



French Sénatrice Meets with French School Members

When members at Bay Area French Schools Ecole Bilingue (EB), Lycée Français de San Francisco (LFSF) and French American International School (FAIS) learned of a site visit in March from a prominent French politician, Senator Claudine Lepage, member-leaders from this CFT Tri-Local developed a plan to reach out to their political representative to bring awareness to the ongoing contract negotiations at EB and LFSF and to solicit support from the Senator. The Senator had planned a meeting with teachers and the administration to discuss French-American Educational programs, and the Tri-Local members got together and drafted and sent a letter requesting a meeting with the Senator as well.



Back Row: Colette Retournard, FAIS and Marion Tobie, EB
Front Row: Christine Bois, FAIS; Pauline Tajchman, EB; French Sénatrice Claudine Lepage; Razik Ikhlef, LFSF and Miguel Concy, LSSF.

Through the support from the CFT/AFT, member-leaders of the Tri-Local were able to contact two French Unions, the National Union of Autonomous Trade Unions (UNSA) and the National Union of Secondary Education Teaching (SNES), who were meeting, at the time, with AFT leaders in

France. Making contact with the UNSA and SNES helped facilitate a meeting with the Senator during her visit to the Bay. Thanks to all of these efforts, a meeting was successfully secured with Senator Lepage.

Once a meeting was secured, member-leaders from the Tri-Local

“Main topics discussed were those of transparency, financial priorities and respect.”

-Ecole Bilingue Federation of Teachers

gathered to prepare for the meeting with Senator Lepage. They developed a clear message and outlined specific concerns at each school. As one member-leader from LFSF commented, “There seems to be a general lack of respect and transparency. Teachers are not being included in shared governance and decision-making. And we want to be good stewards of the schools’ financial resources to make sure that money is being spent

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Redondo Beach Early Childhood Educators Membership Drive

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS with the Redondo Beach USD chapter of AFT Local 1475 are gearing up for contract bargaining by outreaching to all members of the local. During an outreach drive on Saturday, April 18, organizers visited 41 members at home to spread the news about bargaining openers and upcoming actions, confirm personal contact information, identify leaders, sign-up agency fee payers and give members the opportunity to sign commitment cards for upcoming actions. Members of the local will show support on issues like salary increases and break improvements by wearing their AFT t-shirts on bargaining days.

Home visits are a new outreach strategy for the Redondo Beach early childhood educators. While Local 1475 makes a concerted effort to do home visits during the summer, this is the first time the Redondo Beach chapter has adopted the practice so that members could have even more opportunities to voice their ideas about building union power in the lead-up to bargaining. -By Evangelina Nevarez, AFT Project Organizer

Organizing Highlighted at Annual CFT Convention



CFT President Josh Pechthalt and SCI Committee Co-Chairs Kimberly Claytor and Cathy Campbell present a new organizing award to newly affiliated West Valley members Randy Castello, Mel Pritchard and Ann Marie Wasserbauer.

“Organize, Fight Back, Win the Future” was the theme of the 2015 California Federation of Teachers Annual Convention in Manhattan Beach. On March 20-22, 500 delegates and even more guests came together to celebrate their accomplishments in organizing and plan for the future. Early childhood educators, K-12 teachers, classified employees, community college instructors and UC lecturers and librarians from all over the state democratically decided

the union’s policies and elected its leaders for the next two years. Participants also attended workshops on topics like using technology in organizing, outreach to the community and understanding new education policies.

In his State of the Union address, CFT President Joshua Pechthalt emphasized the importance of bringing California up to the national average in per-pupil spending through changes like Prop 30. He argued that California needs to implement

large-scale, structural changes to solve the economic crisis and effectively address the problems that our students face in school, in their communities and at home. Participants also heard from several remarkable keynote speakers. In his speech “We Wear Many Hats,” Carl Williams, CFT Vice President and President of the Lawndale Federation of Classified Employees Local 4529, spoke about the vital roles classified employees play in creating positive learning environments for our students. State Superintendent of Education Tom Torlakson and State Controller Betty Yee acknowledged CFT for its role in bringing Prop 30 to the ballot, and stressed the importance of school in creating more equal economic opportunities.



