

NSO Contact

National Staff Organization

2013 NSO WAR Issue 1

Welcome to Orange County, CA!

Here's what you need to know for Friday, Jan. 13, 2013 of the Winter Advocacy Retreat.

- Follow Winter Advocacy Retreat happenings on Twitter @National Staff Org. and Facebook.
- Today's issue of the NSO Contact is available online. Tomorrow the NSO Contact will be available online and in hard copy.
- Grab your lunch at the café or Molly's Kitchen and join us at the Emerging Issues session at 11:45 today in Park D. We'll be discussing NEA's culture of organizing and Michigan's right-to-work story.
- Don't miss the opportunity to connect and network with fellow NSO members at the Solidarity Reception from 4:30 to 6 p.m. tonight at the Tiffany Patio. It's good people, good food, and a good time.
- Stop by the Disaster Relief Table in the Registration area to buy your tickets to win an iPad and help out fellow NSO members who are coping with loss from natural disasters. The fund was first established for survivors of Hurricane Katrina and now is being used to help those hit by Hurricane Sandy. The drawing will be held at 5:15 p.m. today at the Solidarity Reception.
- Join ORG today. It's the organization for organizers. A \$35 fee gets you their regular newsletter with news and information on organizing and a T shirt. Stop by the ORG table in the Registration area.
- Nov. 30, 2012 was the deadline for filing LM reports with the Department of Labor. Jan. 15 was the deadline for filing 990s with the IRS. If you've missed either deadline, see NSO Treasurer Ron Goldenstein today.
- There are five new sessions being offered for the first time this year at the Winter Advocacy Retreat.
- Representatives from the New Jersey Parole Officers and the Communication Workers of America are interested in joining NSO and are participating in the Retreat as guests.
- Shawnta Howard Bailey from Ohio is currently attending the Harvard Trade Union Program on an NSO scholarship. Follow her blog to see how she's doing.

First-time Winter Advocacy Retreat participants will be benefiting from advocacy training provided by their colleagues and networking opportunities.



Is having power positive or negative?

That's just one of the questions the participants in the "Organizing for Power I" session have to consider as they learn how to transform their affiliate into major players in their states' education arenas.

"Organizing for Power" is NSO's professional development program that builds more powerful and effective locals through strategic organizing. The program embodies the "iron rule" of organizing expressed by Saul



Quinn Chesir, Arizona EASO, believes you have to take power to exercise the power you have.

Alinsky, the founder of modern community organizing: "Never, ever do for others what they can do for themselves." This year, the participant numbers were so large, the two-day, all-day session on Thursday and Friday had to be broken into two separate groups.

After first explaining the concepts, principles and dynamics of organizing for power, trainers give participants lots of experience and practice using their new skills to create an organizing plan for a fictional local.

But learning how to mobilize union power isn't the only benefit coming from this first module in the "Organizing for Power" program. Participants learn how to create and maintain relationships with their members and the community. That power translates into influencing employers. And with power comes respect.

"You're not going to get respect by being quiet and not engaging members and outside groups," said Bruce Grusecki from Michigan. 'Organizing for Power' gives members a voice and levels the playing field."



Basic organizing concepts reinforce the constant organizing goals for "Organizing for Power" participants.

Bullying is invading the workplace

More than 37 percent of U.S. workers have experienced bullying at work. So, as union advocates, how do we prevent the rise of workplace bullying and respond to it when it occurs?

Participants in Thursday's all-day session, "Standing Up to Workplace Bullying" learned that the first step is finding agreement on what bullying is—not an easy task. To get a handle on what bullying looks like, unions have to consider bullying warning signs like continuous criticism, silent treatment or credit not be given to a worker. Then unions have to develop the strategies to deal with it and restore control to the situation.

While 73 percent of workplace bullies are bosses, Lynn Adler, NSO Vice President for Program, reports that she is getting more and more requests for bullying prevention training within affiliates and among members. "It's a disturbing trend. Maybe it's a sign of the difficult times union members are facing, but as union advocates, we're doomed if we turn on one another," Adler said.

The focus of the session was not just on bullying victims. It also shone light on the role of bystanders in either supporting or challenging bullying. Presenter George Luse, himself a bullying victim, explained that there's a 75 percent likelihood that a single bystander witnessing a bullying event will be more apt to react as compared to 10 percent of a reaction if there is a group of five or six bystanders.

Luse said, "It's an issue of moral courage. A bystander thinks nothing is wrong if no one else is looking concerned or reacting. He may think the behavior he sees is typical and exhibit what we call 'pluralistic ignorance and not want to take the risk of acting.'"

Since bullying has moved beyond the playground and into the adult workplace, union advocates need to consider more sophisticated ways of addressing the problem. In addition to individual action, unions can use the collective bargaining process, internal organizing, and legislation to deal with the problem.

Whatever the union strategy, it's clear that unions can't afford to ignore workplace bullying.



George Luse explains how unions can stand up to the growing problem of workplace bullying.