

LOCAL 372

CONNECTION MAGAZINE

FALL 2023
WWW.LOCAL372.ORG

Welcome
BACK2WORK

ONE Child at a Time

SCG Shortage

The Future of Work

**Mentoring
Representation**

**Join us at the
Labor Day Parade.**

**We Organize,
We Rise!**

Local 372 CONNECTION
Shaun D. Francois I, President

Official Publication of Local 372
NYC Board of Education Employees
District Council 37 | AFSCME | AFL-CIO



Labor Day Parade



2023 Scholarship Awardees



Local 372 Rally



General Membership Meeting at 372 Headquarters



School Lunch Workers



Welcome BACK2WORK

PRESIDENT'S Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Welcome to the start of the new school year! We have battled through two extraordinary years during this pandemic as the challenges still rages on, but we are Union Strong! The times are tough, but we are tougher. As we are starting a new school year and the beginning of fall, we must be vigilant and determined to protect all the gains we've achieved.

Amidst of all the challenges, we continue to fight on behalf of our members and retirees.

I am glad you are here and I am excited to be on this journey with you. I want to recognize our Division Staff, Local 372's Support Team, and our District Council 37's Leadership whose efforts create a sound and cohesive network for member protection, benefits, and dignity.

In every conversation, I have sensed an extraordinary degree of passion, commitment, and positive energy carrying us into a new beginning together.

Even as this new season is buzzing with excitement and the prevailing mood is upbeat, I want to acknowledge the emotional, political, environmental, economic, and social complexities of these times. Each of our members carries the weight of challenges and concerns that range from the global to the highly personal. That is why it is especially important to take good care of each other, engage compassionately and patiently, and be guided by our humanity.

As a union, we have an outsized role and responsibility to model, create space for, and contribute to critical thinking and open dialogue. This means having difficult conversations in ways that are respectful, civil, and oriented to fearless, equitable, inclusive progress. The tie that binds us together is the sense of joy and optimism that derives from our history and activism work together. As James Baldwin wisely stated, "Hope is invented every day."

So, in this very moment exists the opportunity to "begin again" – not only to rediscover the why of our individual aspirations, but also the passion for our collective work.

There is much to do this year and much progress already to share. Periodically, we will offer highlights, reflections, and updates on events, union activities, and ongoing member related issues and advances that are underway. Together with this Local 372 network for member protection, we look forward to a year of hard work, great accomplishments, and more than a measure of joy.

Rest assured, you will always have Local 372, a fighter and advocate on your side. Should you have any problems at work or questions about what you are entitled, your Shop Steward or union representative is there to help you. But active and strong member participation is critical to a strong union. Therefore, I encourage you to talk to your representatives and visit our website to learn about your rights, union meetings and events, and amplify your voice. YOU are the union!

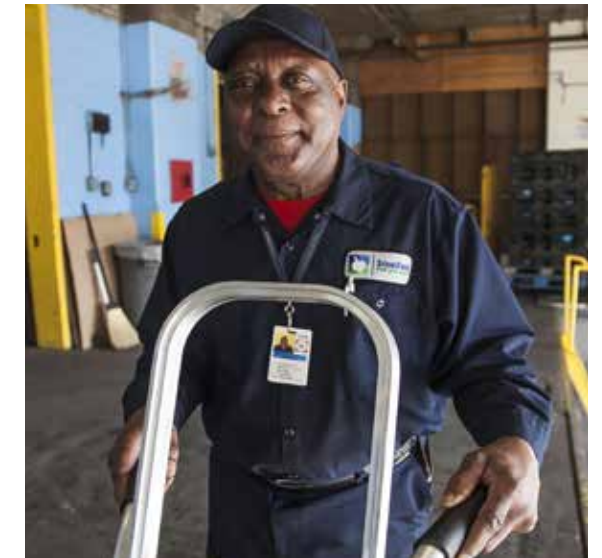
"Stay Ready"