Left: CFT Organizing Director Sandra Weese, West Valley Members Rick Hobbs, Ann Marie Wasserbauer and Mel Pritchard and Organizer Paul Bissember.

Jeff Duncan-Andrade’s inspiring presentation about the trauma and stress that follows low-income students into school had participants critiquing the corporate takeover of education all weekend. Cruz Batista Salvador brought the global struggle for quality education to California in his moving testimony about the 42 disappeared students from Ayotzinapa, Mexico. A relative of one of the disappeared, Batista Salvador explained how these students, all training to be teachers, protested regressive education reforms.

-By Erin Conley and Paul Bissember, AFT Project Organizers

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on educational priorities, including teacher pay and tuition remission, and not on real estate investments and inflated administrator salaries.”

Ultimately, the meeting with Senator Lepage on March 28 was a great success. Two member-leaders from each school, along with two staff from the CFT, were able to meet

with the Senator, discuss the shared concerns of the Tri-Local and update the Senator on their contract negotiations. Here is how the Ecole Bilingue Federation of Teachers (EBFT) described the visit in an update sent to their membership: “The main topics discussed were those of transparency, financial priorities and respect. The

Senator asked excellent qualifying questions and had a good understanding of the various problems faced and where she could be of help. She expressed her solidarity with us and she committed to reach out to the head of the Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE) to try and put pressure on our administrations to bargain

in good faith. We came out of the meeting feeling listened to and validated in our efforts.”

While this was an important success for the Tri-Local, EB and LFSF are still bargaining and working hard to organize their members and parents to support their efforts.

-By Paul Bissember, AFT Project Organizer

Palomar College Spring SCI Training



Sandra Weese

Left: SCI Organizers Sharon Took-Zozaya, Carrie Caudle, Britt Alamo, Kassi Hawkins, Ken Tray, Elaine Francisco, Dylan Alter and Lori Shoemaker.

As a part of the Strategic Campaign Initiative, seventeen SCI Organizers and seven CFT/AFT staff members joined faculty and

ident Shannon Lienhart, Office Manager Amy Hlavaty and Lead Organizer Debbie Forward outlined the mapping, organizing and strategizing before the first membership team arrived for April 13 & 14. A second team arrived for April 15 & 16. Each team member was provided with red and white t-shirts donning the PFF logo for easy recognition.

Each team received a packet in the morning that included all relevant information: a daily schedule, team visit information,

leave-behinds, membership forms, rap sheets, campus maps, a roster of all team members and contact forms.

The bulk of agency-fee payers are in Palomar's part-time faculty. PFF produced a list of about

90 part-time, agency-fee payers for the membership teams to approach.

With downtime between agency-fee payers to fill, each membership team was assigned a building floor to assess for COPE membership. Teams would find someone in an office, check their names against the COPE membership list and talk with faculty about COPE.

Four PFF Executive Board members joined the teams for visits at specified times. The union has committed to doing regular ongoing outreach in the fall with Eboard members

targeting non-members to approach every month. During this drive, 55% of the contacts joined PFF.

These new members will be sent a welcome email with a link to the AFT benefits web site. Lead Organizer, Debbie Forward, is assessing the Contact Forms connected to the membership forms, and matching the new members requesting follow-up with the union with appropriate board members who could speak to their concerns and potential activism/leadership.

-By Paul Bissemer, AFT Project Organizer



Jessica Ulstad

Back left: Organizers Evangelina Nevarez, Erin Conley and SCI Organizer Clark Carter. Front left: SCI Organizers Erika Minkowsky, Katharine Harer, Ronessa Norwood-Coleman, Debbie Forward, Mike Rotkin, Michelle Kern, Elaine Francisco and Organizer Alma Soto.



Jessica Ulstad

Clark Carter and Solomon Namala review their schedule of visits for the day.

staff at Palomar Community College to bolster the Palomar Faculty Federation (PFF) spring membership drive. After months of preparatory work and four days of membership teams reaching out to agency-fee payers on campus, the membership blitz ended with numerous successes.

