



Early Educator

CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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CFT ECE member interviewed for Worthy Wage Day

The Worthy Wage Campaign is a grassroots effort led by early care and education (ECE) teachers, family child care providers, school age teaching staff, Head Start teachers and others who work directly with children to mobilize to improve the compensation and work environments for the ECE workforce. Together, advocates have a stronger voice and are able to build alliances with parents and others in the community, foster respect, and promote accessible and affordable high-quality early care and education to meet the diverse needs of children and families.

The Worthy Wage Campaign began in 1991 and was coordinated by the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) until 1999. The national campaign was initiated to draw attention to the importance of child care work and the urgent need to improve child care jobs. The campaign was highly successful in creating a network of individuals, advocates, parents, and most importantly locally-based



Katrina de la Fuente, preschool teacher and Local 6361 Shop Steward.

campaigns for whom CCW provided resources and technical support, offered leadership training opportunities, and organized an annual retreat.

Several communities continue to be a powerful voice for the ECE workforce by organizing activities on Worthy Wage Day, May 1.

This year, Katrina de la Fuente, a preschool teacher at South of Market Child Care, Inc. and a shop steward for Local 6361 was interviewed by NPR affiliate KTAR in Phoenix for a Worthy Wage Day story.

The reporter noted, "That while there is broad recognition of the importance of high quality

early childhood education, teachers and staff are struggling to make ends meet. Katrina de la Fuente is a preschool teacher and a member of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). She says she has a degree, yet the janitors and gardeners make more than her."

De la Fuente said in the interview, "We want lawmakers and politicians to be advocates for children, good quality education and for the teachers."

According to the AFT, child care workers earned less than \$20,000 a year in 2008. Members of the group are asking the President to continue his support of educators by

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reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The reporter also stated, "If we want high quality early childhood education and to keep talented educators on staff these people must get paid "worthy wages." That's the message from Katrina de La Fuente with the AFT. "

De la Fuente responded by saying, "We feel like our job is not important. That says a lot about our country. It's really sad that this is how we treat our educators – it means that education is at the bottom of the list."

AFT members help build playground for Seattle kids

Members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) joined more than 200 volunteers from the Amgen Foundation, the Tiny Tots Development Center (TTDC), KaBOOM! and residents of the local community on Saturday, June 5 to build a new, safe playground at the Tiny Tots Development Center in Seattle, Washington.

The new playground's design was based on drawings created by children who participated in a Design Day event in March and it will provide nearly 500 chil-

dren who attend TTDC with a safe place to play. Previously, the children who attend Tiny Tots Development Center had old, outdated equipment to play on, which was removed to make way for the new playground.

The playground is one of seven being built by KaBOOM! and the Amgen Foundation across the U.S. and Puerto Rico this year, and one of more than 150 that KaBOOM! will lead across the country in 2010 in an effort to provide a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America.



California Federation of Teachers Early Childhood Education Committee member Betty Robinson-Harris traveled to Washington to help erect the

playground at Tiny Tots. She reported that she had an amazing experience and was very proud that the AFT had supported this very worthy effort.

CFT part of California delegation to model P3 program in Maryland

On May 10 and 11, Early Childhood Education Organizing Project Director Sandra Weese represented the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) as part of a California delegation to visit birth to third programs in Montgomery County, Maryland. The CFT



Sandra Weese, Early Childhood Education Organizing Project Director, with the California delegation outside of the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

was invited to be a part of this delegation because of our union's commitment to high quality education, including early childhood.

The Government Action and Communication Institute (GACI) in collaboration with Preschool

California, several county superintendents of education, and the Bay Area Council invited a high-level, bipartisan delegation to visit and experience the model system of early education and early elementary programs in Montgomery

County, Maryland. In addition, the two-day tour included discussions with policy leaders and education experts in Washington, D.C. like Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Senator Dianne Feinstein and Representative George

Miller.

The two day educational tour provided ideas and approaches for bringing more federal support to California and for improving the quality of our early education programs. The overarching goals for the trip were to see model programs, nurture a leadership team, and engage California

leaders in national and state policy discussions.

