

Local 1199 Flyer “If You Live in the Southeast Bronx...,” Community Action, c. 1960s

Lesson type: Worksheet

Historical Context

American labor unions arose out of the need for workers to organize themselves and work together to demand fair wages, safety in the workplace, and job security. A collective voice could not be ignored by employers as easily as individual protests, and workers who banded together could engage in strikes and other joint activities to strengthen their hand in bargaining with management. In the 1950s, hospital employees were not yet unionized, and labor laws that were being put into effect at the time did not apply to them. Early attempts to organize hospital workers focused mostly on skilled labor. In 1957, Local 1199 began to reach out to these workers. Hospital workers in the early 1950s were badly underpaid and were confronted with a management that regarded unionization as totally inappropriate for health care institutions.

Local 1199 first began as a pharmacists' union, but it encouraged and supported diversity among its membership from the very beginning. It is not surprising, therefore, that the union reached out to the population of mostly Black and Hispanic hospital workers. Its first major success occurred in 1958, when it succeeded in organizing the employees of Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx in New York City. This success led to increased membership, and by 1963, membership had quadrupled. Racial diversity within Local 1199 naturally led it to become involved in the struggle for civil rights during the 1960s, and it subsequently became a political force that fought for equality and the improvement of living conditions in minority neighborhoods in New York City.

Essential Question

How do immigrants impact the economy and culture of a community?

Check for Understanding

Summarize the main purpose of this flyer and explain why this message is targeted toward certain ethnic groups.

If You Live in the Southeast Bronx

In Zip Code Areas # 56, 57, 59 [Morrisania, Tremont, Hunts Point, Southern Boulevard, Bruckner Boulevard]

YOU CAN WIN:

- Better Housing by Correcting ALL Housing Violations;
- Better Police Protection;
- Cleaner, Safer, Better Neighborhoods and Schools.

BY WORKING WITH

A new 1199 program to organize for community action

REMEMBER, by working together in the Union, we have been able to win important victories.

NOW, by working together in the Union's new Community Organization Program, we can win big gains in housing and other important problems we face in the neighborhoods where we live.

Come to the Special Membership Meeting

DATE TUESDAY, JANUARY 31
TIME at 7:30 p. m.
PLACE MORRISANIA COMMUNITY PROGRESS CENTER
1179 Boston Road [Second Floor]
between Home Street and Jackson Avenue

DIRECTIONS: Third Avenue "L" to 166th Street Station.
#26 Bus to Home Street Stop.

If you Live in the Southeast Bronx -- Special Meeting , Kheel Center for Labor Management Documentation and Archives, Cornell University, KHE_5510_B2F4_165

Document Description

Flyer announcing a special membership meeting for Local 1199, in English and Spanish, ca. 1960s.

Questions

1. What is the purpose of this document?

Historical Challenge

Local 1199 is not the only U.S. labor union that has fought for the rights of its mostly Latino members. Using the links listed below in the Resources section, research the life of Cesar Chavez and the struggles of the United Farm Workers of America.

Interdisciplinary Connections

English Language Arts: Write a short play highlighting the struggles of Local 1199.

Technology: Create a Power Point presentation that chronicles the labor history of the U.S.

Resources

1. <http://www.albany.edu/history/LaborAudio/>