



## Local 2121 Strike Vote Passed with 93% Approval

AFT Local 2121 began bargaining with the City College of San Francisco (CCSF) District administration over a year ago for a new contract. From the outset our leaders knew it would be a tough fight after CCSF was attacked and nearly closed by rogue accreditor ACCJC. Our homegrown administration was replaced by a series of interim chancellors, and our elected board of trustees lost its power to a special trustee with extraordinary powers. The special trustee focused on receiving accreditation through implementing austerity, completing the vision of ACCJC for a downsized college.

Since the accreditation crisis our union has been shifting from a “service model” of unionism to an organizing model, focused on building power through



AFT local 2121 members and community supporters picket outside John Adams Campus in the Lower Haight, San Francisco.

organizing our members for action. Still, when we began negotiations, potentially going on strike was difficult to imagine. In our 30 year history local 2121 has never been on strike before now. After the entire spring semester of 2015 got us nowhere in

negotiations - not even a compensation proposal on the table from administration - we decided to organize through the summer.

Saying the “S” word was scary at first. There was concern of backlash from membership that felt the union should wait and see

what administration offered before talking strike. Many members still feared the loss of accreditation if we took militant action for our contract. We needed to have deep conversations about the importance of our contract, and work people through those fears, while taking a concrete step toward strike readiness.

We chose to ask the membership to vote for a small dues increase that would be used to establish a strike hardship fund. The vote gave our summer organizing structure. We asked members to sign a commitment card to vote for the hardship fund. In our bargaining unit of 1,500, over 600 voted by secret ballot with a pass rate of 93%. At the time, it was the largest vote in the history of our union and a good practice round for

See **2121 Strike Vote** page 8

## Local 6554 is Building Union Power!



Laura Watson

ACE leaders showing off new member forms they collected during their drive.

We just wrapped up a successful membership drive, adding 60 new members to ACE Local 6554! Even more impressive is that 37 volunteers engaged in 103 face-to-face conversations about meaningful issues that affect part-time faculty, such as how to obtain Reemployment Preference (REP) and how to apply for Unemployment Insurance.

The part-time committee also held three part-time survival skills workshops at both campuses, staffed by Marina Broeder at Mission College and Lisa Bell and Jory Segal at West Valley College. The workshops educated faculty about REP, pay and benefits and were organized in response to findings from the Part-time Faculty Survey 2016.

-By ACE 6554 Vice President Wendy Bowers-Gachesa

# MHFT Friends and Family Festival Celebrates Public Education



Students participate in a three-legged race at the Friends and Family Festival.

On Saturday, April 23, the Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers (MHFT) held their 1st Annual MHFT Friends and Family Festival. This four-hour event was held at P.A. Walsh STEAM Academy in Morgan Hill, and was organized in order to celebrate public education and neighborhood schools. Teachers, students and their families came out for a day full of entertainment, activities and information for the entire family.

Entertainment included everything from a drumming presentation by the San Martin Gwinn Elementary School Drum Club, to a jazz concert by the Live Oak High School Jazz Ensemble, to a mariachi performance by Mariachi Herencia Mexicana, a band made up of local elementary to high school students.

MHFT members ran booths where Kumihimo, a Japanese method of cord making, could be experienced, seeds could be planted in honor of Earth Day and students could make their teacher(s) a card for the upcoming Teacher Appreciation Day. Additionally, the high school Future Farmers of America teacher organized a petting zoo that brought chickens, guinea pigs, rabbits and goats out. Lastly, teacher run three-legged races, water balloon tosses, wheelbarrow races and three-point competitions were available for attendees.

Several resource booths provided information about the roles they play in the local community. This included Cecilia's Closet giving out free socks for attendees, Community

Solutions and Discovery Counseling providing information on their services for students and families, and Morgan Hill Library signing people up for library cards and discussing their current literacy projects. Foothill Community Health Center provided information on their free clinics and performed dental health screenings. The Learning and Loving Center was present as well, discussing the services they have available for non-English speaking community members. Kaiser Permanente and Second Harvest Food Bank distributed materials to support healthy students and families in our community, and the Morgan Hill Unified School District booth invited attendees to register for The Superintendent's Health Challenge – Easy as 1-2-3.



Jackson Academy of Math and Music third graders sing at the festival.

Community leaders that were in attendance included host principal Teresa Sermersheim, MHFT endorsed school board candidate Pam Torrissi, and current Morgan Hill Councilmember Rich Constantine. The team of SCI Organizers that made this event possible are President Gemma Abels, Treasurer and Lead SCI Organizer Lori Shoemaker, and MHFT members JoAnne Markowska, Janet Lammers, Mario Araujo, Elisa Barragan and Bryan Olson.