In Solidarity,

Shaun D. Francois I, President



Donald Nesbit, Executive Vice President



Loader and Handler



School Cook



Local 372 Shop Stewards



Health Aide



Family Paraprofessional

LOCAL 372: Building a Better Future - One Child At A Time



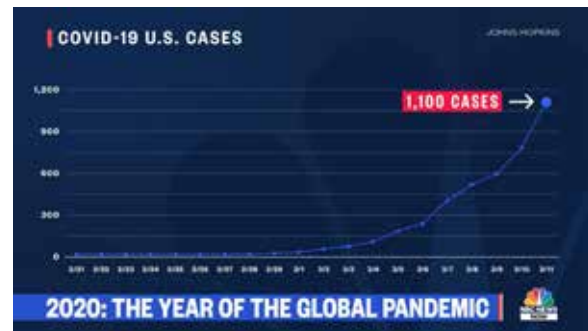
In 1940, school lunch workers earned a meager 50 cents per hour with no benefits or job security. But one man, Harry Gray, had a vision for change. Through his efforts, Local 372 was formed in 1943, representing 500 central kitchen workers.



Today, Local 372 has become the largest union in District Council 37, representing nearly 25,000 Department of Education employees in New York City. These dedicated individuals provide essential support services in public schools, ensuring a safe and productive learning environment for 1.2 million children, and their families.



But then, the pandemic struck, bringing New York City to a sudden halt.



At the end of February the US reports its first death and confirms 25 cases. But within days, that number swells to over 1000, and this is where things really go downhill.



Melanie Baez - Parent Coordinator

“So when the pandemic hit, it was definitely like in the emergency room like triage type of settings. You have to make sure that as parents are coming in, as students are coming in, and you’re dressing their needs.”



Linda Armfield - SAPIS Counselor

“I think the kids were totally unfamiliar with this. It was almost like a punishment, because they didn’t know what was going on. They didn’t understand why they couldn’t play with their friends anymore. Or the depth of it. They didn’t understand that it was really a matter of life and death, and ostracized them away from everything that they knew.”



Jeanette Rodriguez - Parent Coordinator

“It was very heartbreaking just to go through it and then have other people going through and then just watching the news and seeing all these people dying. It was devastating. You couldn’t go out - you had curfew. You couldn’t be outside in the park. It couldn’t go to school, so it was like a sudden stop.”

The vibrant Metropolis transformed into a landscape of emptiness, dismay and disconnection.



Antonio Jordan - Community Coordinator

The pandemic brought about a great change and challenge for our community, and Local 372 did exactly what we were supposed to do, which was to answer the call, build a community, and change the future, which is our children,

However, amidst the darkness, the pulse of the city had to keep going. Local 372 continued to beat - ensuring the lifeblood of the city, its people, and its future. The children kept moving forward.

Local 372’s success lies in its leadership that pulsates with the city. As we move forward, Local 372 will continue to follow the tradition of greatness, both for the Union, and for the city.

Local 372 Building A Better Future, One Child at A Time.



Eric Adams, NYC Mayor



PLEASE RSVP TO: KCDCC2820@GMAIL.COM / SECURE.ACTBLUE.COM/OWATE/BKDEMSGALA2023

SCG Shortage

School Crossing Guard Shortage Puts NYC Children at Risk

As the upcoming school season approaches, a critical issue looms large in New York City - the persistent shortage of School Crossing Guards. This situation has raised concerns about the safety of children, as underscored by Local 372.

Shaun D. Francois I, President of Local 372 and DC 37, stated to News 12, "You only have one crossing guard to a school, when it should be four, one in each corner. It's just unsafe."

Reflecting on recent developments, earlier this summer, the Adams administration disclosed plans to eliminate nearly 500 vacant School Crossing Guard positions from the 2024 budget. Notably, these reductions do not equate to job losses, but Local 372 contends that an increased number of guards is indispensable. These School Crossing Guards fulfill a critical role; their presence is not a luxury - but a necessity.