To achieve these goals, the delegation included California policy makers like State Senator Carol Liu, early learning experts, key businesses and coalition leaders, and the David

and Lucile Packard Foundation. During our two-day session, the delegation:

- Learned from Montgomery County, Maryland's birth to third program, including meeting with Dr. Jerry Weast, Montgomery County's school superintendent;
- Met in Washington, D.C. with policy experts from within Congress and the White House; and
- Built relationships and an agenda among the California delegation for furthering our early education goals in 2011 and beyond.

Sandra Weese and CFT ECE Committee members participated in meetings with Congress members Mike Thompson and Barbara Lee that were facilitated by Preschool California (PC). PC has been scheduling these visits to discuss federal appropriations for early learning, including continuing the ARRA investments made last year in child development.



Pictured (left to right): Marissa Parish (Alameda Child Care Planning Council Intern), Tracy Matheney (UESF Early Childhood Educator), Saundra Andrews (Lee's Senior Field Representative), Anne Taylor (Lee's District Director), Vickie Ramos (PC Deputy Field Director), Jenny Paul-Rappaport (PC Federal Policy Analyst), and Angie Garling (Child Care Coordinator, Alameda County Child Care Planning Council).

“Early Intervention Revisited” explores needs of young children

Skyline Community College's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Department, with the co-sponsoring support of Bright Horizons Child Care and the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) Early Childhood Education Organizing Project, held a half-day Conference entitled “Early Intervention Revisited” on Saturday, May 15.

Over 150 participants heard Community College Personnel Preparation Project (CCPPP) Grant representative Paul Chesler and keynote speaker Dr. Marci Hanson, Special Education Graduate Program Chair at SFSU open the morning session. Breakout workshops were on topics such



Elaine Francisco with Dr. Marci Hanson, Director of the Early Childhood Special Education Graduate Program at SFSU; Kathy Small, Autism Specialist for the Contra Costa School District and Assistant Professor at SFSU; and Kathryn Browne, Coordinator of the Early Childhood Education Program at Skyline College and ECE Professor.

as dealing with challenging behavior, working with parents, understanding the referral process, and fully

including young children with special needs into ECE programs.

Participants earned

professional growth hours, enjoyed meals donated by Starbucks and CFT, and were given complimentary early learning kits by the San Mateo First Five Commission.

Elaine Francisco is an adjunct faculty member in the Skyline ECE Department and is a member of the CFT ECE Committee. She facilitated CFT outreach to conference participants including providing folders with information about the CFT/AFT and our long standing commitment to getting ECE staff recognized as professionals in the field of teaching. Francisco also encouraged those working in centers without union representation to contact the ECEOP for more information.

CFT co-sponsors Early Learning Advocacy Day

Early Learning Advocacy Day took place on June 15 in Sacramento, with more than 350 early learning supporters from across the state—including teachers and providers, parents, business leaders and others—coming to the state Capitol to advocate for high-quality early care

Thank you to our CFT ECE Committee members who attended and for helping to “Seize the moment for California’s youngest children!”

and education programs. Participants met with more than 100 state legislators and staff members to share their stories about how high-quality early learning programs have benefited California’s children, fami-



CFT ECE Committee members Elaine Merriweather, Elaine Francisco and Betty Robinson-Harris at Early Learning Advocacy Day 2010.

lies and communities.

In this time of unprecedented fiscal crisis, Early Learning Advocacy Day, hosted by the California Association for the Education of Young Children and Preschool California and co-sponsored by 60 organizations including the California Federation of Teachers (CFT), showcased the strength of our coalition of early care and education supporters.

Advocates spoke with one voice to tell legislators that in these tough economic times, high-quality early learning programs are a critical long-term investment for California.

Supporters heard from an impressive lineup of early learning speakers, including current State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell, Santa Clara County Superintendent Charles Weis, State Superintendent of Public Instruction candidate Larry Aceves and Donita Stromgren of the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Guest speakers Assemblymember Joan Buchanan, Assemblymember Julia Brownley and Senator Carol Liu reiterated the importance of California’s early care and education programs and asked advocates to remind their legislators that “our children are worth fighting for.”



Elaine Francisco and the San Mateo team visiting with Assemblymember Jerry Hill.

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