-By Lori Shoemaker, SCI Organizer, AFT Local 2022



Creating cards at the Teacher Appreciation Day activity booth.

# Three CFT Locals Host Quality Public Education Forum in San Mateo



Local member volunteers give out free books and resources to conference attendees.

The Schools Our Children Deserve conference was held at Skyline College on Saturday, March 19, and featured speakers and panelists from all over San Mateo County, the greater Bay Area and from the national union based in Washington DC. The conference planners were assisted by staff from the



California Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers, as well as with vital input and resources from Skyline College's staff and administration and volunteers from all of the locals.

The conference sprung out of collaboration with organizers from all three locals, with an eye toward putting a spotlight on the need to gain more resources and support for neighborhoods and

schools in North San Mateo County. Jefferson High and Jefferson Elementary locals represent educators and staff from schools in Daly City, Brisbane, Colma and Pacifica. Skyline College in particular is a destination school for students from North County, making it a natural fit to round out the trio, with the San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers.

Melinda Dart and Elaine Francisco, SCI organizers from Jefferson Elementary Federation, AFT 3267, have been holding workshops for parents in their schools, which are very popular and well-attended, and have gained community support for their union. Sergio Robledo-Maderazo, of Jefferson High Federation, AFT 1481, and Katharine Harer and Michelle Kern of San Mateo Community College Federation, AFT 1493, were inspired by the incredible work of AFT 3267, and all three locals

worked for nearly a year on putting the conference program together.

Over 300 people registered for the conference, which was offered for free, and provided child-care, free gifts and school supplies and meals. There was a great mix of attendees, which included families, students, teachers, school staff and local school board members. The morning session featured magnetizing speakers, which included inspiring words from Skyline President Regina Stanback Stroud, California Assemblymember (and AFT 1493 member) Tom Ammiano and well-loved SFSU Ethnic Studies educator and community education activist Jeff Duncan-Andrade as keynote speaker.

The conference covered a range of pre-k through 12 education topics, and also included a townhall on early education workforce issues with several elected local officials.

Also featured were panels on grassroots regional issues, such as "Live & Learn: The Effects of the Housing Crisis on Education & Educators," which was presented by two community housing activist agencies, 4 North County and Fair Rents 4 Pacifica, and attracted great attention from attendees. All three unions are looking at ways to get

*"I'm so glad I came to this conference for many reasons, but to see my values reflected and valued is really supportive and encouraging. I love meeting people who want to serve students and the community!"*

-Schools Our Children Deserve attendee

membership involved in helping to solve issues of housing in San Mateo County next year, as the current crisis also impacts education and quality of life for both our students and workforce.

Josh Pechthalt, President of the California Federation of Teachers, gave an outstanding ending keynote, which presented a state-wide perspective on how the union is working to support education in regions like North San Mateo County. Pechthalt also spoke on the political issues in 2016 to increase education funding for the state schools, like the renewal of Proposition 30, the so-called "Millionaire's Tax" which will be expiring soon, and has been vital to preserving quality education in California.

-By Michelle Kern, SCI Organizer, AFT Local 1493

# Part-time Working Conditions Tackled at LRCFT Conference



Co-organizers Linda Sneed and Paul Baltimore facilitate conversations about professional development opportunities for part-time faculty.

Part-time professors from Los Rios Community College Federation of Teachers (LRCFT) held a one-day conference focusing on the working conditions of contingent

allowed the attendees, most of whom stayed for the duration of the five-hour event, opportunities to share information, get involved in their union and ultimately build community. Sneed and Baltimore successfully crafted the conference to draw in part-timers—the majority of the district’s faculty—who tend to be isolated and scattered across the district’s four main colleges and various centers. Many attendees had never come to a union event, and most of them taught at more than one LRCFT college. In their comments throughout the day, faculty stressed that their working conditions left them seeking mentorship, inclusion into campus life and governance and most importantly, job security and pay equal to that of full time faculty.

Baltimore opened the event with a brief plenary on the history of adjunct

labor in higher education and an overview of current activism happening nationwide. The presentation segued into a panel on part-time life outside the classroom, and resulted in a rich discussion on the challenges of finding real professional development opportunities that are compensated. For instructors stretched thin by their not-so-part-time schedules that sometimes include upward of five courses a semester, some unpaid extra work on a committee or developing curriculum can be too much to ask. But often times this unpaid work can result in part-timers receiving rare full-time employment opportunities.

