

Worthington Libraries Staff Announce Union Effort

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Today, staff at Worthington Libraries called on their library management to voluntarily recognize their union after they presented signed union cards from an overwhelming majority of library employees. The organizing campaign is led by staff from all three library branches.

"We love our jobs and we love the library," said Coleman Mahler, an adult services librarian at the Northwest Library branch. "Now we're asking for a voice in policy that affects us, autonomy over our working conditions and a library that works as hard for us as we work for our community."

Employees are calling on Worthington Libraries to recognize their union and to not use taxpayer money to hire anti-union consultants or to engage in any actions that could be interpreted as anti-union behavior. Copies of the cards were delivered to management at the Old Worthington Library branch, while the originals were filed with the State Employee Relations Board (SERB) to request voluntary recognition of the union.

"Equity and democracy are pillars of the public library," said Libby Vasey, a librarian at the Worthington Park branch. "A union at Worthington Public Libraries will affect positive change for the community, raise the morale and effectiveness of its staff and create an overall healthier organization."

The employees are organizing to join the Ohio Federation of Teachers, who represent nearly 20,000 active and retired public school teachers, charter school teachers, school support staff, higher education faculty and staff and public employees in Ohio.

"I support organizing because regardless of position or pay grade, we all deserve a voice in our workplace," said Ety Green, a circulation aide at Old Worthington Library. "United we can make ourselves heard and make our library more equitable."

Improving communication in the workplace is a key reason why library employees are forming their union, according to Karen Laird, a 20-year employee who does storytimes at Old Worthington Library. "Despite what we are told, it seems that our input is neither sought, valued, nor respected. Organizing our union can help us establish a stronger, healthier, more equitable work environment for the amazing people who work here now and those that will in the future."

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