



Early Childhood Educators learn advocacy skills at Skyline Community College

It is increasingly recognized that a high functioning educational system that includes quality preschool for all can benefit our communities through improved child outcomes and a more productive workforce. In spite of this awareness, many California preschool programs still suffer from sub-standard facilities, lack of basic materials, and an early childhood education (ECE) staff stretched beyond capacity.

This reality motivated Elaine Francisco, a veteran Special Education Preschool Teacher and Executive Board member of Jefferson School District Local 3267, to design a course at Skyline Com-



KATHRYN WILLIAMS BROWNE

Kim Waldron with Elaine Francisco and her Skyline Community College ECE advocacy class.

munity College in San Mateo County focused on helping members of the ECE community become better informed on the details of early childhood issues while learning how

to systematically advocate on behalf of positive policy solutions. Offered since 2008, over 175 students have completed the course, including forty-eight aspiring early child-

hood educators last fall. They learned how to start and sustain conversations with legislators and how to advocate in local communities. When Assembly member Jerry Hill and Daly City Council member David Canepa make guest presentations in the course, they stress how important it is for legislators and the public to hear everyday ECE classroom stories.

Kim Waldron from United Educators of San Francisco, Local 61 recently visited the class to listen to the ideas and needs of students and to explain how unionization can help improve wages, benefits and professional development for early childhood educa-

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Fresno State Center executive board undertakes training to build their local



SANDRA WEESE

Local 1533 executive board members participate in a membership drive training.

THE STATE CENTER Federation of Teachers, Local 1533 is developing a comprehensive plan to build their union. Central to their efforts is a membership drive, developing a contract survey, and electing two board members next year.

Recently, Local 1533 President Lacy Barnes and the Executive Board (EB) along with Field Representative Shannon Willson invited Organizing Director Sandra Weese to provide a training, which modeled how to conduct successful one-on-one conversations with non-members. To help EB members with their conversations, a script, talking points and a contract survey were developed and guidance was given on how to make the ask. EB members then took assignments for all the non-members and planned the outreach effort.

President Pechthalt makes strong case for investing in education at forum in Sacramento

The economy is not working for the middle class, and raising significant revenue from the most wealthy and using it to finance public investments makes sense to most Californians. This was the case made by CFT President Josh Pechthalt at a recent gathering of education activists at the Early Childhood Education “Water Cooler” conference. He outlined why the CFT is sponsoring

a statewide initiative on the 2012 ballot pushing for raising revenues from millionaires, saying it can assist in moderating recent and persistent trends toward widening income inequality while helping to restore a society of shared prosperity. President Pechthalt said: “we think it is not only fiscally responsible and economically sensible, but also politically viable.”



SANDRA WEESE

President Pechthalt pushes need for additional revenue on panel with Advancement Project’s Molly Munger.

>TO LEARN MORE about the Millionaires Tax of 2012 visit www.cft.org or www.millionairestaxca.com.

Strategic Campaign Initiative’s political organizer program has impact

The Strategic Campaign Initiative (SCI) rolled out a political matching grants program for locals, called Political Leaders United to Create Change (PLUCC), which began operation in the fall of 2011. Currently, 11 locals are developing strategic plans to build their political strength and capacity through the PLUCC program. Efforts are being coordinated through biweekly conference calls and quarterly trainings are being held around the state.

The PLUCC program is having a significant impact at locals around the state. COPE contributions are already up by more than 5% in some areas and locals are piping significantly more money to the AFT. Special recognition goes to Alex Bauer of the Galt Federation, Casey Carlson of the Santa Cruz Federation, Joel Flores at Newport-Mesa Federation, Sadie Reynolds at Cabrillo College Federation, and Ken Tray of the United Educators of San Francisco.



New Training Director Laura Kurre facilitates the second PLUCC training hosted by Newport-Mesa Federation on February 25.

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tors. The class discussed how years of budget cuts has led to turnover in staffing and the exodus of good teachers. Kim stressed how

improvement in the working conditions will increase stability and professionalism and made the point that the working conditions

of early educators are the learning conditions of the children. Elaine Francisco added: “The core problem of the field is each of us not

knowing our true value in the lives of children, and how our work can really contribute to the society as a whole.”

CFT Strategic Campaign Initiative presented to AFT's Organizing Committee in Chicago

The CFT launched an impressive effort in 2011 to develop a long-term strategic organizing program that integrates new member organizing and internal organizing with political and legislative work. Called the Strategic Campaign Initiative (SCI), this program began a comprehensive survey of CFT locals' capacity, needs, and organizing interest, and the final survey report offers an unprecedented picture of how the CFT can assist locals in building their strength and growing their

membership. Based upon this assessment, dozens of conversations with local leaders and staff, and strategic research, the CFT drafted a comprehensive Organizing Analysis report, which identifies strategic opportunities for the CFT to grow its membership and build capacity in existing locals.