With a wealth of experience, Rosa Browne, who served as a School Crossing Guard for nearly three decades, advocates for enhanced support for current crossing guards. This encompasses increased financial resources and augmented police presence around schools. Browne said, "While you're a School Crossing Guard you have the responsibility to watch the kids."

The shortage of School Crossing Guards in NYC has become a pressing concern, potentially compromising the safety of our children. Urgent measures are needed to address this issue and ensure the well-being of our kids. Local 372's Leadership is leading the charge to fix this shortage.



Local 372 represents a diverse range of essential job titles and is preparing for potential changes as Artificial Intelligence (AI) advances. Although the exact outcomes are yet to unfold, considering how AI might affect specific job titles within Local 372 can shed light on how the union is gearing up for the future of work.

How AI Could Change Different Jobs:

School Aides: AI might help with things like keeping track of who's at school, so School Aides can spend more time helping students. They could also help students and teachers use new technology.

Health Aides: AI could help Health Aides keep an eye on patients' health, so they can take care of them better. Health Aides might work with AI to understand medical information.

School Lunch Workers: AI might help plan meals and reduce waste, so School Lunch Workers can focus on making tasty food and keeping the lunch area nice.

School Crossing Guards: AI could make school crossing streets safer for people. School Crossing Guards might work with AI to make sure students and people can cross streets safely.

SAPIS (Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialist): AI could help find students who need help. SAPIS workers might become counselors who use AI information to help students.



Family Paraprofessionals: AI might help Family Paraprofessionals understand what families need. They could use AI to connect families with helpful services.

Community Workers: AI might help Community Workers know what people in the area are worried about. Community Workers might use AI information to plan programs that help the community.

Dealing with Change:

Even though AI is exciting, some people worry that jobs might disappear because of it. Local 372 could help by teaching workers new things so they can work with AI. They could also work with schools and tech experts to find new ways AI can help workers.

What's Important:

We're not sure how much AI will change things, but this is a good time for Local 372 to think about how AI and people can work together. This way, they can use new ideas while still valuing the skills Local 372 Members bring.

STAY READY, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET READY

President Shaun D. Francois I's cherished motto, "Stay Ready, So You Don't Have to Get Ready," resonates deeply as a guiding principle within our union's mission. At its core, this phrase encapsulates the proactive stance we take in nurturing and protecting our children.

It's about maintaining a state of constant preparedness, similar to having an umbrella before the rain starts falling. In this context, our responsibility extends far beyond a reactive approach; it's a commitment to anticipation, foresight, and strategic planning.

We invest in training, honing our skills, and staying ahead of potential challenges, ensuring that we're well-equipped to provide the utmost care and support to our most precious cargo - the children who depend on us. This motto reminds us that our dedication to their well-being means always being one step ahead, so that their safety, growth, and flourishing are never compromised.



Report Of The Director Of Education And Library Division

In an environment shaped by the complex social, economic and health circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Division has made significant progress in our pursuit of delivery of the highest quality of service to the members and the local.

We have employed a strategic plan, which allows us to continue delivering the local's and the council's priorities which are to engage the members, provide information to them, and to be visible through informational sessions.

This strategic plan drives what we do daily which is to achieve our vision of outstanding services. If the work we are doing does not effectively accomplish these goals, then we stop, reassess, and rebrand. Our overall plan is to continue to care for and service our members.

The strategic plan was created with direct involvement of the front-line staff employed across the council. We examined our internal and external environment and determined what our division should focus on for the benefit of the members.

To engage our members, we arrange lunch-time meetings, union days as well as in-person and virtual borough meetings. We endeavor to participate in orientations, meeting with superintendents, principals, managers, supervisors as well as the rank and file to maintain working relationships and open lines of communications, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the Division. We are resolution driven and will continue to evaluate and monitor our delivery of services to ensure the highest quality of performance.



John Burke, Education Library Division Director

Mentoring Union Representation

Here are the newest grievance representatives to join the Education & Library Division, ready to represent you, Local 372 Members.



