

# Classified Insider

UNION NEWS FOR THE CLASSIFIED SERVICE

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## Food service workers serve up fresh attitude Workers, menus adapt to changing food culture

Something good is cooking in campus cafeterias, and the recipe includes happier staffs. From school kitchens in Berkeley to community college taquerías in San Diego, classified AFT locals are raising wages

and winning full-time status for food service employees.

Big changes in Berkeley

schools began when food service workers affiliated with AFT Local 6192, the Berkeley Council of Classified Employees. Before the change in 2012, Local President Paula Phillips said, managers used to



Jackie Townsend says teamwork and training improve work flow at the grill.

PHOTOS BY SANDY HUFFAKER, JR.

warn workers not to miss work during the holidays.

“Telling food handlers that they can’t call in sick is unconscionable,” Phillips said.

Union site rep Elizabeth

Dunkle said work is getting better since the AFT affiliation.

“This is a very physical job, with injuries from lifting, burns, slipping and cuts,” Dunkle said. “And while

wages have improved, most of us still can’t afford to

live alone. We need room-mates or a family structure. It’s especially hard to get by when you’re off for summer.”

Dunkle works at King Dining Commons, where she and two other senior cooks, backed up by two prep cooks, produce about 2,500 breakfasts and lunches daily for preschool and lunches through teenage students.

“For a lot of these kids, that may be the only balanced meal of the day,” she said.

Temp abuse is a major problem in food services. Although  
*(Continued on page 4)*



## Three topnotch staff named Members of the Year

**STAFF NOMINATED BY** their local unions were named Members of the Year at the annual Classified Conference. The award recipients have at least two things in common: They are active in their unions, and in their communities.

**Mary Le Duc**, a secretary at Mid-City Center in San Diego, is a solid advocate for classified staff in the San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca community colleges. She is secretary of the AFT Guild, Local 1931, and an officer of the Classified Senate in San Diego con-



MARY LE DUC

tinuing education.

“Mary is outspoken, smart, hard-working and compassionate,” says local President Jim Mahler. “She is always willing to participate in state and local union issues, and serves on many committees representing classified staff.”

Le Duc also volunteers in the LGBTQ community.

**Charles James, Jr.** has been an early childhood professional at San Francisco’s Jefferson Elementary since 1980. James represents paraprofessionals on



CHARLES JAMES, JR

the executive board of United Educators of San Francisco and serves on both his school’s and the district-wide Union Building Committees.

According to Local 61, “The children and families, as well as the teachers, trust and rely upon Charles. They say he is Mr. Reliable. Charles loves the career he has chosen, and the children and families love him back.”

**Jeanie Brown**, a finance account technician, is the financial go-to person for students, parents, and staff at Santa Cruz High School, as well

as her union, the Santa Cruz Council of Classified Employees, AFT Local 6084.

Local President Robert Chacanaca said, that as chief negotiator for the union, “Jeanie has shown the district such a high level of skill that the district’s chief negotiator often has to consult with its legal team.” During last year’s tumultuous negotiations, the management side went through three chief business officers — yet Brown never let down her resolve and stayed the course.



JEANIE BROWN

PHOTOS BY SHARON BEALS

## Member-organizers motivate fee payers to become full members

# Worksite organizing fires up classified local unions

**ACROSS THE STATE**, classified employees are convincing fee payers to upgrade to full union membership, and convincing coworkers to sup-

port the union's Committee on Political Education, or COPE. Most classified AFT members are clustered in several spots on each worksite, while fee payers generally work by themselves.

"Member-to-member con-

tact is very important," Ishaque said. "These people have had minimal, if any, contact with the union. In some cases they didn't realize they weren't union members." Two Los Angeles campuses already have 99.9 percent membership, but the SCI team has vowed to reach every fee payer and convince each person to join the union. The most effective argument to join the Staff Guild, he said, is the package of benefits available to full AFT members, from automobile loans to having a say in how the union carries out its mission. The Staff Guild has resolved to have an SCI coordinator at each of the 10 sites in the district and to reach all members to enroll them in the union's political work. They also wanted to increase the number of members who have received leadership training from 264 to 289 employees, but already surpassed that target and have trained 293 members.



Katherine Reedy

do," said Katherine Reedy, the local's executive director and SCI coordinator. Two executive board members are SCI organizers and track progress.



