

AFGE



Local 3369

THE GOOD FIGHT



“Still I rise”

Maya Angelou

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- First Annual Women’s Empowerment Event 2
- Strengthen Y.O.U.N.G . 2
- Lunch & Learns 3
- Working Conditions..... 3
- Retiree Lunch & Learn.. 4
- Inspired to Represent ... 4
- Baby at Work – Inspiring Story*..... 5
- Why the Union is important 6
- Solidarity Against Immigrant Children 6
- HealthPlex 6
- Member Appreciation... 7
- Looking Ahead 7
- Bread and Butter of Local 3369 8

COMBATED THE EO’S

On May 25, 2018 President Trump issued three Executive Orders with the goal of weakening the Union sufficiently to leave all federal employees vulnerable and at the mercy of Management.



On June 22, 2018 Local 3369 was the first and only SSA local to file a lawsuit against President Trump’s Executive Orders and bring a lawsuit against SSA and OPM specifically for the abridgement of SSA employee’s rights. On August 24, 2018, the Union prevailed in the DC District Court with 13 combined lawsuits to preserve the rights of federal employees.

VISITED CAPITOL HILL AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

In February of 2018, Local 3369 attended the 2018 AFGE Legislative Conference.

Local 3369 meets with Congressional leaders, lobbying for better working conditions, commensurate pay raises, and an increase in front line staffing for SSA Offices.

Local 3369 forges personal relationships with jurisdictional congressional leaders in order to create a partnership that will promote the value SSA employees bring to their local communities.

Local 3369 embarked on a letter writing campaign to inform Congress of the harm PQR has brought to SSA employees and the negative consequences it will have on the public.



Edwin Osorio (left); Jennifer Ramirez (middle); Congressman Peter King (right)

1st Annual Women's Empowerment Event



Our own AFGE Local 3369 in collaboration with AFGE Local 1168 VA hosted our first Women's Empowerment Event "Still I Rise...". The event took place March 30, 2018 in the Bronx VA Hospital.

Over 60 Union Members attended from all 5 boroughs and parts of Westchester. Among the Speakers were **Edwin Osorio**—Local President L3369, **Evelyn Padilla**— AFGE VA Bronx President of L1168, **Vanessa Barrow**—2nd District Y.O.U.N.G. Organizing Unionist for the Next Generation Coordinator, **Jennifer Ramirez**—AFGE National Y.O.U.N.G. Member of Large/AFGE L3369 Treasurer and **Anthony Sanon**— AFGE Women's and Fair Practices Coordinator and Local President of Bureau of Prisons L2005.

"But still like dust I'll rise"

Strengthening



The National Y.O.U.N.G. Committee is composed of up to two coordinators per District appointed by District's National Vice Presidents and up to two Members at Large appointed by Women's and Fair Practices National Vice President .

This Committee has been mobilizing politically and legislatively to make our workplace inclusive and to push issues concerning the Y.O.U.N.G. generation locally and socially. We are doing more than showing up, we are at the forefront of many of our local and social movements from the Woman's march in February 2018 to the Executive Orders "Red for Feds" protest.

Y.O.U.N.G. workers are more active than ever with an astonishing 40% of our members in L3369 under the age of 40.

In the last two years, we have been working closely with Retiree Coordinator L3369 Charlie Falikman in helping preserve it's history and encouraging the way for more active membership.





Edwin Osorio speaking to members of Local 3369 in Lunch & Learn event.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS WITH LUNCH & LEARNS ?



Local 3369 has experienced many ups and downs during 2018 from PQR to executive orders. But none of this has diminished the spirit of SSA employees. And one of our most successful ways of encouraging member participation and employee involvement has been through our Lunch and Learns.

In 2018, Local 3369 has been to an unprecedented 80% of the offices in Area I and Area II. This has given the Local an opportunity to meet many of the SSA employees and hear their experience in their respective offices; not only did it prove to be an effective way of engaging with employees, but it also served as an opportunity to learn about employee concerns and

how employees can best benefit from their union's services.

Local 3369 will continue its commitment to all of the offices by meeting with them and giving them an opportunity to share their ideas and express their concerns about their work environment and the role they would like to see their union play. Local 3369 believes strongly in having a strong union presence in every office and making themselves accessible to all employees regardless of office size or geographical location.

Local 3369 encourages you to stay tuned, before you know it we will be at an office near you !



SAT DOWN WITH SSA COMMISSIONER TO DISCUSS WORKING CONDITIONS

Local 3369 participated in Council C220 Caucus in early 2018 and for the first time at the table with Nancy Berryhill, *Acting SSA Commissioner*.

Among the topics discussed were Health and Safety, Contract negotiations, budget, new hires, etc. Local Presidents from all states attended this meeting opposing the closing down of offices, understaffing, parking issues, stress levels, health and safety issues.



Jennifer Ramirez (left); Nancy Berryhill (middle); Edwin Osorio (right)



Local 3369 and Council 220 in conference room with Nancy Berryhill.