As workload discussion wrapped up, Sneed and LRCFT Executive Director Robert Perrone began their presentation on their union and the

contract with the district. Sneed and Perrone gave informative and interactive presentations on faculty protections and rights, and encouraged them to get involved. Breakout sessions allowed attendees to do just that, as faculty chose to attend working groups devoted to community building, the contract negotiation process or discussions around the path to full-time work.

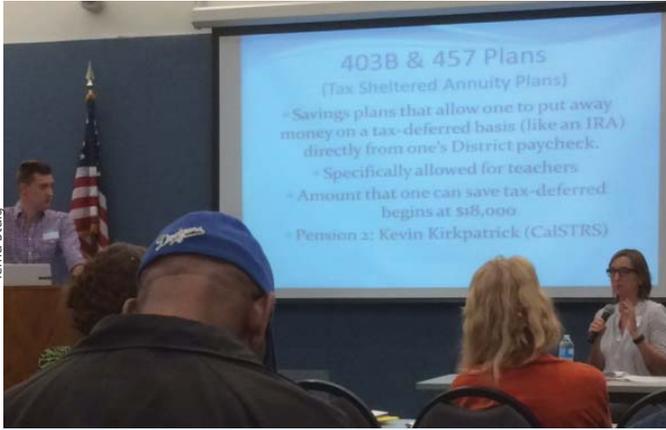
As participants reported back in the closing plenary, it was clear at the end of the day that more work needed to be done to improve the working lives of part-time professors. Sneed and Baltimore are currently working on an end of year meeting to plan for next year’s events, and look forward to building part-time power within the Los Rios Community College

—By Project Organizer Jessica Beard



Teachers, students and parents say “fund the schools our children deserve” in Daly City as part of the national AROS walk-ins on May 4. #ReclaimOurSchools

# Local 1521 Retirement Workshop Provides Opportunity to Engage Members and Sign-up Some New Ones



Kevin Kirkpatrick and Sharon Hendricks discuss AFT retirement.

People are rethinking what it means to retire. For many, it no longer means slowing down. It means a longer, healthier, more productive and active life. As AFT members, we have many options to enable us to thrive as we get older if we no longer choose to

work.

On March 5, Local 1521 hosted a standing-room only Adjunct Retirement workshop at City College. According to Chapter President Sharon Hendricks, over a hundred faculty members turned out.

Attending a workshop is helpful for navigating the intricate and very personal path to retirement. Phyllis Eckler, Committee Representative for Part-timers, did a thorough job of explaining the ins and outs of the many options for retirement, such as PARS, CalSTRS and CalPERS. Our district has robust matching plans and many choices, so the sooner you start, the greater your benefit.

“It was a great opportunity for everybody to get more informed,” says adjunct political science professor Chris Cofer. “I’ve gone to a number of faculty retirement workshops. Over time, it makes me

more aware of how I have to keep on top of my retirement. I’ve learned a lot about available options such as how to juggle my IRA, 401k, defined benefits and social security.”

The very approachable Kevin Kirkpatrick, Pension Program Manager for CalSTRS Pension 2 did a terrific job of rounding out the class. He discussed 403B and 457 tax sheltered annuity plans that are specifically allowed for teachers. He is available via appointment at 818-539-2768.

Everyone left armed with copious information to explore, empowered to define our financial

-By Tema Staig, Building Power Organizer, AFT Local 1521

## Lawndale is Meeting and Greeting Members and Potential Members

The Lawndale Federation of Classified Employees (LFCE), has been busy building its power. LFCE has been hosting a series of tabling, meet and greet events at each of the district’s nine school sites. The events have been well received and well attended. This wonderful opportunity has given the officers of the LFCE a chance to connect and have face-to-face time with members. We have been successful in signing many new members through a particular emphasis on one-on-one conversations.

In addition to the tabling

events, LFCE has planned a special dinner meeting for the RAP, after school program staff. RAP staff, which makes up some of the youngest employees of the district also have some of the least density in membership for LFCE. With careful planning and consideration we are confident that this event will not only bring an awareness of the work that the union performs but will also encourage workers to sign as new members. We are halfway through the campaign and have met almost 50% of our new membership goal.

We have also started



Lawndale President Carl Williams educates folks on the benefits of union membership.

collecting surveys from our noon-duty employees who have recently affiliated with LFCE. This has allowed us to start building positive and meaningful relationships with our new partners.

