



## Capacity Building: Member Outreach and Community Engagement

From Scott Walker's proposed bill to turn Wisconsin into a "Right to Work" state, to the Harris vs. Quinn, to the imminent Friedrichs vs. CTA, labor unions are being assaulted and tested. In anticipation of what may come down the pipes, CFT leaders and members have been stepping up their efforts to build capacity, increase membership and ultimately build power.

Throughout 2014 and now into 2015, many locals have tapped into the training and organizing resources the CFT has to offer. For starters, the Strategic Campaign Initiative grant program allows CFT locals to apply for matching funds to implement organizing programs that build capacity in their locals.

Last year, nineteen locals



Sandra Weese

Building on the success of a number of school board and county board of education victories in November, the Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers has launched a spring COPE campaign! On March 12, all Executive Council officers signed their COPE cards to kick things off, and they will invite all MHFT members to do the same at their upcoming membership meeting. A strong COPE program is an important part of having an active and engaged membership!

were awarded grants. Besides providing matching funds, the grantees have the opportunity to participate in trainings, workshops and conferences. Last fall the training focused on increasing members and growing COPE.

In a time when agency fees are being threatened, increasing our member-

ship and expanding our COPE programs are two key components to building power. Recognizing what's at stake, a number of locals executed successful membership drives. Peralta Federation of Teachers, the Part-Time Faculty of Allan Hancock College and UC-AFT organized some very successful membership drives.

Each drive kicked off with a two-hour training, followed by a couple of days of concerted outreach. Palomar Faculty Federation is organizing a drive in April which also will be the spring SCI training. Peralta and Palomar also included in its goals to expand its COPE Program. Each local that participated saw a considerable increase in members signing up, and it offered a valuable opportunity to identify and develop new leaders.

In Chicago as well as in St. Paul, we've seen the success that teachers' unions can have when they include parents and community members in their organizing efforts. In northern California, Jefferson Elementary School (JEFT) has partnered with the CFT, AFT and the PTA

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Laura Watson

**WHY ARE COPE & MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS IMPORTANT?** Numbers in union-speak represents members with a voice and a commitment to the union. These numbers also serve as an

accountability tool to gauge how effective the union is at educating, engaging participation, activating and communicating to fellow members. When membership and COPE numbers are low, so is the union's membership involvement, participation, resources and power.

*Pictured: part-time faculty member and new SCIO, Dylan Alter, gives a presentation to PFT Executive Council about building the local's power through increasing membership and creating a Contract Action Team for upcoming negotiations.*

Some SCI organizing highlights from February 2014 to February 2015:

- Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers increased membership by 10%, signing up 178 new members and 24 new COPE contributors.
- Palomar Faculty Federation increased membership by adding 117 to its union force.
- Berkeley Council of Classified Employees added 46 new members.
- AFT College Staff Faculty increased their numbers by signing up 48 new members.
- UC-AFT led 6 membership drives across the state.

-By Laura Watson, AFT Project Organizer

# UTLA Takes a #StandatGrand



Thousands of UTLA members and supporters "Take a Stand at Grand."

On February 26, 2015, after UTLA declared impasse in negotiations with LAUSD when the district failed to bring meaningful proposals to the table on key demands. An estimated 15,000 educators and their supporters from across Los Angeles gathered in Grand Park to rally for "The Schools LA Students Deserve." UTLA red poured into the park from

all directions to send a strong message to LAUSD that Los Angeles teachers will not stop fighting for smaller class sizes, fully staffed schools, clean & safe schools and fair compensation. UTLA was joined at the rally by students, parents and community groups; and was supported by its affiliates CFT, CTA, AFT and NEA, as well as Grammy Award-

winning Ozomatli.