Monique Lizcano



Maryym McDonald



Carols Sanchez



Karla Deschamps



Pamela Rodriguez

Union representation recruitment and mentoring of these representatives are essential for safeguarding Members' rights. By selecting representatives from the rank-and-file, the union ensures advocates who truly comprehend workers' challenges.

These representatives bring unique skills and firsthand experiences, having walked the same path as their peers. Mentorship by seasoned representatives facilitates knowledge transfer, enhancing overall effectiveness. Let's warmly welcome them to the fold, as their contributions fortify the union's ability to protect and uphold Local 372 Members' rights.



(L-R) Jacqueline Pointdujour, Assist. Director; Monique Lizcano; Carlos Sanchez; Maryym McDonald; John Burke, Div. Director

John Burke
Director of Education & Libraries Division
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(212) 815-1951

Jacqueline Pointdujour
Assistant Director of Education & Libraries Division
pointdujourj@dc.net
(212) 915-1064

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY NOVEMBER 7TH 2023 FOR THE NYC COUNCIL

Please Exercise Your Right to VOTE!

The **2023 New York City Council elections** will be held on November 7, 2023, with primaries having occurred on June 27, 2023. Due to redistricting and the 2020 changes to the New York City Charter, council members elected during the 2021 and 2023 City Council elections will serve two-year terms, with full four-year terms resuming after the 2025 New York City Council elections. Party nominees will be chosen using ranked-choice voting.



Donald Nesbit, Executive Vice President

RAISES AND RETRO MONEY

Everyone should have received their negotiated raises and retroactive money.

If you haven't, please call the

DC 37 Education and Libraries Division at 212-815-1050

Look forward to your next raise of 3% in May 2024, and 3.25% in May 2025.



Meet Us @ The 2023 LABOR DAY PARADE

Join your Local 372 and DC 37 Union Family as we March in the 2023 New York City Labor Day Parade, featuring Grand Marshal Nancy Hagans, NYSNA President.

We Organize, We Rise!

Saturday, Sept. 9th @ 10 am

**DC 37 Assembly Area:
West 44th Street - Between
6th Avenue & Broadway**

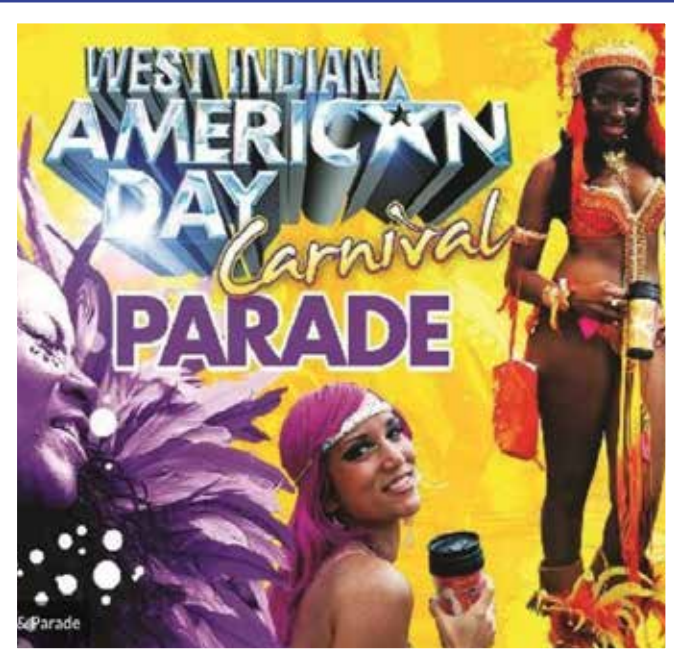
Join DC 37 at the 2023 **LABOR DAY PARADE**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9
 DC 37 members assemble at 10 a.m.
 Meet at West 44th St. between 6th Ave & Broadway

Join your DC 37 Family and tell NYC:
WE RUN NEW YORK

Scan to register and join us:

 Or visit:
www.mobilize.us/afscmedc37/event/571908
 For more information, contact your local or union representative, or the DC 37 Political Action Department at 212-815-1550.