We will be gearing up for negotiations in order to win a first successful contract for noon-duty employees this summer.

-By President Carl Williams, AFT Local 4592

## College of the Canyons Now at 70% Membership

Alex Castillo-Kesper



Amy Foote, president, Local 6262 gives a progress report on hard-fought gains for the college's adjunct faculty.

Part-Time Faculty United Local 6262 at College of the Canyons (COC) held their annual member engagement event at El Torito Restaurant in Santa Clarita on March 18. There was strong turnout, as 66 people came out

to meet and socialize with longstanding and new members alike. The event was an opportune moment for the local president Amy Foote to give an update on their progress with contract negotiations, which

includes hard-fought gains such as paid office hours and 8% retroactive raises for the college's adjunct faculty. The room erupted into enthusiastic applause and gave Foote a standing ovation as they learned of their union's progress. One member was so moved by the work done by 6262's leadership that she got up to say that that she has been at College of the Canyons since 1982 and "this is the largest salary increase" she's seen. She ended by saying, "We need to thank our union for this."

Since this event, Local 6262 has ratified their contract, and surpassed their membership goal for

the semester, and are now at 70%. As they continue to have meaningful one-on-one conversations with their fellow adjunct faculty and engage with the membership, the Building Power team at COC will now focus their efforts on building and identifying strong union stewards throughout the school's departments. With a Strategic Campaign Initiative Organizing Grant confirmed for the next academic year, the union at College of the Canyons is poised to take their organizing capacity to the next level.

-By Project Organizer Alex Castillo-Kesper

## El Camino Classified Employees Organize Pancake Breakfast

Luz Langworthy



ECCE members join other El Camino College Staff at their well-attended spring pancake breakfast.

It was spring break and the members of El Camino Classified Employees Local 6142 (ECCE) were getting ready to enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast. That calm quickly subsided as enthusiastic employees began to take their breaks

and head out towards tables full of fruit, coffee, fresh juices and the wonderful sight of a grill full of fluffy goodness!

The Building Power organizing duo Laurie Dawdy and Cindy Lopez could be seen greeting everyone with enthusiastic

hellos and selfies. Smiles and hearty laughs erupted as members greeted colleagues they rarely see. Union President Luukia Smith passed out name tags to all classified employees in attendance giving members an opportunity to get to know one another better.

This event was a huge morale booster for Local 6142. It provided a unique moment when classified, faculty and administration, which included the new college president, could come out and enjoy breakfast together.

Building power for ECCE is about building stronger



Cindy Lopez

ECCE members raise their fists to demonstrate their power.

relationships with its members, about listening to their needs, wants and concerns and following through with results. On this sunny Wednesday morning, it truly felt like the bond was getting

-By Cindy Lopez, Building Power Organizer, AFT Local 6142

# Glendale Community College Developing Creative Opportunities to Engage and Activate Members



Zohara Kaye

Glendale board members Roger Bowerman and Zo Kaye tabling at Glendale College.

The Glendale College Guild’s Membership and Mobilization (MnM) Task Force joined efforts with CFT’s Building Power (BP) project this winter. BP Organizers David John Attyah and Justin Smith co-chair the newly formed organizing committee with the goal of increasing membership and member engagement. David and Justin attended the Build-

ing Power Organizing Institute, a two-day training seminar led by CFT.

We also held two training opportunities for our MnMers on having one-on-one conversations with new members. Building Power has set a goal to meet and sign up 120 new guild members by the end of the spring semester.

Our goal is to provide every faculty member with

the opportunity of having her/his voice heard in our union, and we’ve got custom M&Ms to prove we are serious!

Through membership drives, Hot Lunch seminars, and mobilization around the efforts to extend Proposition 30, we aim to create a lively discourse between faculty, students and the campus community.

Membership drives include reaching out, one-on-one to non-members and providing them with information and the opportunity to sign-on to become guild members. We are also “tabling” at Faculty Meetings and other events. With the help of our MnMers, we have 45 new faculty members to date. Currently our membership percentage is 79%, up from 69% in fall 2015. This is a start, but we aim for larger solidarity and involvement of campus

faculty, allowing our collective voices to be heard and solidifying support for the contract negotiations.