Suleman Ishaque

Like the Staff Guild, the Coast Federation team is mapping where fee payers and

union members work, then having one-on-one conversations about contract negotiations, political campaigns, and other issues.

"When an employee sees their union rep daily," Reedy said, "they feel involved and see what representation means."

port the union's Committee on Political Education, or COPE.

The flurry of internal organizing falls under the twin banners of the Strategic Campaign Initiative and Building Our Power. Grants from the former help locals meet their political organizing goals, while the latter awards grants based on potential for member growth.

In Los Angeles, SCI coordinator Suleman Ishaque said College Staff Guild organizers mapped where AFT Local 1521A members and fee payers work on the L.A. Community College District's nine campuses and district headquarters.

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The Staff Guild has resolved

**IN ORANGE COUNTY**, the Coast Federation of Classified Employees represents about 700 staff in the Coastline, Golden West and Orange Coast

**"Member-to-member contact is very important. In some cases people didn't realize they weren't union members."**

— Suleman Ishaque, SCI coordinator Los Angeles

campuses and the district office in Costa Mesa. About 90 percent are already AFT members.

"Organizing and communicating with our members is something we always want to

The Coast Federation recently held an Oktoberfest COPE fundraiser. "People had a great time. It was a chance to get engaged in the workplace and around issues built on relationships."

## Highlights: Classified Conference 2015

**AT THE ANNUAL** conference held October 9-11 in San Jose, there was a smorgasbord of learning opportunities for attendees. Classified staff and paraprofessionals took advantage of the offerings, which were both

informational and social.

■ **Assemblymember Tony Thurmond**, representing the East Bay's 15th Assembly District described his hard-scrabble upbringing and his path to becoming a state legislator. He also told how being a member of the West Contra Costa School Board helped him understand the essential work of classified employees.

■ **In one legal seminar**, attorneys addressed mandatory reporter laws, administration of drugs, and recent decisions of the courts and the Public Employment Relations Board. Another provided the history of workers' compensation, defined what constitutes an industrial injury and explained claims processes.

■ **Workshops galore**, with the always popular Workplace Bullying, and Addressing Disruptive Student Behaviors, as well as numerous others.

■ **Red & White Social...** a chance to dress up and just have some fun after all that learning.





#### Turlock members see health cost relief

A NEW CONTRACT provides a salary increase of nearly 4 percent, but the real economic relief for 134 clerical and tech staff will be in monthly health premiums. The district agreed to raise its contribution to clas-

Local 2424 President Reggie Gomes, "That's now down to about \$250 a month."

The three-year agreement increases the district contribution for employees but not dependents. "We opened the

"We opened the door to affordable benefits. We'll propose adding spouses and children when we sit down to negotiate the next contract."

— Reggie Gomes, AFT Local 2424 President

sified employees' health benefits by more than 80 percent.

"I was paying about \$850 a month for medical, dental and vision coverage," said AFT

door to affordable benefits," Gomes said. "We'll propose adding spouses and children when we sit down to negotiate the next contract."

#### Big raises! Perseverance pays off for Southland college staffs

SOMETIMES IT PAYS to go long. After nearly two years at the bargaining table, classified employees at Los Angeles and Pasadena community college districts have approved three-year contracts with significant pay raises and other gains.

Staff members at the Los Angeles district will get back pay for about 18 months, reflecting two rounds of raises totaling 8.26 percent. In July 2016, base salaries will increase another 2 percent.

The district will also increase the tuition reimbursement fund from \$120,000 to

\$140,000 per year, and allocate \$10,000 annually for professional development, to be distributed equally among the 10 campus worksites.

At neighboring Pasadena City College, AFT Local 6525 members approved a contract with more than 8 percent in pay raises. Base salaries increased 3 percent during each of the first two years. In July, wages will rise another 2 percent plus one-half the COLA.

Local 6525 members will not pay any health plan premiums and coverage remains unchanged.

Where are they now?