CFT President Josh Pechthalt and Organizing Director Sandra Weese were invited to present CFT's work to AFT's Organizing Committee in Chicago at the beginning of this year.

The SCI has taken several important steps forward already in 2012. At its January 21 meeting, the CFT Executive Council approved the recommendations in the Organizing Analysis, which were unanimously supported by the CFT's Strategic Campaign Committee, who reviewed both reports. These recommendations suggest focusing CFT's organizing resources on key education sectors, such as community colleges, and building a member organizer program, among others. At the same meeting,

the Executive Council also approved initial funding to create a matching grants program for locals that want to carry out organizing projects—the Member Organizing Committee (MOC) grant program.

Additionally, CFT and AFT leaders and staff met in January to review the Organizing Analysis report and discuss opportunities to collaborate on new organizing projects. Next steps include refining targets, establishing timelines and benchmarks, and identifying resource needs.

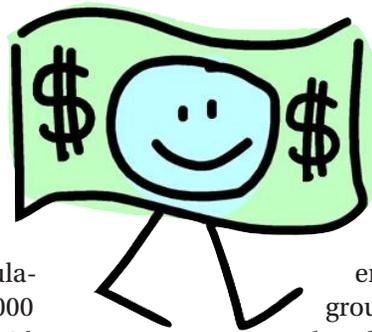
CFT awarded \$75,000 to help build support for LAUSD's early learning programs

First Five of Los Angeles has made a multi-year grant to the joint team of United Teachers of Los Angeles, Local 1021, the CFT and the Advancement Project to support work aimed at preserving the School Readiness Language Development Program (SRLDP), one of the Los Angeles Unified School District's largest early education programs. While this highly popular program prepares children to listen, use appropriate vocabulary, and develop academic readiness skills, it has consistently faced budget cuts and threats of elimination for the past several years.

Established by a civil

rights case mandating the racial integration of the Los Angeles Unified School District, the SRLDP now provides early learning instruction to nearly half of LAUSD's early childhood population of 35,000 students, with a special emphasis on providing services to racially isolated communities. Its elimination would have far reaching effects on racially diverse and low-income students' access to high quality public

early learning experiences, as well as set a troubling precedent for school districts throughout Los Angeles County.



Throughout the grant period, the CFT will engage a diverse set of stakeholders – parents' groups, neighborhood coalitions, etc. – to organize and advocate for the expansion and improvement of the SRLDP. The goal is that the SRLDP will be expanded to provide additional students with crucial kindergarten prepa-

ration and the SRLDP professional development program will be formalized.

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Petaluma Federation of Teachers discuss Strategic Campaign Initiative

CFT Field Representative Terry Elverum, Statewide Political Field Director Jim Araby and Organizing Director Sandra Weese met with members of the Petaluma Federation of Teachers, Local 1881, to go over the strategic campaign initiative and develop a strategic plan for their local.



SANDRA WEESE

Lisa Debronner-Lewis, Kim Sharp and Carrie Caudle from the Peralta Federation of Teachers participate in a strategic planning session for their local.

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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NLRB rule aides workers exercising their right to vote on whether to form union

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has adopted changes to the union election process that will remove barriers and better ensure workers can effectively exercise their basic right to vote on whether to form a union in a timely way.

Until recently, the NLRB election process allowed significant delays in the vote. Employers often used delaying tactics to harass, threaten and intimidate workers trying to gain union representation. One recent example involving the Los Angeles Film School (LAFS) faculty was particularly illustrative of the problem.

LAFS teachers interested in unionizing signed CFT authorization cards. The NLRB notified LAFS management that the CFT had



filed an election petition and management instantly contested the petition for an election and LAFS workers were immediately confronted with intimidation, employer delays, and a concerted disinformation campaign. LAFS workers and community allies fought back. It took months, however, before the NLRB ruled in favor of the CFT and found that LAFS administration's

campaign of intimidation of workers and attacks on organizing committee members violated the law. By then, management's efforts had succeeded in demoralizing faculty and in eroding union support. The CFT withdrew its petition for an election. The next week the NLRB issued complaints on all unfair

labor practice charges filed against the employer, too late to preserve the integrity of the election process.

CFT President Josh Pechthalt summed up the NLRB's action: "At a time when we are facing many challenges, we can take satisfaction in this decision which progresses the ability of workers to organize."