338 member Ray Wishropp.

"We need change. Part of change is reaching out to our communities to help."

It was an inspiring week, and the future of our union is bright! Congratulations once again to the newly re-elected leadership of the UFCW! We can't wait to see what they accomplish in their next term.

















## Local 388 Minimal Sport Light

### Suzanne Kuczka



Suzanne Kuczka, a pharmacist at MedMen in Buffalo, joined New York's cannabis industry because she wanted to help people. Suzanne, who has worked both in retail and hospital pharmacies, says a career in the cannabis industry has made her feel like she is making a difference in the lives of her patients by providing them access to a new kind of treatment for their pain.

At MedMen, Suzanne counsels patients on the best kind of medical cannabis for their unique needs. She works with them on what form of cannabis they're consuming and adjusts the dose as necessary. Suzanne says that seeing how cannabis has been able to improve the quality of life for her patients is incredibly rewarding.

Suzanne is committed to helping erase the stigma surrounding the cannabis industry and the using the plant as a form of treatment. By working in the industry, she believes she can help put first-time and regular users at ease with using cannabis.

"It's a more holistic way of treatment. I've seen how it's helped with anxiety, PTSD, and pain. We're really, truly making a difference in the lives of patients that we're seeing who didn't have any options before and reducing the stigma of cannabis. And as a healthcare professional, I feel I can do that at a different level than some people."

When her MedMen unionized, Suzanne was all-in. She knew that a union was necessary to protect herself and her job and says having a union at MedMen has made a huge difference. She just celebrated her 5-year anniversary with Local 338, and encourages workers to join the union movement!

"The union is absolutely needed in the cannabis industry, we need to be represented so people don't walk all over us," she said. "With the union, you're not forced into overtime. You're actually getting holidays. It makes working conditions better when you have a boss that can't abuse you because they have to follow rules."

In her free time, Suzanne loves going to festivals and jam band concerts, and may attend Jubilee this summer. She also loves to garden—she grows Marzano tomatoes every summer to make and can her sauce! Thanks for being such a proud member of our union, Suzanne!

### RRNews is YOUR News Source

Do you have a unique hobby, a special talent or a great accomplishment that you would like to share? Maybe you love to woodwork and have a back porch to prove it. Perhaps your coworker recently won an award but is too humble to brag about it.

Our unique abilities are what make us different but our togetherness as a union is what makes us strong. Contact Caroline Leddy at 516-294-1338 Ext.1300 or email her at <a href="Cleddy@local338.org">Cleddy@local338.org</a> to be considered as a feature in the next issue of 338 News.



















# Marching in the 50TH Annual NYC Cannabir Parade

On May 6, Local 338 proudly represented New York's unionized cannabis industry in the 50th annual NYC Cannabis Parade! The event, which has been held every year since 1973, has played a key role in educating New Yorkers about cannabis use and prohibition. The parade kicked off with a rally, where speakers from various organizations and government departments spoke about the importance of social equity in the industry and what the end of prohibition means for New York's cannabis industry.

As the parade began, hundreds of marchers walked down Broadway from Herald Square to Union Square, where a rally was held following the parade and cannabis organizations had tents set up to share more about becoming involved in cannabis. It was a great opportunity to learn more about the state's cannabis space and what the future of the adult-use industry looks like!

We were proud to be there on behalf of our cannabis members working in the industry from seed to sale! They are what makes New York's cannabis industry successful, and we are proud to be their representatives. We hope to see you at next year's parade!

















# LABOR DAY 2023 PARADE SAVETHE DATE

Join Your Fellow Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW Members at the

### Labor Day Parade!

Celebrating New York's Working Men & Women!

Saturday, September 9, 2023

Location and times to meet:TBA

Friends and Family are welcome! I We'll kick off the Parade with food and fun!

To see pictures from previous years, please visit: flickr.com/local338





#### **Stamping Out Hunger** with Island Harvest and the NALC



2023 marked the 31st Annual National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Stamp Out Hunger

food drive! The drive has collected over 1 billion pounds of food for those in need, and this year's totals helped thousands of families in our area thanks to the support of the members of Local 338!

Local 338 joined volunteers at Island Harvest Food Bank on May 15th and 16th to help sort and organize nonperishable donations that were collected throughout Long Island. The pandemic and inflation have exacerbated food insecurity nationwide, and we were proud to be able to provide some support to Island Harvest, an organization that has been giving food to families in need for over 30 years.

To encourage donations, we distributed customized bags to our membership, which were then left outside mailboxes once they were filled with donations on May 13th for letter carriers to pick up! Thank you to all our members who put out bags of food again this year-your assistance does not go unnoticed, and your community appreciates the donations!























### Met E. Gonzalvo

**Executive Vice President** 

Palmer and Paumanok Vineyards Ratify First Contract

Since the Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act passed in 2019, farmworkers across New York have been busy exercising their right to unionize. Among the first groups of farmworkers to unionize were the workers at Palmer and Paumanok Vineyards, who joined our union family on August 11, 2022.

