

Fourth Galveston Living Wage Conference set for Sept. 26

By **STEPHEN MCINTYRE** | **Posted: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:00 pm**

Labor Day is on the first Monday of September and on the last Monday we will be holding our fourth annual Galveston Living Wage Conference from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sept. 26 at St. Patrick Catholic Church, 1010 35th St., in Galveston.

Some of you may have attended the first conference on the last Monday in September 2013 at Live Oak Missionary Baptist Church, where we had presentations from lawyers, local officials and federal government concerning issues facing low-wage workers.

The second conference in 2014 at St. Patrick Catholic Church included Galveston County District Attorney Jack Roady and discussions about the Sec. 3 jobs program at Galveston Housing Authority and city of Galveston and prosecuting wage theft. Former Galveston Independent School District Superintendent Larry Nichols opened the 2014 conference with his announcement of a wage increase for almost 100 of GISD's lowest wage workers.

The 2015 conference returned to St. Patrick Catholic Church where there was a panel on religious teachings concerning workers' rights and other presentations along with an announcement that the Park Board had decided to award a pay raise to some of its low wage workers.

At this year's conference there will be panels on religious teachings concerning workers' rights and J1 Visa workers. There also will be presentations on living wage ordinances, Galveston demographics and wage enforcement by the U.S. Department of Labor.

This year's conference is sponsored by Gulf Coast Interfaith, Galveston Coalition for Justice, Galveston Northside Taskforce, Texas Organizing Project, NAACP Galveston Unit No. 6180, LULAC Council No. 151, Texas Civil Rights Project, LULAC Council No. 22270, Gulf Coast Homeless Coalition, Plumbers Local Union No. 68, The Children's Center Inc. Outreach and Assistance Program, Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, Commissioner Stephen Holmes, Service Employees International Union Texas, Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle of Episcopal Church of Texas, Texas Legal Services Center, Baptist Ministers Association of Galveston, Galveston County Adverse Childhood Experiences Collaborative, Archbishop Emeritus Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston Catholic Diocese, United Way of Galveston, IBEW Local Union No. 527, The Jesse Tree, Pipefitters Local Union No. 211, St. Vincent's House, Texas Appleseed, Galveston Ministerial Alliance, Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, Galveston Catholic Charities, The Metropolitan Organization, National Employment Law Project, Students Together for Service, Galveston County Central Labor Assembly-AFL/CIO and Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law.

Letters have been sent to different local employers concerning the wages of workers and information has been provided and conversations held or scheduled. An employment survey has been circulated to help

quantify the treatment of low wage workers. Over the years these quiet conversations between people of goodwill have been helpful in gaining a better understanding of the working lives of our friends and neighbors in Galveston and may be making a difference. On June 14, the Park Board of Trustees voted to raise the wages of eight of its lowest wage workers by over 10 percent.

You can read about all four conferences and related news at www.gulfcoastinterfaith.org. Join us on Sept. 26.