

338 News

Volume III - 2021



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John R. Durso

President of Local 338

Light at the End of the Tunnel

Local 338 has been hard at work helping to ensure that a majority of our members get vaccinated. In order to return to a true sense of normalcy, we as a society, must follow the appropriate steps recommended by our reliable healthcare officials on the state and federal level. Unfortunately, in recent weeks, vaccination rates among people living in New York State have plummeted from the record high numbers in March and April.

The CDC has attributed this decline in vaccination rates towards vaccine skepticism. I can say, both from personal experience and a wealth of research and guidance from trusted health professionals, the vaccine is completely safe, effective, and highly recommended. The mild, temporary side-effects you may experience from the vaccine pales in comparison to the potential impacts of COVID-19. Getting a vaccine is incredibly easy, and often times you can get a shot right away without waiting on any lines or scheduling an appointment in advance. I recommend reaching out to your Union or Funds/Service Representative to find out how you can get your vaccination today.

With new guidance regarding

mask usage coming out seemingly every week, Local 338's position is better safe than sorry. We urge our members to continue wearing a mask while working to avoid any sort of illness, COVID or otherwise, until the pandemic is completely conquered. Additionally, we will continue stressing to the public to wear a mask while frequenting Local 338 shops in a sign of respect to essential workers who have sacrificed so much throughout these past few months. I understand and empathize with our members who might be uncomfortable with wearing masks all day long. It's not always pleasant, but it keeps you and your family safe from catching respiratory illnesses. That means no seasonal colds, no flus, and no COVID.

I would like to thank our members for voting in the June Primary elections. Local 338 works hard to screen candidates deserving of our coveted endorsement. We take our screenings incredibly seriously, asking tough questions and explaining our positions for the benefit of our members and working families everywhere. With the primaries over and the results of these elections coming in, we begin to gear up for the general election in November. While it

may seem far away, the stakes are high, and we can't rest now. We need to ensure our endorsed candidates win their elections and we can't do that without your help. Talk to your Union or Funds/Service Representative to see how you can get more involved in electing pro-worker candidates!

Our members are tough, brave and resilient. Local 338 members and the work you do every day represent stability and strength in and for your communities. As always, I am incredibly proud of our members for leading the way over the last 15 months – you are and always will be essential. And just remember, we are nearly at the end of this astoundingly long and dark tunnel.



Coming Back Stronger

One Vaccination at a Time!



New York has hit the 70% vaccination mark and while this is an incredibly important milestone, there's still a lot more work to do to make sure everyone who can be vaccinated is getting their shot! Unfortunately, there is still plenty of misinformation floating around regarding the safety and efficacy of vaccines. The rate of vaccination has dropped dramatically since the vaccines were made readily available earlier this year. The science is clear; the vaccine is safe and effectively protects you from the dangers of COVID-19. Additionally, if you're fully vaccinated, the chances of the virus spreading from you to another person is almost zero. You will be completely protected, and you'll be doing your part to keep COVID-19 positivity rates low.

Local 338 member Michael Flood, who works at ShopRite in Country Pointe, signed up for a vaccination appointment months ago through one of Local 338's vaccination events. He says his experience was quick and painless. He experienced very mild side effects from both shots of the Moderna vaccine and recovered the following day both times. This is what Michael says about vaccination: "I would definitely recommend other people getting vaccinated. It allows you to live more freely and openly. Also, you'll be completely safe from the virus, and you don't have to worry about infecting anyone."

Currently, everyone without a prior medical condition over the age of 12 is eligible for a vaccination appointment. In order to find a vaccine walk-in location, or to set up an appointment, click here: <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov>. If you have any questions regarding the vaccine, be sure to visit our COVID-19 resource page: http://local338.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=278





Joseph Fontano

Secretary - Treasurer

The Member Spokesperson Project

The mission and voice of a union comes from our members. The best way for the public, including employers, elected officials, and community leaders to understand our mission is by hearing directly from you. In fact, we are often approached by the press or elected officials asking to interview or talk to our members for a variety of reasons. It may be that an elected official wants to better understand how new legislation can impact working folks or the media seeking an interview with members affected by an ongoing negotiations or crisis such as the pandemic that has just impacted us all.