District Council **37** AFSCME AFL-CIO



West Indian American Day Carnival & Parade 2023
 Where: Brooklyn, New York
 When: Monday, September 4th, 2023

Presented by **LOCAL 372 SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**
 Chairperson - Janice Sutherland
 Vice-Chair - Jennifer Austin

CAESARS CASINO
 ATLANTIC CITY
BUS TRIP
 December 9, 2023



Local 372 Members: **\$65.00**
 Non-Members: **\$70.00**
 per person

Please scan to pay: 

Itinerary:
 * Please arrive on time at 7:30am
 * Bus will Depart at 9:00am Sharp!
 125 Barclay Street,
 New York, NY 10007
 * Mandatory Player's Credit
 * Breakfast is On Your Own
 * Bus leaves Casino at 5:30pm

Local 372
 President Shaun D. Francois I

Local 372 Scholarship Committee Bus Trip

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 17TH 2023
THE 54TH ANNUAL

Pre Parade Show
 11AM-1PM
 125th St

Manama Diop
 Javier Gooden
 Uptown Dance Academy
 and More!

Parade starts 1PM SHARP!

African American Day Parade
 Parade Route: 111th - 137th St & Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd
 (7th Ave) Harlem, NYC
 Theme: "Celebrating African American Culture"

African American Day Parade

Local 372
 Our job is kids

MEMBERS - \$120
 NON-MEMBERS - \$160

PRESIDENT - SHAUN D. FRANCOIS I
 CHAIRPERSON - JANICE SUTHERLAND
 ICE-CHAIRPERSON - JENNIFER AUSTIN

Scholarship Dinner BANQUET
SAVE THE DATE!!
 THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 2024
 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM

VILLA BARONE MANOR
 737 Throgs Neck Expy, NY 10468

KEYNOTE SPEAKER & HONOREES
TBD

SAVE THE DATE!
 Scholarship Dinner Banquet

Local 372 Officers

Shaun D. Francois I
President

Donald Nesbit
Executive Vice President

Glenys Rivera
2nd Vice President

Trina Prior
Secretary-Treasurer

La'nette Murphy
Recording Secretary

John Olsson
Sergeant-At-Arms

Darell Jones
Sergeant-At-Arms

Antonio Jordan
3 Year Trustee

Willie Mitchell
3 Year Trustee

Yvonne Vazquez
3 Year Trustee

Janice Sutherland
Monthly Annual School Lunch
Employees Chapter Chairperson

Pamela J. Armstrong
School Aides / Health Aides Chapter
Secretary

Donna Tilghman
Substance Abuse Prevention And
Intervention Specialists (S.A.P.I.S.)
Chapter Chairperson

Sharon Lipscomb
Monthly Annual School Lunch
Employees Chapter Secretary

Jennifer Austin
Family Paraprofessionals
Chapter Chairperson

Nestor Reyes
Substance Abuse Prevention And
Intervention Specialists (S.A.P.I.S.)
Chapter Secretary

Dionne D'arrigo
Hourly School Lunch Employees
Chapter Chairperson

Denia Igenio
Family Paraprofessionals
Chapter Secretary

Denise Ferrante
School Crossing Guards
Chapter Chairperson

Yvonne Dupree
Hourly School Lunch Employees
Chapter Secretary

Dery Roriguez
All Community Titles Chapter
Chairperson

Michelle Dunston
School Crossing Guards
Chapter Secretary

Barbara Richardson
School Aides / Health Aides Chapter
Chairperson

Keisha Stevens
All Community Titles Chapter Secretary

Local 372 Connection

Please call or email your news to Soner Isbilir at 212-815-1372 or sisbilir@local372.org

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372 • Text LOCAL372 to 56525 for more information.





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New York, NY 10001



**Building a Better Future
One Child at a Time!**