The Local 338 negotiating team has been hard at work since August to ensure that these workers were given the strong union contract they deserved. We are pleased to announce that on April 18th, 2023, the workers at Palmer and Paumanok Vineyards on Long Island ratified their first contract, making history as the first group of unionized vineyard farmworkers in New York to secure a union contract!

A union contract is a binding and enforceable document which ensures that workers are guaranteed certain protections—this includes the right to union representation, the right to a grievance procedure, and ensures that an employer cannot fire a worker without due process. It gives workers the support and protection they need at work and

guarantees that the wages and other benefits (such as paid time off) won in a union contract cannot be taken away.

In a win for the workers, the Palmer and Paumanok contract secured guaranteed annual wage increases and paid holiday, vacation, and sick time. It also solidified the benefits that were previously offered by the company, meaning the employer is obligated to continue to offer them to the workers.

The contract ratification at Palmer and Paumanok inspired another group of farmworkers at Macari Vineyards in Mattituck, to file a petition demanding representation to become part of Local 338. We are thrilled to welcome them and look forward to negotiating their first contract! If you're a farmworker who wants more information about unionizing, or a current Local 338 member who wants to talk about our union, you can reach me on my personal cell phone: (646) 261-4858. Member feedback is critical if we are going to be the best representatives we can be for our membership. Active Local 338 members who reach out will receive free swag!



#### **IT PAYS TO BE UNION**

Since January 2023, Local 338, through grievances and arbitrations, collected funds and returned back wages to our members in excess of

\$ 42,596.67





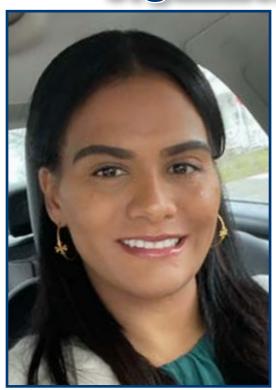








### **Introducing Local 338's Newest** Organizer, Yocasta Reynoso



Yocasta Reynoso joined the Local 338 team as an organizer in September! She previously worked at RWDSU Local 1102 for six years as a Union Representative and Organizer, where she organized and represented workers in Manhattan across a variety of industries, including school staff, retail workers and food services.

As an organizer at Local 338, Yocasta educates nonunion workers on their rights and what kinds of benefits they could gain from unionizing their workplace. She educates them on the value of a union contract and having the support of an organization that can protect their job. Yocasta is passionate about making sure that workers fully understand their rights—she says that workers sometimes don't have a full understanding of what a union is, and her job as an organizer is to explain to them the values of being part of a union family.

"My job as an organizer is to make sure that the workers I'm organizing trust me enough to explain to them the value of being in a union. The working class needs to understand how important it is to work under a union contract," she

Outside of work, Yocasta is a Yankees fan—she's looking forward to the 2023 season-and enjoys traveling with her four children! She's looking forward to visiting her sister in Texas later this year, where she'll meet her first nephew.

#### Welcome to the team, Yocasta!

#### Do you have a new phone number, email, or home address?



Let us know! It's important to keep your information updated in our systems so you're up to date on all things union. Having the correct information in our system ensures that you get everything you're supposed to, in terms of contract negotiation updates, news about your benefit packages, scholarship opportunities, our newsletter, and more! You can update your information through the form here or by logging in to the Local 338 app!



















#### Here's How The Ending of the National and Public Health Emergencies Will Impact You



Ear / Watherins

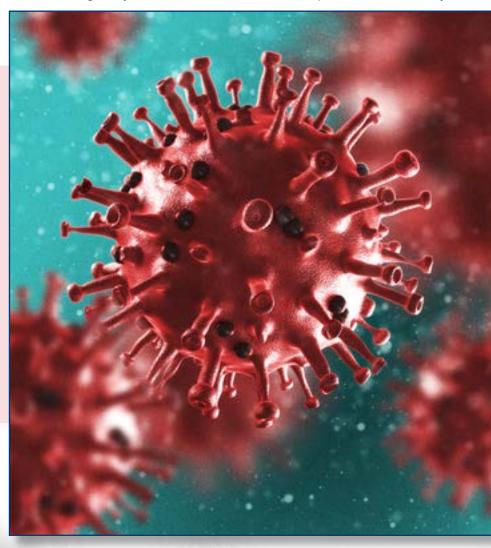
We are all thankful that the worst of the pandemic is over, and we have been able to resume a sense of normalcy in our day to day lives. However, the Biden Administration is ending the National Emergency and the Public Health Emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic on May

11, 2023, means that some of the policies that were enacted during that time will come to an end.

The Public Health Emergency, which was put in place on January 31, 2020, determined the period that health care plans were required to pay for diagnostic tests and related services for COVID-19. The end of the Public Health Emergency means that health providers will no longer be required to cover certain services. This includes and is not limited to:

- Coverage of preventative services and vaccines both in and out of network
- Covered COVID-19 tests without cost-sharing

The Local 338 Health and Welfare Fund will continue to cover you and your eligible dependents at the appropriate cost share for all covered, non-preventive services.



