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Fred Wright of AFSCME Local 1739 Highlights Union Workers' Needs During a Pandemic

Feb 24, 2021 08:00AM By Nana Ama Addo



American people with physical and emotional disabilities face issues of inaccessibility, prejudice, and ableism every day. A pandemic undeniably exacerbates their struggles...

AFSCME Local 1739 is a union that represents employees who work in the Philadelphia Community and Social Service Agencies. With over 1500 union workers, Wright notes that 1/4th of the members work in communities that require hands-on activities...

In sharing the most pertinent issue for union members during COVID-19, Wright says: "Job security is an issue for workers. There is a high unemployment rate...The poor, disabled, and elderly are usually the first people to get cut."

Wright shares that the disabled and elderly have been the most underserved during the pandemic. This highlights the need for organizations like Local 1739. He states: "Those individuals are the most vulnerable, and they can't speak or advocate for themselves..."

Wright spearheaded initiatives designed to cushion workers during COVID-19, including negotiating with employers for adequate hazardous pay. His most memorable moment so far was getting the salaries for Direct Support Professionals (DSP's) increased...

COVID pushed Local 1739 to seek digital avenues of outreach. Currently, Local 1739 makes use of all versions of electronic media, including texting, virtual meetings and video chats.

We thank Mr. Wright and the team at Local 1739 for the work they do. Additional member resources of Local 1739 include education and scholarship assistance, money and credit assistance, and a travel center.



Nana Ama Addo is a writer, multimedia strategist, film director, and storytelling artist. She graduated with a BA in African Studies from the College of Wooster...

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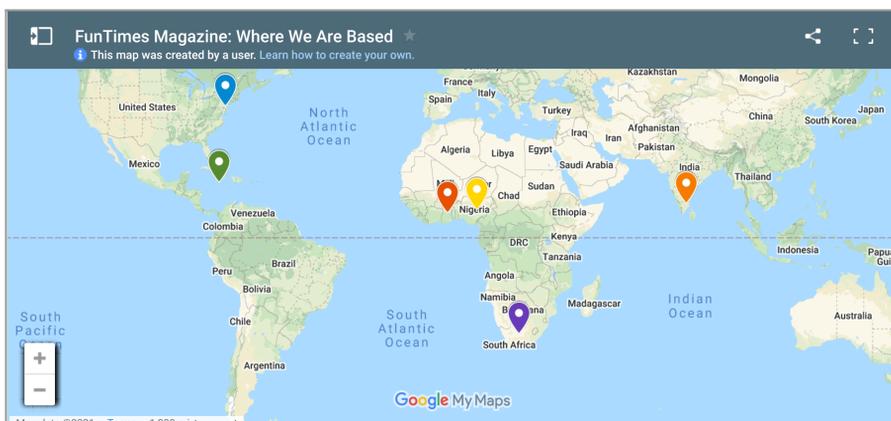
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