We recently formed three new task forces to provide faculty more opportunities to be involved in the guild:

- Workload Equity Task Force - exploring issues pertaining to full time faculty workloads
- Part-time Equity Task Force - exploring issues pertaining to parity, and working conditions for part-time faculty
- Racial Equity Task Force - exploring issues of racial equity, impact, and influence

We also scheduled three Hot Lunch events open to all campus constituents and the public

-By President Zohara Kaye, and Building Power Organizer Justin Smith, AFT Local 2276

## SCI Spring Training/Drive in Fresno



Alan D'Souza

SCI Organizer Lori Shoemaker visits SCFT part-time art instructor Leslie Battie at her home.

This spring more than 20 Strategic Campaign Initiatives Organizers built union power in a membership drive collaboration with the State Center Federation of Teachers, Local 1533 (SCFT). Sixteen SCI organizers joined over 30 member-volunteers in asking agency fee payers to become full members of the union and sign a petition asking the State Center Board of Trustees to bargain over paid office hours for part-time faculty.

Over the four-day drive, participants recruited 102 new members to the union and collected 176 petition signatures. Organizers and volunteers held over 200 conversations with agency fee payers on four State Center campuses: Fresno City College, Reedley College, Clovis College, and Madera College. In addition to visiting agency fee payers after their classes, organizers and volunteers incorporated house visits for the first time at this local.

Volunteers and organizers faced some unique circumstances at Reedley College, avocado fields and a power outage on the first day of the drive presented organizing challenges. Nevertheless, drive participants at Reedley organized an impromptu department meeting with chemistry faculty joined by SCFT President and CFT Executive Vice President Lacy Barnes. Every faculty member in the chemistry department meeting signed the petition. As Debbie Forward, an SCI organizer with Palomar Faculty Federation, observed, “Faculty at Reedley College was so welcoming. Our work there opens up the potential for the union to have a greater presence; you have to start with conversations.” - By Project Organizer Erin Conley

Paul Bissember



strike vote to come.

In addition to our roughly 30 union delegates we formed a contract action team of about 20 rank-and-file union members that would build and help implement our organizing strategy specifically for the contract campaign. These member-organizers received training on how to have one-on-one conversations and campaign strategy. We structured our campaign to be a series of escalating actions, beginning with a rally, then the hardship fund vote, then a series of informational pickets and a major march downtown. We started spring 2016 with a boycott of the Chancellor's FLEX day address, after that we were ready for a strike vote.

We hit our numbers exactly as expected, with over 800 voting - a new record - with again a 93% pass rate.

After the vote we continued escalation with a civil disobedience action planned to coincide with the CFT convention in San Francisco, and finally we were ready for a one-day

strike, which occurred on April 27. We filed several unfair labor practice charges against the district including, bad faith negotiations and unilateral changes in working conditions.

The administration responded to our announced strike by claiming it was illegal since we are still in the mediation process. When that intimidation tactic didn't work, on Monday night, the chancellor announced that school would be closed on Wednesday, the day of the strike. The solidarity between AFT 2121 and the other unions meant that admin would likely be unable to even open many CCSF buildings.

We converged on the civic center campus near City Hall for a major noon rally with easily over 600 people in attendance. It brought together all the campuses, and our

members saw their united strength. After the rally, many people returned to picket duty until 7pm, and we estimate that AFT 2121 put upwards of 1,000 people into the streets of San Francisco in support of the City College San Francisco deserves.

Community and student support of our picket lines was essential, and many of those connections our union has built since the accreditation crisis brought us into an alliance with students and community to save the college from ACCJC. We brought attention to administration's plan to downsize CCSF, and engaged students and community in the struggle to save it. We also built our capacity; our members and leadership now have an experience of striking, and will be prepared if we have to do it in the future.

-By Michael McCown, SCI Organizer, AFT Local 2121



Packed house at the BOT meeting at the College of San Mateo. Standing-room only with over 60 faculty in attendance to win workload equity for members of San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1493.

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.

**PRESIDENT**  
Josh Pechthalt

**SECRETARY TREASURER**  
Jeff Freitas

**ORGANIZING DIRECTOR**  
Sandra Weese

**PROJECT STAFF**  
Jessica Beard  
Paul Bissember  
Alex Castillo - Kesper  
Erin Conley  
Luz Langworthy  
Laura Watson

*Get Organized!* is produced by union workers in the CFT Field Representatives Union and the Office and Professional Employees International Union.

**LAYOUT**  
Taylor Mohel

**EDITORIAL OFFICE**  
*Get Organized!*  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1601  
Oakland, CA 94612  
510-523-5238  
510-523-5262 fax  
www.cft.org

All story ideas and submissions should be emailed to Sandra Weese at [sweese@cft.org](mailto:sweese@cft.org).