The National Emergency was declared on March 1, 2020, and relaxed certain deadlines, including deadlines for filing for COBRA, claims and appeals, HIPAA enrollment and more. The end of the National Emergency has reinstated deadlines for these services, meaning they are no longer being accepted on a rolling basis.















#### The Local 338 Health and Welfare Fund will be reverting back to its pre-Covid deadlines which include:

- 180 days from the date of service for timely claims filing
- 180 days from the request date for submission of medical records required for claims review
- 30 days from the date of issue to respond to Coordination of Benefits Information requests
- 180 days from the date of claim denial to respond to our injury questionnaire regarding how, when and where your injury/condition occurred
- 180 days from the date of decision to file an appeal on a claim denial

Effective 5/15, Navitus our pharmacy vendor will be making

 OTC COVID tests an excluded product on the formularies based on the Government declaration.

#### PLEASE GET YOUR FREE 8 OTC COVID TESTS PRIOR TO MAY 15!!!

- Paxlovid, used to treat COVID exposure, will no longer be free of charge to the member or the plan, but rather covered under the formulary at the appropriate tier 2 cost share (\$30-\$45)
- COVID vaccines will remain at \$0 copay.



Despite the National and Public Health Emergencies ending, we still encourage Local 338 members to stay up to date on their vaccinations, and to go see their primary care provider if they are feeling ill. Your health is always a priority, and the changing rules around the pandemic should not stop you from seeking treatment.

As always, the Local Affiliated Funds are available to help with any benefits-related concerns members may have. Should you have questions related to the ending of the National Emergency and the Public Health Emergency, please call (516) 294-1338 ext. 1776, or reach out to your Union or Funds Representatives through My Local 338 Member Portal or through the Local 338 office by calling (516) 294-1338 ext. 1775.











### Introducing the UFCW's Free GED Program

We always push our members to succeed and educate themselves—that's why we're pleased to showcase the free GED benefit that's available to Local 338 members and retirees through our international union!

As a member or retiree of Local 338, you are eligible to take General Equivalency Diploma classes for free through our international union, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), and Essential GED. This program offers a customized learning plan, helping you succeed, regardless of when you last went to school. Essential GED will meet you where you're at, allowing you to fully prepare to pass the GED test. Students can study at their own pace, with selfguided classes that can be completed from a laptop, phone or a tablet.

For members or retirees who are interested in taking advantage of this benefit, please visit ufcw.org/ged. Please note: it may take a few days for the UFCW to verify your membership, but once it's been confirmed, you'll receive an email that explains how to log in and begin taking your free GED classes!















### Opt-In to Keep in Touch!



As your Union, it's important that we can keep you up to date on important things happening within your union. Now that we've entered the new year, it's a great time to make sure the contact information we have on file is accurate, including your mailing address, cell number and email address. To do this, you can speak to your Union or Funds/Service Representative, contact the Union Call center at 516-294-1138 ext. 1776, or by simply logging in to your My Local 338 account!

Additionally, we are launching a new peer-to-peer text messaging program to make it easier than ever to get the most important information to you as quickly as possible! This information may include updates on contract negotiations, membership meeting information, or other important union news. We will be using this new program on an as-needed basis— and we will only be sharing information about upcoming events and important updates.

We are asking all members of Local 338 to fill out this form to opt-in to text communications from Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW. (Please note Standard message and data rates may apply.) You can do this in one of two ways:

- Logging in to your My Local 338 account (mylocal338.org) and selecting YES to receiving text messages in the My Profile and Settings tab under My Information
- Completing the following consent form: <a href="https://local338.org/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=352#">https://local338.org/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=352#</a>

### We look forward to keeping in touch with you!

If you have any questions, please contact your Union or Funds/Service Representative.





We are so proud of our members—that's why we feature so many as part of our Member Monday series! Once a month, however, we like to spotlight a member who has gone above and beyond on the job and in their union. Recently, we've featured Christopher Bonacasa, the frozen food manager at ShopRite in Deer Park! He's been a member of Local 338 since 2019. Christopher is a huge fan of Marvel movies, and Spider-Man is his favorite hero from the comics. He's also enjoys spending time with his family and his dogs, Max, Toby and Buddy.

We've also featured Zeion Porter, a 2.5-year member of Local 338, as our June Super Member! Zeion is a dispensary associate at Curaleaf in Newburgh. He is the Shop Steward for his dispensary and says he's proud to be a member because having a union gives him extra protection at work. He's extremely knowledgeable about cannabis, having worked in the legacy market for several years. His favorite strains are Sativa, Jack O'Hare, and Godfather OG. We'd like to feature as many members as we can, so if you think you know someone who should be our next Super member, let us know! We'd love to feature them on our social media platforms. To stay up to date on all things Local 338, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter





#### **LOCAL 338 MEMBER MEETING**



**Join Us for Our Next Membership Meeting on** Wednesday, **June 21, 2023** 

Please check your My Local 338 account for location details and Zoom registration information.















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Our Mission: To Better The Lives Of Our Members And All Working People.