

# CHICAGO TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25



## NEWS»

### ON THE SOLE OF COMMUNITY, A TEAMSTER GIVES BACK AFL-CIO Honors Local 726 Member for Community Service

The Illinois State Police used to throw their shoes away. When old boots and weathered work shoes had passed their prime, officers—like most of us—would put them out to pasture. But where others saw worn soles and broken laces, Master Sergeant Shad Edwards saw an opportunity.

It started small. Shad gathered boots from the garbage bin, asked for volunteers to help clean them up and began donating the better ones to veterans groups and Cub Scouts in need. Over time, Shad's shoe collection, like his vision, began to grow.

Now, shoes are coming in from across his Decatur community. Some are spruced up and passed along. Others are chopped up; their soles are sent to Nike, which recycles the rubber to build new playground equipment. And in return, the company sends Shad gently used Cub Scout uniforms, which he gives back to the community to keep this cycle of social consciousness up and running. On the soles of old shoes.

The innovative green initiative is just one of the ways the Teamsters Local 726 member is giving back to his community, something Shad's grown accustomed to in his 20 years serving the Illinois State Police. He's been an undercover officer in an organized crime group. He's been a narcotics supervisor with Task Force X. He completed two four-year terms on the Decatur City Council earlier this year. And he just celebrated his fifth year wearing a different kind of uniform as the Cub Scout Pack Leader of Lincoln Trails Council Pack #104.

And on December 11, Shad will be the recipient of the Illinois AFL-CIO's 2010 George Meany Award, a national honor for union members who make significant contributions to their communities.

"It's terribly important for union members to give something back to their communities," said Shad, from his home in Decatur. "Local involvement gives people the opportunity to see skilled workers becoming role models for our children.

"It gives kids the chance to say, 'Here's a Teamster who is helping his or her community. Maybe that's something I can aspire to be.'"

In addition to working with the Cub Scouts (his son Ethan is a member of Pack #104), Shad has sought to be a local role model for the youth of Decatur for decades. He regularly teaches Scouts the importance of firearm safety, from how to properly handle BB guns to what to do if you accidentally find a gun during a game of Hide

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'N Seek. For 10 years, he has been a leading DARE officer and educator for Decatur schools, serving as the drug and gang prevention instructor for every student in his community.

Beyond his years on the city council, Shad has remained a devoted civic volunteer. He is currently the president of the Coalition of Neighborhood Organizations and a member of the Decatur Chamber of Commerce. His commitment as an officer of the law also extends beyond the Illinois State Police. A certified juvenile policing officer, Shad has been a longtime member of the Mid-States Organized Crime Information Center and the National Gang Crime Research Center.

As evidenced, Shad's labor does not begin and end in the workplace. Yet he contends it's the protections and privileges he receives as a union member with the state police that still pushes him to be an influential member of his community.

"As a union member, I've seen firsthand the opportunities that I've been given, from my wages to my benefits and job security," said Shad, who regularly volunteers with the Teamsters on voting efforts and food drives. "Every Teamster has the chance to recognize these things and be grateful for these things and give something back."

The Illinois AFL-CIO will recognize Shad Edwards on December 11 at the Decatur Masonic Temple.

Teamsters Local 726, an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, represents approximately 300 Master Sergeants with the Illinois State Police.