The Local 338 Member Spokesperson Project offers an opportunity for you to easily participate in your union in a more profound way. We need confident, well-spoken members with a strong sense of solidarity and outspokenness to volunteer their voice to help get out our message. We need your voice at rallies, contract fights,

negotiations and press conferences to offer a more effective and personal perspective on the issue at hand. Many times, the most powerful way to gain support from the public is by hearing directly from workers in their community. In just the past year we've heard from your fellow Local 338 members such as Eddie Quezada (Stop & Shop) who addressed the press on workers compensation issues, Joel Rodriguez (FoodTown), Luis Linary (Gristedes), Wally Waugh (Stop & Shop) and Christine Merola (Stop & Shop) have all spoken to different press outlets about the experience of being an essential worker during the pandemic.

We are looking for members from different industries who would be comfortable speaking with a reporter over the phone, to a crowd at a rally, or in front of a camera to clearly illustrate their experiences as a frontline worker and union member. We will work

with what you are most comfortable doing, whether that's speaking to a reporter or even a short video to talk about a Local 338 benefit, like My T. Co's (FoodTown) video about the UFCW Free College Benefit that's been shared on our website and social media. We need your help in order to effectively advocate for and with your fellow members. With your voice, you can have a direct impact in everything from spreading the word on Local 338 specific information to gaining support for a contract fight or even helping win a union organizing election!

If this sounds like something you are interested in, or if you'd like to learn more, reach out to your Union or Service/Funds Representative, or call Andrew Koven in our Communications Department at 516-294-1338 Ext. 1320. We are actively recruiting spokespeople who can and will use their voices to spread the Local 338 message!



Local 338

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Helping to Heal Through Medical Cannabis

Local 338 member Tyler Curtis is on a mission to educate his community on the medicinal benefits of cannabis while debunking stigmatizing myths. For some, the idea of using cannabis products is intimidating. For decades, our society has criminalized cannabis and we have been taught steer clear at all costs, while ignoring the substantial and well-documented benefits the medicine may offer.

Before beginning his career at the Sunnyside* (Cresco Labs) medical cannabis dispensary in Williamsburg, Tyler wrote for Merry Jane, VICE and High Times Magazine. Growing up as a Deadhead, Tyler has always had a passion for live, jam band-style music. When he was 17 years old, he was approached by High Times to write concert and music reviews for the magazine. Eventually, Tyler switched over to writing pieces related more towards educating readers on cannabis culture, products and its medicinal uses.

Tyler wanted to combat the unfortunate abundance of misinformation spread throughout mainstream culture regarding cannabis. Through his writings, he taught his readers how to most effectively use different cannabis products, their advantages and disadvantages, as well as cannabis alternatives to medical treatments or therapy. As a personal user of medical cannabis to treat anxiety, ADHD and other issues, Tyler wanted to use his experience to create a more personal and relatable relationship to his readers.

His passion for medical cannabis brought him to pursue a career as a Wellness Advisor at Sunnyside*. Tyler says, "As a wellness advisor, we often act as a therapist for our patients to address mental symptoms. We are helping to heal people; this is modern medicine. Wellness Advisors work with patients to figure out the best treatment for their particular issue. People always have questions, and we are happy to help them better understand. This is a pharmacy; we work with the community. I have seen the results time and time again; we are truly healing people." Thank you for supporting your community and being such an effective advocate, Tyler! Our union is a stronger place because of passionate members like you.

338 News 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 Andrew Koven at 516-294-1338 Ext. 1320 or email him at AKoven@local338.org to be considered as a feature in the next issue of 338 News.





Lisa Lund



Lisa Lund got her start as a Local 338 member in 1979, when she worked at Waldbaums in Hewlett. She's been involved in her union for a long time - before joining Local 338's Executive Board in 2016, Lisa was a Shop Steward for about 15 years. She now works as a receiver at Stop & Shop in Merrick and says being on the Executive Board allows her to keep her coworkers up to date on everything going on within the union.

"I find out a lot of good information at the meetings," she said, "I try to help my Shop Steward out by passing that information along to everybody in the store."