*Charlie Falikman representing **GAME ON** Shirt at Retiree Luncheon.*

Mobilizing RETIREES

April 2018- AFGE L3369 hosted its first Retiree Luncheon in the Flushing NY Union Office. Executive Board Members and retirees joined together to reunite the retirees and to reaffirm the participation and solidarity in the labor movement and assistance in the local and to ensure that we preserve the legacy of our local.

**find
your
voice!**

Inspired to Represent

When I came to SSA almost 4 years ago I was excited and optimistic about the possibilities of what could be. I was eager to learn and perform. How could this journey not be awesome? My optimism slowly turned into anxiety as I was constantly being met with unprofessionalism and borderline harassment by members of management. Frustration turned into resentment, resentment turned into anger and, anger turned into antipathy.

I knew I needed to speak up before I hit a downward spiral and became a disenchanted employee. So, I reached out to the Union and they assisted me without hesitation. They stepped in and spoke up for my rights when I felt like my voice was marginalized. That intervention resulted in positive changes that I am still grateful for, so much so that I became a Union Rep to be able to be that same saving grace for someone else. I am as active as I can be, because I believe in the Union and know first hand how instrumental knowing your rights are and having people that are willing to fight for them are!



**By: Donna Duffin ,
Onsite Union Representative - Flushing, NY—SSA Office**

BABY AT WORK—MY FIRST BATTLE SCAR

As a recently elected Local 3369 President in 1981, I received a telephone call from a claims representative who worked in a Westchester office. Gwen, the CR, said that she had been on annual leave for several months to care for her new-born son but had exhausted her leave. Management let her use sick leave but now that was gone too. Gwen said that she lived in an area where it was difficult to obtain child care Her manager would not grant her LWOP. She didn't know what to do. She was a successful claims representative and didn't want to lose her job.



As a new guy on the job of Local President I contacted Regional Office. At that time labor-management relations was conducted with higher levels of management unlike today where we now deal with lower level LMR specialists. I explained the problem to the Deputy Regional Commissioner for Field Operations, (A job eliminated long ago.) He was sympathetic to the situation and told me that he would get back to me. I was happy that the matter appeared resolved and I told Gwen I was hoping for good news for her.

The next day, the deputy contacted me and said that either Gwen had to return to work or be disciplined. I said, "What, yesterday you seemed to understand her predicament and was ready to help her?" I said, "Why lose a good employee just because she has a baby?" "Is that fair?"

A deadline was set and Gwen was told to be at work or be disciplined. She told me that she wanted to return to work with her baby. I asked her if she was sure that she wanted to do that. She was adamant. She asked me to show up on the day she came to work. I told her I would be there to support her.

I took my camera with me and rode the train to the Westchester County Social Security office. Gwen and baby Josh were already at the office. Josh was quietly sitting in the playpen set up beside Gwen's desk. Her manager was pacing back and forth apparently not comfortable with the situation. He didn't say much to me. I spoke to Gwen and she started taking interviews for Social Security applications. The public appeared amused at seeing a baby at work. I took a few photos but then the manager came over and told me that the



Deputy Commissioner was on the phone for me. A screaming voice informed me that I was illegally bringing a baby into the office and that I should stop taking photos. I asked him to calm down and told him that Gwen followed his order and appeared at work but had no child care. Gwen, I said, had little choice. He ordered me to leave the office and the office manager ordered Gwen to take her baby home. I later used the photo of Gwen and her baby at her desk in the local's newsletter, "The Federal Unionist."

Of course, both Gwen and I were formally reprimanded for misconduct in disrupting the Social Security office. Gwen was sent home with Josh and I returned to my Manhattan office. We took the case to arbitration and the arbitrator removed the reprimand from Gwen's record but let mine stand.

The arbitrator said he believed that I put Gwen up to it to make a point with management. Although it wasn't the truth, I didn't mind taking the reprimand for baby Josh. Unfortunately, in those early days, management was not mandated to provide parental leave and Gwen was eventually forced to resign. The union continued to fight for a more enlightened workplace for employees and as we know legislation was passed to provide parental leave for employees. Rights are not granted. They are fought for and won.

That was my first battle scar for the union, but there were more to come.

(The identity of the employee and her baby, were changed to protect their privacy.)

By: John Riordan



WHY THE UNION IS IMPORTANT

- ◆ We are the checks and balances of Labor Management Relations
- ◆ We ensure the Agency follows the contract, Federal Statute and regulations/EEOC Policies and procedures
- ◆ Promote and protect the best interests of SSA employees Bargaining Unit
- ◆ Organize, educate and mobilize members
- ◆ Negotiate renovations, office relocations, etc.
- ◆ Ensure and offer member benefits such as life insurance, short-term disability, dental, education, etc.
- ◆ We are your exclusive representative and all labor contract matters
- ◆ Lobby for higher wages and improved healthcare, protecting health benefits and ensuring Federal Employee recognition
- ◆ We are your first-line of defense in matters concerning discrimination, retribution—retaliation and whistleblowing
- ◆ Promote a healthy work environment free of high levels of stress, discrimination, hostility bullying

LOCAL EXECUTIVE BOARD OF MEMBERS STOOD BY SOLIDARITY AGAINST PUTTING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN CAGES

June 28, 2018- *AFGE Local 3369 Treasurer Jennifer Ramirez* and *L3369 Secretary Ivis Bianco* attended Bronx Vigil and rally demanding that separated immigrant children be returned to their parents. Bronx Borough President **Ruben Diaz Jr.** NYC Public Advocate Letitia James were in some of the ones who attended.