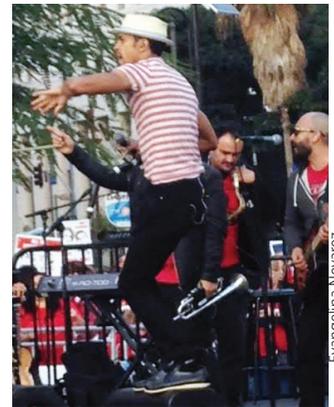
UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl said, "UTLA does not want to strike, but no one should doubt our resolve to do so if necessary. This fight is too important for the 640,000 students in LAUSD. To accept what the District has offered to date simply would not be fair to these students, their parents and to the educators, who have not even had a cost of living adjustment in eight years. LAUSD should and must do better."

UTLA will continue to organize and hold actions until the Superintendent listens.

The outstanding issues as listed on the rally flier:

- Salaries: LAUSD ranks 47th of 47 districts in LA County in maximum salary. LAUSD won't be able to recruit and retain the educators our students need when pay is so uncompetitive.
- Class sizes: LAUSD admits that nearly 3,000 classes have more than 45 students per teacher. Those numbers impact educators' ability to deliver quality instruction and they damage our students' educational environment.
- HHS ratios: California is 50th of 50 states in guidance counselors, with LAUSD being one of the worst within California.

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Grammy Award-winning Ozomatli performs in support of UTLA's "Take a Stand at Grand."

## ACCJC Update

**NEWS OF THE COURT RULING THAT THE ACCJC DENIED CCSF OF DUE PROCESS** when it revoked its accreditation has been hailed as a partial victory. The CFT is continuing to develop a statewide strategy with the aim of restoring fairness to the accreditation process of the California community college system. One element of that plan is the Speakers' Bureau. It was designed to provide a venue for introducing the topic of fair accreditation to campuses. Also, it created an opportunity to engage members and nonmembers in organizing conversations about a common issue that has had profound implications statewide. The Speakers' Bureau and the field plan were developed with two goals in mind:

- To collect resolutions from community college constituency groups throughout California in order to demonstrate that the ACCJC is NOT widely accepted by California's community colleges; and
- Build our community college constituent base in order to mobilize around organizing, legal and legislative strategies.

To date, the Speakers' Bureau has accomplished the following:

- Fourteen community colleges have hosted the Speakers' Bureau. Of the fourteen, two were CTA-represented colleges.
- Over 1000 people have attended these events – from faculty, staff, students, administrators, trustees, and other campus union allies.
- Over 600 people signed up to receive more information or to get involved.
- Seventeen total resolutions have been passed: Six by faculty unions, ten by academic senates, and one by a student group.

As has been reported before, the fight for fair accreditation is not yet over. The Speakers' Bureau remains a useful tool in reaching our community college constituents. For instance, Peralta Community College is hosting the Speakers' Bureau on March 17, 2015. We encourage locals and districts that have not yet done so to host an event and/or to pass resolutions in support of a fair accreditation system. -By Alma Soto, AFT Project Organizer



# Building Power Among New Locals



Mission College Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) members wear ACE 6554 buttons in support of their bargaining Team

Newly affiliated locals within the CFT are demonstrating that, through organizing, workers can effectively engage members, fight for a voice in their workplace, and build democracy. Two examples of these new locals are the Association of College Educators (ACE), AFT Local 6554 of West Valley - Mission Community College District and Ecole Bilingue Federation of Teachers (EBFT) in Berkeley.

Since their affiliation, ACE, AFT Local 6554 rank-and-file member organizers, along with

elected union leaders, have formed a Transition Committee to democratize decision-making processes, better communicate with members, and rebuild the union from the bottom up. They began their work by asking a simple question; "What does union mean to me?" Members responded with words such as democracy, solidarity, respect, power, and cooperation. These words represent the union's values which ground and inform the work that this committee carries out. This includes reviewing the

budget, planning actions, establishing best communications practices, and developing new governing structures by creating a Constitution and Bylaws Committee. In one action, during the college's Flex Day, members from both campuses had a table where they updated members on the recent affiliation and surveyed over 100 members on their vision for the union.