Lisa says that having a union to support her and her coworkers on the job is important. She knows that she can call her union representative if she needed to and has someone there to walk her through any problems she may have at work. Other employees at her Stop & Shop often come to her with questions about their contract or benefits and she will make sure to pass the message along to her representatives.

"The union really has a lot of benefits, they protect jobs. I feel very safe and comfortable in my job. They really go to bat for everyone," she said.

We're glad you're proud to be a Local 338 member, Lisa! Your participation in the union helps us to do our jobs better--thank you!

If you want to become more involved in the union, you can reach out to Executive Vice President Neil Gonzalvo about becoming a Shop Steward in your store at: 646-261-4858.



WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER





Neil E. Gonzalvo

Executive Vice President

Staying Safe and Showing Your Union Pride

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Shop Stewards and Local 338 shop leaders who have stepped up these recent months to ensure their fellow members are safe and prepared. It is a difficult job to look after the well-being of others, as well as yourself. From what we understand through guidance from trusted and educated health officials, masks and vaccinations significantly reduce the rate of transmission of COVID-19.

Our position at Local 338 is that our members should continue wearing masks until there are enough people vaccinated to totally control the spread of the virus, as well as encourage customers and clients to do the same. While we know that many are tired of wearing their mask, it is important we continue to stay united in our strategy to combat the virus, because it's working. There are new variants of the virus popping up and until we fully understand how to combat these threats, the vaccines and masks are our best and only line of defense. If you haven't yet received a Local 338 mask, ask your Union or Funds/Service Representative - they can help you be safe and show your union pride!

As you read in President Durso's article, it is extremely important to get your vaccination, not only to protect yourself but to protect others as well. Some people have pre-existing medical conditions that make them ineligible for vaccination. These individuals, among others, are

the reason we continue wearing masks. If we have the chance to save even one life through a simple act such as wearing a mask, then why not? If you haven't gotten your shot yet, [please visit our website](#) which provides several different COVID-19 related resources.

To add to our impressive successful contract ratification record this year, we've added another major employer to the list. Our Gristedes contract was overwhelmingly ratified on May 19th. Similar to voting in local elections, ratification votes are a great way to show your community you care. Your voice in these contract decisions is what makes you a member of this union. Even while the Local 338 negotiating team is crafting the language in your union contract, use your influential voice to tell us what you'd like to see written. We value and require your input and perspective.

I remain incredibly proud of our members as we continue to define what it takes to be a brave and bold essential worker. Our membership are the backbones of the community, we build the framework to a functioning society. Our union is a family, we care and fight for each other. Show off your union pride by getting involved. Reach out to your Union or Funds/Service Representative to see how you can be more involved and support your union sisters and brothers where they need it most.



IT PAYS TO BE UNION

Since January 2021, Local 338, through grievances and arbitrations, collected funds and returned back wages to our members in excess of

\$19,804





Honoring Workers' Memorial Day



Workers' Memorial Day is recognized on April 28th each year and is a day dedicated to remembering those who have been injured, fallen ill, or have lost their lives while on the job. This year, Local 338 joined the Long Island Federation of Labor's Workers' Memorial Day commemoration. The last year has been an extremely difficult one for essential workers, including our membership, all of whom worked on the front lines of the pandemic in order 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. At this event we remembered and memorialized the ten Local 338 members who have passed over the last year due to COVID-19 complications. Long-time Local 338 member Ray Wishropp, who tragically lost his life in April due to workplace gun violence, was also honored during the ceremony.



As part of our union contracts of many of our largest employers, Local 338 successfully negotiated for provisions for management at the worksites we represent to recognize the sacrifices our members have made through a reflective moment of silence on April 28th. These moments of reflection are a necessary demonstration of respect and an acknowledgement of your commitment to your communities.



On Workers' Memorial Day and beyond, we honor the sacrifices of those lost by fighting like hell for the living. Working families are the framework of society and Local 338 members are the backbone of that framework. We will ensure our elected officials, employers, and the public remember and respect the risks and sacrifices our members have taken.





WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

With **Jennifer Lipack**
MAP Director



Destigmatizing Mental Health

Mental Health Awareness Month takes place during the month of May, but it is an important issue that we should be thinking and talking about year-round. Now, more than ever, we need our society to better understand mental health in order to avoid unfair judgements and fight the stigma associated with mental illness. While many cultures stigmatize health problems like depression or anxiety, in reality, these conditions are actually extremely common and treatable.

Mental health problems have absolutely nothing to do with being lazy, weak or unstable, and many people need additional help to get better. Depression and anxiety disorders are highly treatable, yet only about 40% of individuals suffering ever seek treatment. Treatment for mental health problems varies depending on the individual and could include medication, therapy, or both.

Often times, mental health conditions originate from a brain chemistry imbalance, genetic predisposition, trauma or all the above. Seeking medical or therapeutic treatment for a mental health condition is as much a sign of weakness as seeking treatment for a broken arm. Sometimes, medical intervention is necessary, and a professional

health specialist is the best person to help you make that decision.

As a community, we need to be open-minded and patient with others, you never know what someone may be going through. We should regularly check in with our physical and mental state as often as possible. If you find a certain mood or behavior is negatively affecting your life in a significant way, then talk to your doctor or reach out to the Local 338 Member Assistance Program and we can help guide you towards a treatment, counseling, or resource unique to your situation. I can be reached at 516-294-1338 ext. 1304 and all calls are confidential. Your mental health is as important as your physical health and we, as a society, need to treat it that way.





MY BENEFITS

Need More Free Healthcare Help? You Got It!

Your free Grand Rounds Health benefits offered through Local 338 Health & Welfare Fund just got even better! Thanks to these improvements, now your personal care team can help manage more of your healthcare. In addition to second opinions, you get fast matches to top doctors in your area and easy access to all your benefits, all in within the app.

Extra healthcare benefits, no extra cost!

- Need to see a doctor? Find top doctors in your network in a flash.
- Not sure what's covered? Get the health benefit answers you need now.
- Got a health worry? Our medical experts are here for you by phone or app.

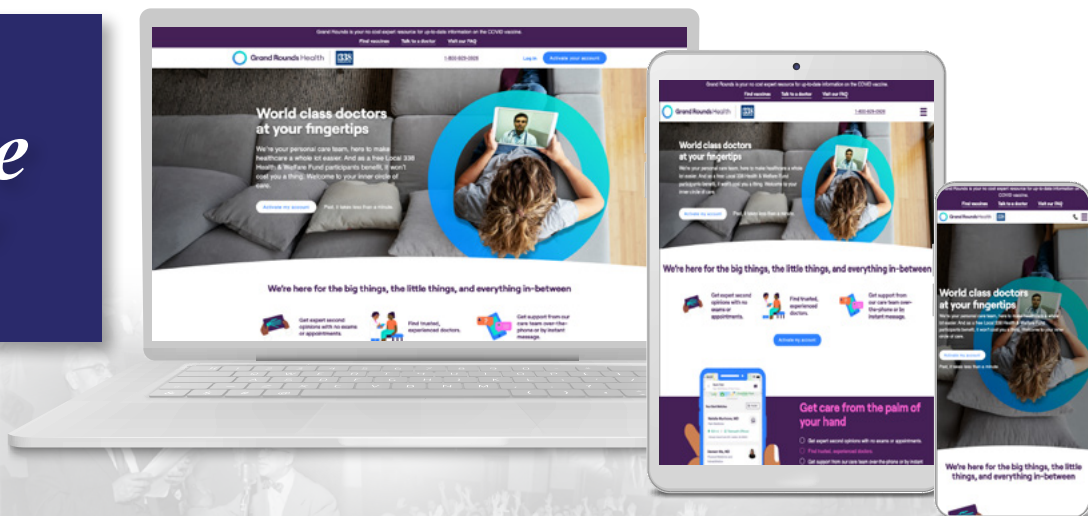
Activate your Account Today & Qualify for the Chance to Win



**Grand
Rounds
Health**

Local 338 Health & Welfare Fund has already set up your no-cost Grand Rounds Health account. Activate it now at grandrounds.com/local338, call us at 1-800-929-0926, or download the Grand Rounds app in the Apple or Google Play Store. As an added bonus, eligible Local 338 members who use Grand Rounds Health to connect with a clinician, find a provider, or get a second opinion will qualify for the chance to win one of two \$100 Visa gift cards!

