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Let us know what you think, or submit a piece of your own: info@unitedworkingfamilies.org

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Cover Photo: Desmon Yancy
2019 Movement Leader Fellow Parrish Brown celebrating our electoral victories at the UWF Inauguration Bash in May.
Meet the 2019 Class of Movement Leader Fellows!
By James Muhammad

Since 2018, UWF has built a pipeline of over 180 working-class candidates, campaigners, and organizers of color. Our Movement Leader Fellowship has been central to these efforts.

Through the fellowship, UWF trains people of color from the rank and file of grassroots social movements. Fellows are embedded in a UWF campaign where they play lead roles in organizing or fundraising, honing their skills on what it takes to run for office or run a campaign. Alumni of the program include 33rd Ward Alderwoman Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez, Party Committee members Anna Green and Kerry Luckett (members of SEIU HCII and CCCTU Local 1600, respectively), and labor organizers Rigoberto Campos and Alejandra Avila.

The eleven 2019 Movement Leader Fellows did powerful organizing and fundraising work this cycle. In this newsletter we feature two of their stories.

Fellow Profile: Hope Pickett says UWF feels ‘like home’

Chicago was a different kind of political animal for Hope Pickett, a professional fundraiser who worked in Seattle, Washington. Getting a fellowship with United Working Families (UWF) was the blessing she needed to help find her way around Illinois politics.

“I wanted to learn more,” she said. “Politics here looks different but my job is to be in the room and be involved.”

UWF offered Hope a fellowship in December 2018. She had never heard of the organization and was introduced to it by then aldermanic candidate Maria Hadden.

People in Chicago seemed complacent about politics, like “things are the way they are” and not much will change, she said, and people seemed to be ok with the “layers of corruptness.”

The UWF program helped Hope hone some of the skills she already had and gave her new ones. The program taught techniques in analyzing data, how to identify sources of money, the role of Political Action Committees (PACs), and generally how to build a successful campaign.

“I had never had a fundraiser host incorporate a personal story,” she said. “Their story tells the ‘why’ of what they’re trying to accomplish. One host actually told me they appreciated that I helped them to tell their personal story.”

Hope established friendships with other fellows participating in communications, organizing, fundraising.

She said grassroots fundraising is hard but rewarding. Working for campaigns that get huge corporate donations don’t fit Hope’s style because “big donors always want something in return.”

“UWF aligns with the things I value. It’s an organization that feels good to me, like home. It’s a brilliant group of people that has opened doors for me. It’s infectious how much they believe in their mission,” she said. (profile of Victor Negrete on pg. 7)
Beyond Election Day
By Kate Barthelme

While we are thrilled to celebrate the inauguration of our 10 new alderman to the Chicago City Council, we know it’s just the beginning. Our 2019 victories were built off years of the hard work and deep organizing that comes between elections and this is the work we’re returning to now.

We’re continuing to build our power by organizing in our neighborhoods, our workplaces, and in our streets. We’re ready to work with our champions in City Council to push a bold agenda that wins real change for working families and recruits more members to our party. We’re ready to work with our members to build a democratically-governed political home that is funded by and for the many. And we’re ready to recruit, run, and train those members to run for office and organize for change.

Here are just a few examples of the work we’re doing to keep building a powerful vehicle for working-class politics:

• Organizing Fellows are continuing to deepen and build in wards across the city. We’re planning a summit on August 3 for all the members and volunteers who want to start an Independent Political Organization or UWF chapter in their community.

• Members and staff organized two Policy Schools for our slate during the election season, and a Governing School for incoming aldermen the week after the election in order to hit the ground running in fighting for the issues we campaigned on.

• We organized our first New Member Orientation for all the folks who became a part of UWF through the elections.

Want to get involved? Contact us at info@unitedworkingfamilies.org.

Our aldermen are headed to City Hall. Our members and movements are going with them.

Maria Hadden
Daniel La Spata
Matt Martin
Carlos Ramirez-Rosa
Michael Rodriguez
Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez
Susan Sadlowski Garza
Byron Sigcho-Lopez
Jeanette Taylor
Andre Vasquez

Photo: Desmon Yancy
For the past eight years, the political status quo has enriched tech investors, Wall Street financiers, and real estate moguls while black and Latinx Chicagoans lost their jobs, their homes, and their lives.

But 2019 was a change election. Across our city, voters ousted the corrupt political dynasties of old and opted instead for the promise of change.

Now it is time to make good on that promise. That’s why, together with our progressive colleagues, we released a set of legislative priorities for the first 100 days of the new City Council.

Our plan includes:

• Addressing skyrocketing rents and widespread homelessness with three ordinances: “Homes for All,” “Development for All,” and “Bring Chicago Home.” These ordinances will rebuild affordable family housing, restore public housing stock, and begin the process of raising taxes on the sale of multi-million dollar properties.
• Curtailing reckless TIF spending with an ordinance to return annual TIF surplus funds to our public schools.
• Limiting the impact of the city’s unjust and inaccurate gang database with amendments to the Welcoming City Ordinance.
• A community benefits agreement ordinance for the Obama Presidential Center to preserve affordability, create jobs, and prevent displacement on the South Side.
• Raising the minimum wage to $15 by 2021.