PFF's Full-Time Co-Pres-

ON APRIL 16 AT FERNANDO RIVERA MIDDLE SCHOOL, Jefferson Elementary Federation and Jefferson Union High School Federation collaborated with Migrante Northern San Mateo County, Laya Youth and National Alliance for Filipino Concerns to present an evening seminar on cultivating civic mindfulness, volunteerism and involved citizenship in our Daly City youth. Union leaders Sergi Maderazo Robledo, Jerry Reed and David Gold from AFT 1481, and Elaine Francisco, Melinda Dart, Nena Cabrero and Beverly Leano from AFT 3267 were joined by CFT Field Rep Zev Kvitky from CFT, and leaders from the organizations, to talk to parents about ways to encourage involvement in our youth and develop community-ready students. Jefferson Elementary School District board member, Joseph Otayde, and Daly City Councilmember Michael Guingona attended, as well as parents and students. This event was so successful the groups hope to repeat it in the fall.

-By Melinda Dart, President, Jefferson Elementary Federation of Teachers



Melinda Dart

Creating Cultural Change within our Union: Member Outreach Week at ACE Local 6554

The affiliation process is on track at ACE Local 6554 with faculty now casting votes on the newly created constitution. Immediately following, new executive board elections will take place before the close of the semester. With this substantive transformation, local leaders and CFT organizers planned a member outreach to educate members regarding these changes and also to listen to their concerns.

Laura Kurre, CFT Training Director, led an upbeat outreach training with over 15 members from ACE Local 6554. The skills we learned prepared us to engage our faculty, and most importantly, to encourage them to become active in the union and even run for office. We even practiced role playing to prepare for resistance



Laura Watson

ACE COPE Chair, Wendy Bowers-Gachesa, heading out to talk to members about the upcoming vote on the new constitution and the officer election.

we might encounter.

The outreach effort itself was extremely well organized with ample support from CFT staff. The volunteers received their contacts for the day and all of the materials needed to be successful. I met with two part-time faculty members my first afternoon, Justin

Coburn and Ivana Bozidaveric, who were pleased to have the friendly visit from their union. In fact, the outreach was targeted to part-time faculty in addition to full-time faculty.

Over the week, volunteers from West Valley and Mission Colleges held over 200 one-on-one conversations and received over 170 commitment cards from members. In addition, non-work personal contact information was collected in order to improve communication with members.

I truly see the value in making personal contacts with members. Having the support and training from CFT staff was instrumental in our success.

-By Wendy Bowers-Gachesa, ACE Council Elected Representative, West Valley College

The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. The CFT represents faculty and classified workers in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California's students.

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UC-AFT Drives Working Hard to Increase Membership

SINCE RECEIVING AN SCI GRANT, the University Council-AFT has been busy setting goals, making plans and exceeding those goals. Deservedly, it received an Organizing Award at this year's CFT Convention for achieving the third highest membership growth of all CFT locals in 2014. With contract negotiations currently underway, members and staff have ramped up in 2015. They set a goal to sign up 150 new members at UC Berkeley and another 150 at UCLA. These are some of the highlights for each campus:

UC Berkeley

- UCB has exceeded its goal of signing up 150 new members this year
- 200 face-to-face conversations
- 15 UC-AFT members talking to their colleagues about joining the union
- SCI Organizer Mike Rotkin has been out in the field training members on how to have one-on-one conversations, and providing support to colleagues
- Successful completion of a three-day member outreach drive, supported by UC-AFT staff, one UCR member, two UCSC members and several UCB members

UCLA

- Holly Craig-Wehrle happily reported that "with five weeks left [of classes] we're confident we'll exceed that goal."
- 50 of those recruitments were the result of member-to-member conversations
- Many more were gathered at events hosted by the local, such as the member benefits fair
- SCI Organizer, Mike Rotkin, CFT Organizers Alma Soto and Erin Conley and other UC-AFT staff have provided a boost to those numbers.
- 45 possible Contract Action Team leaders identified. Staff and members are now working on securing confirmations.

UC-AFT member recruitment numbers for the past year: UCSD- 60, UCR- 38 UCI- 95, UCM- 10, UCLA- 180, UCSC- 40, UCB- 220, UCD- 63 and UCSB- 10 for a grand total of 716 new members!