

Father and Son Brunch Meeting

On Saturday, November 19, 2011, Laborers Local 332 Business Manager Sam Staten Jr., hosted a Father and Son brunch, to discuss how to foster more participation of younger members of Local 332

Fourteen fathers and fourteen sons, two grandsons and one daughter attended the brunch. Mr. Staten expressed gratitude to those attending for coming out on a Saturday. After the initial presentations and discussion, the participants were divided into two groups: The Fathers and The Sons. Each group went into separate rooms to "brain storm the question: "What can we do, on any level, to increase the involvement of our younger members"?"

The following is a summary from the Fathers meeting:

The younger members must be more knowledgeable of our Union Constitution. We must help them get more involved in the monthly meetings.

Many of our young members lack understanding on some very important issues. We need to help them grow and mature. We need to explain to our youth, the importance of rules in society and in our Union.

Several fathers present, elaborated on the importance of the training school. Our product is a "skilled Laborer". Our future as a Union depends on all of our members representing our Union in the highest fashion. We can do this by arriving on each job 100% of the times prepared for whatever task we are assigned.

Communications among members was stressed by several fathers. "The younger members some times complain that the older members don't listen to them - communications runs both ways".

The orientations are extremely important and helpful. "Once some of the young members see all that is happening at the local it has an impact. Thirty-two (32) of the sixty-five (65) new members who completed the orientation in November expressed an interest in joining a committee.

Fathers' group recommendations:

1. That a "Youth Committee" be formed. Young members could meet among themselves to discuss ways to get more involved in Union activities.
2. That an "Older member/Younger member retreat, to really spend some time bonding and brainstorming.
3. That a website be established to facilitate better communications among members.
4. That the group come together again in three - six months and invite others. There are some mothers with sons in the union and maybe other fathers with daughters. They should be invited to join the group.

The following is a summary from the sons and daughter group.

- The sons and daughter group members acknowledged that Local 332 has accomplished so many great things because their fathers and those before have committed the time and effort to the organization.

- Group members wanted it to be clear that their lack of participation in existing activities does not indicate a lack of support or appreciation for the local. Several expressed that they do not know where they would be today, if they had not been given the opportunity to be in Local 332.

- However, they expressed unanimously that they felt "times have changed." "It's just that we do things in a different way." "We like things streamlined", said one.

- "Our fathers came up during a time when "social networking" meant physically coming together. For the younger generations, social networking occurs most often electronically, through technology: texting, emails, Facebook, Twitter or other social media", another stated.

- The social networking media can get the message out instantly to many more people. One pointed to the "Occupy Wall Street" and "Flash Mobs" groups as examples. "They were largely organized online".

- "Our generation is all about technology. If we can find a way to bring the two together, some things might change; you would get more young people involved".

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Sons and daughter group recommendations:

1. That a committee for young members be created.
2. That Local 332 create a Facebook and Twitter account.
3. That other opportunities be made to bring fathers and sons and daughters together.