This plan is just the beginning. There is much more work to be done to make our city a peaceful, just, and abundant home for all of us. But these ordinances will immediately begin to improve the schools, jobs, safety, and housing conditions in our neighborhoods.

It’s a new day in Chicago. We look forward to working with the new mayor and City Hall to make a Chicago for the many a reality.

This piece was originally published as a Letter to the Editor in the Chicago Sun-Times. For the full 100 Day plan, please visit bit.ly/UWF100days
Chicago Teachers Union member Christine Dussault has been organizing in Chicago for about three years. She is currently an active member of the UWF Organizing Committee, which organized canvasses, phonebanks, and house parties for endorsed candidates this year. Christine emphasized the importance of organizing a “Get Out the Vote” (GOTV) bootcamp for volunteers a week before the election, so that volunteers had the skills to be effective through election day.

Christine organizes with UWF because we are working to create multi-racial coalitions to address the ways families and students have been failed by our elected officials. She pointed out how the housing crisis in Chicago poses a threat to public education. “If we don’t start talking about public education and housing as linked we will be in trouble,” she said. “If students and their families cannot afford a place to live, public education will disappear.”

“We are at a pivotal moment in our city and if you’ve been contemplating getting involved or how to get involved, this is the time,” she continued. “UWF is an organization that is truly fighting for what is important to working-class people.”

Christine is looking forward to continuing the momentum built among UWF members after the election, and to growing as an organization.

“Organizing Committee Spotlight: Meet Christine Dussault!”
By Brenda Kissane

Christine, far right, leads discussion at our New Member Orientation in June

“Movement Leader Fellow Marissa Arrez makes a fundraising ask at the UWF Inauguration Bash.”

“UWF members celebrate at Jeanette Taylor’s victory party in the 20th Ward.”

In February, the UWF Organizing Committee organized a south side canvass (pictured) and a north side phone bank for our endorsed slate.

“Photo: Erica Bland-Durosinti”

“Photo: Aaron Cynic”

“Photo: Desmon Yancy”

“Photo: Emma Tai”
Fundraising Committee Spotlight: Meet Minnie Bandy!
By Yesenia Lopez

Minnie Bandy joined the United Working Families (UWF) Fundraising Committee a year ago. She currently works for SEIU Healthcare as a home care provider and enjoys cooking during her spare time.

Minnie was born in Mississippi and moved to Chicago when she was three years old. She grew up on the south side of the city.

Minnie believes that everyone should be treated fairly and this has led her to get involved with numerous campaigns and UWF. Minnie describes UWF as a wonderful group with positive energy and is inspired by their unity.

Minnie is extremely proud of the Fundraising Committee’s accomplishments in the last year, including the Holiday Party and Inauguration Bash. She is excited to continue the work with UWF and the opportunity to meet other passionate individuals like herself.

Fellow Profile: Victor Negrete is doing ‘great things’ with UWF
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Victor Negrete worked on the 2016 Bernie Sanders presidential campaign. He also worked on the recent campaign of Rafael Yañez for alderman of the 15th ward. While on the Yañez campaign Victor accepted a United Working Families Organizing Fellowship, and that had a big impact.

“The fellowship was an opportunity to get involved and learn about UWF,” he said. “There aren’t many organizations like UWF in Chicago that’s building relationships with other organizations to build political power.”

While already working with Yañez, the campaign manager told him about the UWF fellowship opportunity. Participation would offer additional resources, training, mentoring, and a small stipend.

Victor, who works with the City Colleges of Chicago, attended a one-day UWF orientation in December 2018 at the start of the fellowship. He was teamed with other organizers and the relationships became “like family.” He learned additional techniques and approaches to organizing work he was already doing.

Victor said he put his “heart and soul” into the campaign and the skills he got from UWF made the work even more rewarding. He learned skills in organizing fundraisers, canvasses, door knocking teams, organizing meet-and-greet socials, and training volunteers in a host of other campaign roles.

“Every campaign operates differently and I did a little bit of everything,” he said, adding that he even did social media work.

Victor was especially impressed by the number of progressive aldermanic candidates UWF endorsed who won. And he’s hopeful about the future of progressive politics in Chicago.

“The entire UWF experience was great. I would recommend it to anyone interested in political organizing,” said Victor, who continues to volunteer as a UWF Organizing Committee member.

“I was happy to see the UWF membership take a lot of initiative in being leaders. It shows that when people come together and work together, you can do great things.”
SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE!

July 25, 2019  Trivia for the People
August 2-3, 2019  Training for Chapters and IPOs
August 21, 2019  General Membership Meeting
October 5, 2019  New Member Orientation

In May, incoming UWF aldermen joined members of the Grassroots Collaborative in the streets to protest the massive “mega-TIF” giveaways to the real estate developers behind Lincoln Yards on the north side, and the 78 in Pilsen and the South Loop.

Photo: Aaron Cynic