

## **FSW Function Report**

**Name and Title:** Cynthia Ford – Steward at Westfall Road location

**Name and nature of the event/function (i.e. District 1 Conference, Steward Training at ILR, etc.):**

District 1 Conference

**Dates attended:** July 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>

**What was the purpose of the function?** For me being a new steward, the purpose was to assist me to become more informed on the union, the various unions that are associated with CWA, how the union operates as well how well all the unions work together like a family, (which I was not aware of). There were various workshops / seminars/ and panel discussions on various topics such as: “The Janis Era - How we got here, how we got ready, and the Challenges Ahead” I found to be very interesting and very informative. I gained great insight for the various speakers such as: Dennis G. Trainor, Governor Phil Murphy, Kim Cook, Alexander Ocaiso- Cortez and last but not least Chris Shelton whose remarks were empowering and encouraging.

**What did you learn and/or what significant information was shared at the function?**

I attended 2 workshops: Organizing & Strategic Planning and Runaway & Inequality.

Runaway & Inequality - I was somewhat taken back when I was given the information on the salaries that Presidents & CEOs are earning versus the amount that the employees are earning, more than 100%+. Which I found to be very dishearten and disappointing.

There was a lot of information that was shared such as: All the successes that New Jersey has achieved since electing governor Murphy (now that Gov. Christy is no longer in office) in a very short length of time. Which is very impressive.

There were discussions on how to response to questions that we may be asked in the future due to the passing of Janis. They spoke about how Janis came about and the reason why persons believed it would be a good idea to get rid of the unions as well as what would happen without unions.

There were presentations such as: CWA District Report, Credentials Reports, CWA Member and Non-Member Polling, and Avoiding Financial Fraud Presentation.

Information was shared on how and where monies were spent, how to continue to speak with non-union members about the benefits of joining the union. Also shared was how the union will continue to stick together, stay strong and vote for the representatives who are running for office, that will support the union. We need to have majority of the house.

**How is what you learned relevant to FSW?**

Everything I learned is relevant to FSW, we are a part of a very strong and powerful union, which I was not aware of. This is one of several reasons I decided to get more involved in the union; to experience and learn first-hand what the union is all about and it takes to operate (which is A LOT). The union is a family, when someone needs help we all gather around and lend our support as well as a helping hand.

I learned that the union bargains and represent us in order to receive benefits we are entitled to and believe are fair, not what the employer thinks we should or should not have. I did not realize the union bargained for us to receive 35 hours work weeks, sick time / pay, vacation time / pay, retirement benefits and more. Had I not decided to get more involved in the union I would not have known this. I have made it a point to share this information to others who may feel or have felt the same way I did about the union. I found out you really need to get involved & attend meetings to appreciate and get a better or clearer understanding of the union and the various offices that helps to make **OUR** union successful.

We may not all agree on everything that is done or said, which ok, we are allowed to come together voice our issues or concerns as well as listen to the diverse opinions and conversations. We are then given an opportunity to vote on the various topics and move on as one. We are a POWERFUL and caring union!

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to attend the conference as well as the knowledge that I have gain for this experience.

Thank you,

Cynthia Ford