



NEWS

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

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OVER 700 BUILDING SERVICE WORKERS GRADUATE FROM TRAINING PROGRAM

—Ceremony recognizes workers who gain skills through joint labor-management program—

New York, NY – Hundreds of Local 32BJ members are advancing their careers and improving their services through courses administered by Local 32BJ’s Thomas Shortman Training Fund. Certifications in programs ranging from innovative industry techniques, like “Green-Cleaning,” to specialized technical skills, such as Air Conditioning/Refrigeration Repair, enable janitors, porters, doormen, superintendents and security officers to better perform their jobs as a result of the skill enhancement.

“The Thomas Shortman Training Program has given me the skills and confidence to move ahead in my career,” said Local 32BJ member Juan Pichardo, scheduled to receive NY City Department of Housing Preservation and Development’s Superintendent certification. “Over the past five years, I have taken and completed just about every industry training given.”

The training program is a joint labor-management program supported by employer contributions negotiated through collective bargaining. The Fund, which was founded in 1968, provides over 7,000 training courses to nearly 4,000 union members each year. Over 700 diplomas and program certificates were awarded at this year’s graduation, making it the largest ceremony to date.

“The building service industry is constantly evolving to keep up with the latest technologies and practices,” said Linda Nelson, Director of the Building Service 32BJ Benefit Funds Training Program. “The Thomas Shortman program continually updates its curriculum to provide to allow our members to stay ahead of the changes and continue to offer the best services in their buildings.”

“The Shortman Fund also offers courses in English as a Second Language and U.S. Citizen Test Preparation,” said Local 32BJ Secretary-Treasurer Héctor Figueroa. “These programs help immigrant workers, who would otherwise be unable to afford these classes, in their jobs and in their new communities.”

At Saturday’s ceremony, program graduates from New York City, New Jersey, Long Island and Westchester County were honored for completing free courses in Appliance Repair, English as a Second Language, GED Preparation, Computers, Locksmith training, and Heating Systems, and others received diplomas for multiple-year courses in Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning or Superintendent/Resident Manager.

“Negotiating wages and benefits is only part of our union’s commitment to members,” said Local 32BJ Vice President Kyle Bragg. “Providing professional development opportunities is an essential part of our service.”

With more than 85,000 members in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., Local 32BJ SEIU is the largest property services union in the country.

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***** The Thomas Shortman Training Program graduation ceremony will take place on Saturday, June 23, 2007 at 10 am at Local 32BJ, 101 Avenue of the Americas, NYC. Local 32BJ Vice President Kyle Bragg, Realty Advisory Board President Jim Berg and several instructors and graduates will deliver remarks.*****