Union plays labor hardball — strike!

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land Center home was privately owned by the Reed family.

The strike began when, workers and management couldn't come to terms.

The unionized workers — certified nursing assistants, li-

The workers seemed thrilled with the union, manage-

"We're fired up, can't take it no more!" shouted unionized workers of the Guilderland Center when they marched at the entrance of the home demanding more staff and higher wages and benefits.

"We're cautiously optimistic," said Joyce. "Not much happened [yesterday], but we still won't step back. We came out of it pleased; the strike was a success.

The number of cases for the strike, Robinson said, is to gain better staffing. "I'd take the raise and the benefits, but I'd rather have an adequate staffing," he said. "I'm here to take care of our residents; that's my job."

Workers have only 10 to 11 minutes a day to spend with each resident, Robinson said; she has been working at the Guilderland Center Nursing Home for five years.

"I feel bad because, being short-staffed, you can't spend quality time with them," said Kim Cacciolfi, another certified nursing assistant. "Sometimes, the CNAs are assigned to take care of 40 residents at a time; she said. "The other night," she said, "one worker was saying, 'We have to handle 31 residents'.'

To handle the three-day strike, management at the home brought in temporary workers from an outside agency.

Highgate management did not return several phone calls from The Enterprise this week, but issued a statement last week, saying there was adequate staffing to cover the striking workers.

"They say they have plenty of staff," Cacciolfi said, but "the residents don't know these people coming in."

"They come first to me," she said, her voice quivering. "They're like my family." Cacciolfi has been working at the nursing home for 15 years. "I don't have to pay an agency there, so I feel good," she said. "The residents don't know they're here. It's hard to leave them so late.""

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