Rally for separated Immigrant Children....



WHAT IS HEALTHPLEX.

HealthPlex is one of the most used member benefits close to 30% of our members are HealthPlex dental users.

HealthPlex is offered at a flat fee of **\$14.75** per pay period — covering members, their spouse and children/dependents.

HealthPlex covers a myriad of things from essentials root canals to reduced cost of crowns and bridges.

Contact your onsite representative or executive board member for more information or instructions on how to enroll.

Appreciation and Recognition for Union Officials



Local 3369 had its quarterly meeting in Flushing NY on September 27. What separated this meeting from any other is Local 3369 paid homage to its own by recognizing three of its most illustrious board members for their distinct contributions to the Local representation of its members.



Rich Kirchner (left); Jennifer Ramirez (middle); Daniel Kravetz (right)

Daniel Kravetz (EEO Vice President) was bestowed a special award of recognition for his exemplary performance of representative duties under the draconian executive orders. Jennifer Ramirez (treasurer) was recognized for the dedication and tenacity that brought about for the first time, the inception of language into the AFGE National Constitution that specifically prohibited bullying and sexual harassment within all AFGE affiliated unions.

Richard Kirchner (1st Grievance Vice President) spent the better part of four decades representing employees in an array of issues with a level of dedication that is unrivaled. And while he is winding down his career with SSA, his devotion to the cause remains

undiminished. In recognition of his relentless and prolific service to the members and loyalty and dedication to the Local, Rich Kirchner was presented with the first ever Local 3369 Lifetime Achievement Award. Please help Local 3369 applaud the accomplishments of these three exceptional unionists. This is a tradition that Local 3369 intends on continuing as we usher into some of the most challenging and tempestuous times of our history. Let this be the prototype for the unionist of the future.

“There is Strength and Solidarity”

Looking to 2019 and Beyond

As we individually make our New Year’s resolutions, Local 3369 envisions 2019 full of challenges and surprises. This will not deter Local 3369 from focusing on its core responsibility of representing its members by keeping the members engaged and well informed in all aspects of their federal employment. Local 3369 will continue to explore different ways of enhancing the experience of unionism for every member.

As Local 3369 maintains and cultivates its position as the exclusive agent for SSA employees, it takes its responsibility to the members of Local 3369 as all encompassing. This means Local 3369 will work tirelessly for you. In 2019 Local 3369 will continue its unrelenting commitment to visiting field offices for Lunch and Learns. This will perpetuate a strong union presence that will encapsulate every member as an integral part of the Union. Local 3369 will always be a collaborative effort in its mission to preserve the rights of all employees.

Because of the success and popularity of the 2018 Local 3369 Scholarship Contest, the 2019 Local 3369 Scholarship Contest will include a separate contest aimed towards the high school students of all Local 3369 Members. This along with a planned Union/Members bowling event, and other activities for 2019 will be crafted to promote member participation, and make the local more accessible to its members.



The BREAD and BUTTER of Local 3369

While there are many benefits to being in the Union from saving money on your mortgage, discount vacations, dental and life insurance, and free legal advice just to mention a few, there is nothing more vital for a union than defending the rights of its members when it comes to the work place. The most effective way Local 3369 can do this is through filing grievances and arbitrations on behalf of its members.

In 2018 Local 3369 introduced a system for tracking grievances and uniformly analyzing grievances for strengths and weaknesses, in order to emphasize the strongest merits in a grievance and alleviate any flaws. Ultimately, grievances are originated on the strongest arguments of the most successful grievances, and avoid less successful arguments.

With the close of 2018 Local 3369 is in the process of moving forward with over a dozen arbitration cases ranging from termination and suspension cases to addressing overtime pay and inequitable PACS appraisals. Local 3369 expects 2019 to be a litigious year, as more grievances and arbitrations are being represented by the Local on behalf of its members. And none of this could happen without its members support and participation. Local 3369 thanks you for your continued membership.



AFGE Local 3369
c/o SSA
138-50 Barclay Avenue
Flushing, NY 11355

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Executive Board Members

Edwin Osorio—*President*

Darren Sligh—*Executive V.P.*

Jennifer Ramirez—*Treasurer*

Ivis Bianco—*Secretary*

Rich Kirchner—*1st Grievance V.P.*

Bob MacGowan—*2nd Grievance V.P.*

Kevin Diaz Garcia—*3rd Grievance V.P.*

Carmen Vega—*4th Grievance V.P.*

Amanda Bracco—*5th Grievance V.P.*

Dan Kravetz—*Vice President of EEO*

PLEASE PLACE
RECIPIENT MAILING
LABEL
HERE