At Ecole Bilingue in Berkeley, EBFT members are going through their first contract campaign. Throughout negotiations, they have continued to emphasize that they formed a union to gain respect and a greater voice in decision-making at their school. The EBFT Organizing Committee, with members of the Bargaining Team, meet regularly to address members' concerns, debrief on negotiations, and develop strategies and plan actions to demonstrate unity to the administration. One action involved negotiations where over half of the members rallied in the hallways outside of a bar-



Ecole Bilingue Federation of Teachers members, Martine Fournier and Jean-Baptiste pose for a selfie as they participate in a sticker-Up action with colleagues in support of bargaining their first contract.

gaining session to show support for the bargaining team and to make the head administrator, who had been largely absent from these sessions, come to the table and listen to their demands. EBFT has also been working with two other CFT French school locals in the Bay Area, Lycée Français de San Francisco (LFSF) and the French American International School (FAIS), to form a Tri-Local in order to increase bargaining strength and maximize resources. Members from each local met on Feb. 7 to decide on a Tri-Local constitution, share stories from their current and past campaigns, and develop strategies to build power among the three unions.

- By Paul Bissember, AFT Project Organizer

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Even with measles at our doorstep, LAUSD admits that nursing ratios are so bad that it has not been able to do appropriate follow-up on measles vaccinations.

- Spending: LAUSD has over \$59 million in

unspent Common Core funding that must be spent by June 30. The District claims the money was sent to school sites, but has no knowledge of how or even if it has been spent. How much other money is sitting

unaccounted for that can go towards the classroom?

- The money exists: Governor Brown's January initial budget proposal included an increase for public schools of at least 8%. Since then, the Legislative Analyst says

that state revenue could be up to \$2 billion more than the projections used to build Brown's proposed budget, with the biggest share of that going to public schools.

-By Evangelina Nevarez, AFT Project Organizer

to implement an ongoing series of family education nights. This partnership was first kicked off with an overwhelmingly successful professional development and storytelling festival, "Reclaim the Promise," in spring 2014. Over 350

parents signed in that day, and JEFT has maintained the momentum throughout the year by holding evening family workshops on relevant issues that affect the school community.

If your local is interested

in conducting an outreach event, please contact Laura Kurre or Sandra Weese. They can get you started with the tools, training, and support to make your outreach drive a success.

-By Alma Soto, AFT Project Organizer

## CFT/AFT Educators, Supporters Turn Out for National Adjunct Action Day

It is estimated that 75% of faculty in higher education are not on tenure track - and the percentage is growing.

At events held on February 25, AFT adjunct faculty and supporters throughout California, and beyond, spoke out against the marginalization of these faculty members in higher education as part of National Adjunct Walkout Day.

Actions such as a student walk out, pilgrimage, graduate student lectures, and a rally were also organized and held by AFT members throughout the state, including Local 1931 and UC/AFT.

"The simple fact is that the situation confronting adjuncts and part-timers has been growing steadily worse over the past 30 or 40 years, and enough adjuncts are becoming aware of the injustices and exploitation they face that many have finally reached a tipping point," said Ian Duckles, Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at Cuyamaca College, Mesa College, Miramar College, and the University of San Diego, and AFT Local 1931

member.

"This is the age of the precarious worker who lacks the financial means to resist the onslaught of policies that make income inequality the status quo," John Hoskins, Adjunct Professor of English at Mesa College, co-editor of adjunctcrisis.com, and AFT Local 1931 member. "It is time to empower the precarious. Nationally, the adjunct army is rising to resist 'adjunctification'... Truly, we're all in this together."

Rally attendees wrote letters to Governor Jerry Brown asking that he allocate additional funding for paid office hours, parity compensation and

for the conversion of existing part-time temporary faculty to full-time faculty status.

Many students spoke out in support of adjunct professors. "Over the years I have had a mix of full-time and part-time professors," said Bianca Arellano, student at San Diego City College. "I have never, ever, been able to tell the difference between teaching style. The only difference I have witnessed is stress level. Part-time teachers are always more stressed. "It is not because of the class content, it is because of their low pay and unfair treatment."

- By Evangelina Nevarez, AFT Project Organizer



CFT members protest during National Adjunct Walkout Day.

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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