*Click Here
To Learn More*



Have Children in Child Care?

We May Be Able to Help!

Local 338 understands that many of our members are working parents and that paying for childcare can be expensive—that's why we established our childcare benefit. Members who are covered under a Local 338 Benefit Plan are able to take advantage of this benefit as long as they have a dependent child under the age of 12 who is currently enrolled in daycare, after school or pre-school programs.

In order to take advantage of this benefit, you must pay for the childcare and give us a receipt and application—we will then reimburse you. The amount you will be reimbursed depends on a few factors, including the type of childcare and the number of children participating the benefit.

Local 338 members are also eligible to apply for the Facilitated Childcare Enrollment Project, which provides funding assistance to ease the cost of childcare for working parents. It's an excellent program and we've already had several members approved for the program and receive upwards of \$20,000 towards the cost of day care and after school programs for their children!

You can apply for this program as long as you work at least 20 hours per week, have children under 13 and meet certain geographic and income requirements. You can check your eligibility if you live in [New York City](#) or if you live in certain parts of [Upstate New York](#).

For a full outline of the Childcare Benefit and to view the application, please visit your [MyLocal338](#) account.





Last Chance to Apply!



As a member of Local 338, you have access to a variety of scholarship opportunities, including through our International and National Unions – the UFCW and RWDSU! The UFCW Charity Foundation Scholarship deadline has been extended! The program awards scholarships of up to \$8,000 each, broken up into payments of \$2,000 for each year they are enrolled in an accredited college or university. The program is open to Local 338 members or their dependents under the age of 20 who have been active since January 1, 2020. This is an excellent opportunity, and we encourage all eligible members to apply! The deadline for the first part of the application is July 24, 2021. You can read more and [apply here](#).

Members may also be eligible to apply for the RWDSU's Alvin E. Heaps Scholarship, which awards one student a year of financial assistance. The scholarship is open to all Local 338 members and their families. Winners must have a demonstrated understanding of the role unions play in workers' lives. The deadline is July 1, 2020. You can [apply here](#).

For more information about scholarships and other educational opportunities available to you and your dependents, log in to your Local 338 app or [My Local 338 account](#)!



New York's Rental Assistance Program

The pandemic has had a profound impact on us all and for some, it's made it difficult to pay rent each month. As a result, with funding from the American Rescue Plan, New York State has established the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)! The program is designed to help low and moderate-income households facing housing instability or homelessness with temporary rental assistance and assistance if you owe back rent to your landlord or are in arrears with utilities.

You may be eligible for the program if:

- A member of your household received unemployment benefits or experienced a drop in income, or experienced financial hardship due to the pandemic on or after March 13, 2020, AND
- If you are obligated to pay rent at your primary residence and have rent overdue at your current residence, AND
- Household gross income is at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The limits can differ by county and household size.

If you meet the eligibility requirements for the program, New York State will make the payments directly to your landlord, property owner or utility company on your behalf. You'll receive a notification with how much assistance you have received. In the event your landlord is difficult to reach or does not provide the information needed to complete the application, the funds you receive will be held for 180 days. This will allow you additional time to contact your landlord and protect you.

If you live in the Towns of [Hempstead](#) and [Islip](#), these localities have set up their own applications. For New Yorkers residing outside of those areas, you can [apply here](#). For a full breakdown of the program, [click here](#).



Small Change = Big Change!

Often times, members ask how they can become more involved in political or social efforts to benefit working families across New York State and the rest of the country. We know voting is an incredibly important and powerful tool in determining the future and present of the labor movement, but there is more we can do! The Local 338 PAC, which is funded completely by voluntary contributions, supports all of our political and advocacy work focused on creating policies, laws, and budgets that directly support you and your family.



By donating as little as 25 cents per week, you will make a direct and tangible impact in the lives of your fellow members. Every dollar of the Local 338 PAC has helped us successfully advocate for:

- Access to PPE and policies to keep essential workers safe on the job
- Programs to help Local 338 families offset the high costs of childcare
- State funding for wage increases for Local 338 members who work at non-profit and healthcare agencies
- Paid Family Leave to support our members who have to care for loved ones
- The legalization of adult-use cannabis, including protections to ensure the creation of good, union careers in the industry and the formation of a strong social equity program
- Policies that protect immigrant workers



Local 338 Shop Steward Max Schiffman, who works at Gristedes in Manhattan, is among the many members who makes weekly donations. He says, "I donate to PAC because I believe in the Local 338 mission. We need the financial resources to advocate for our rights and benefits which keep our families safe and healthy. Being a member of Local 338 means looking out for each other and joining PAC does just that. I suggest every member join the Local 338 PAC".

By contributing to our PAC you'll be joining a team that helps every Local 338 member enjoy a better life. For more information and to get signed up, log in to your "[My Local 338](#)" account or the Local 338 app or speak to your Union or Service/Funds Representative. And remember, you can make a big difference



LOCAL 338 RWDSU/UFCW SUPER MEMBER MONDAY

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 Michelle Snyder, a 5-year member working at ACME in Yonkers. She's a huge baseball fan and can't wait to attend Yankee games this summer! She loves to spend time with her nieces and nephews and family barbecues, where they play cornhole and horseshoe.

We've also featured Eddie Preski, a member at the Stop & Shop in Shirley. He's been part of our union family since 1997 and loves to travel and attend travel shows! He told us that it's important that our members get vaccinated: "the more people who get vaccinated, the less we need to worry about this problem. I suggest everyone does it!" Thank you for adding value to our union family, Eddie!

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.



Michelle Snyder



Eddie Preski

LOCAL 338 MEMBER MEETINGS



**Join Us for Our Next
Membership Meeting!**

**Monday,
September 13, 2021**

**Meeting registration details will be
emailed in the coming weeks.**



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Wishing Our Members A Happy Retirement!

(Local 338's recent retirees between May 1 - June 30, 2021)

Ana Palmer
Maximo Almodovar
Domenico Amato
Margarita Arias
Richard Caporaso
Dariel Chinnery
Joann Conza
Norma Davis
Lisa Denimarck
Yunes Doleh
Margarita Fajardo
Paul Fowler
Sadie Gibbs
Sandra Gonzalez
Charlie Graham
Kevin Greene
Linda Greenhagen
Josephine Guarino
Felix Guerrero
Marvin Hatchett
Elizabeth Itzla
Douglas Jewell
Moussa L. Kiema
Eloise Kraebel
Debbie Krzyminski

Robert Kuzianik
Eladio Laboy
Stephen Lobrutto
Nicholas Lombardi
Laura Metzner
Cynthia Mineo
Doris Palmer
Emilio Peralta
Ann Peters
Michael Pettigrew
Steven Phillips
Robert Riggs
Miguel Rodriguez
Jorge Rodriguez
Winston Rose
Cheryll Scarangella
John Sparagi
Nathan Stamps
Joanne Teigue-Farrell
Laurel Van Houten
Maria Vargas
Christine Westhassel-Hans
King Wong
Mohammad Younas
Gus Zoitaz

Frances Bosi
Jody Chafouleas
Eileen De Lucia
Vincent Farrugia
David Woolf
Mark Babcock
Margaret Campbell
Julio Cordero
Robert Crawford
Edward D Erasmo
Joseph Donohue
Jill Ettere
Gregory Ferrante
Diane Grella Ercolano
Donald Joyce
Susan Levine
Wendy Monzon
Edwin Morales
Francesco Pesce
Maria Portelli
Alexandra Rojas-Ponton
William Santiago
Margaret Saume
Rasul Sunesara

"Retired from my job, not from my union"



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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!



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Stay Connected With Local 338 on **😊 Social Media**



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A handwritten signature in black ink.

Joseph Fontano
Secretary-Treasurer

A handwritten signature in black ink.

John R. Durso
President

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Neil E. Gonzalvo
Executive Vice President

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

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