#### CFT Raoul Teilhet Scholarship Recipients Scholarship for Gilroy para's daughter was smart investment

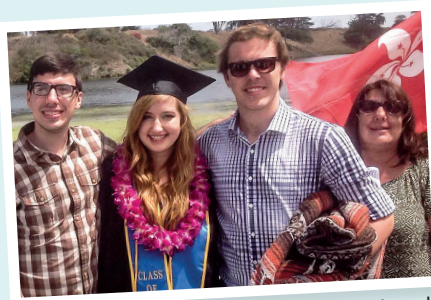
TARA CLARK is whip smart with a work ethic that won't quit.

In 2013, Clark earned both her high school diploma at the Gilroy Early College Academy and an associate of arts degree from Gavilan Community College. This June — after only two years — UC Santa Barbara awarded her bachelor's degrees in Philosophy and Linguistics, with a minor in Education.

Today, the 20-year-old is the youngest student in the UCSB Graduate School of Education's doctoral program. She also works 30 hours weekly, the most the program allows.

"The biggest struggle for me has been financial. Any little bit helps," Clark said. "I come from a very low-income, single par-

COURTESY TARA CLARK



Tara Clark at college graduation, with friends and her union member mom, Ellen

ent household, where we faced a daily struggle to put dinner on the table. To distract myself from fear and worry, I focused all my time on school."

Clark wants to leave academia without massive student debt. Because she works for UCSB she qualifies for tuition remission. She also teaches at Santa Barbara's Dos Pueblos

High School, and fills in gaps with federal financial aid.

Clark's biggest supporter has been her mother, Ellen, a behavioral support aide at Luigi Aprea Elementary School and a member of AFT Local 1921, the Gilroy

Federation of Paraprofessionals. She heard about the CFT Raoul Teilhet Scholarship program a few weeks before the deadline to apply.

"My life's goal is to give Tara and her brother a better life. I've worked two jobs for 12 years," Ellen Clark said. "I've also tried to give them the values and strength to succeed."

#### ClassifiedCalendar

**Legal Rights Training and Council of Classified Employees** meetings will be held **January 22** at the Manhattan Beach Marriott.

**Leadership Conference: Politics & Policy Organizing Summit** will be **February 9-10** at the Sacramento Convention Center.

**CFT Convention 2016** will be held **March 11-13** at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. Be a voting delegate! Ask your local when delegate elections will be held.

**AFT's Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel Conference** is **March 31-April 3** at Bally's Hotel in Las Vegas.

**Council of Classified Employees** will meet on Friday, **May 13** at The Concourse Hotel Hyatt Regency in Los Angeles.

**Classified Conference** will be **October 7-9** at the Kona Kai Resort & Marina in San Diego.

## Members share pride at Conference

### I am proud to be classified because...

"As a life science lab technician, I set up the science labs that excite students about science and the world around them. My work is some of the first exposure they will have to the scientific community."

"I know my work matters when I see the light in a child's eye, because they finally 'got it.'"

"I care about providing a clean and sanitary college for our students, teachers, classified, and management, and the public."

"I get to work every day and help people on my campus. I get to see students start and finish their goals because of the help I give."

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"I process the paperwork to get special education students into the programs they need to be in to learn at their fullest potential."

"As a cook for Berkeley Unified, I am providing meals and nutrition to our students that is essential in their well-being."

"I keep the grounds beautiful! I also go the extra mile to encourage students to keep up their good work! I am blessed!"

### INSIDE!

- Classified building strong unions
- Union invests in our future

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## Food service workers adapt to changing palates

(Continued from page 1)

Dunkle earned culinary and hotel restaurant management degrees, she wasn't made a permanent employee until about seven years ago.

"People may be working full-time now, but they lost time and benefits they would have otherwise accrued."

The problems are similar in community colleges. In July, the San Diego district reclassified a group of food service "temps" as permanent employees, including one who had worked there for 14 years.

Tina Solórzano Fletcher, membership coordinator of San Diego's AFT Guild, said the local was able to raise wages for long-time kitchen workers by including food staff in the office-technical salary schedule,

which offers more steps.

From her vantage point at the grill and taquería station, Jackie Townsend thinks work also flows better now at San Diego's Miramar campus, thanks to teamwork and training the union negotiated.

Townsend and Maureen Henshaw came to Miramar from the Mesa campus after the district revamped the test kitchen about two years ago. Henshaw works in catering and the deli, as well as the taquería.

San Diego hired Henshaw after she graduated from the culinary program at Mesa about 18 years ago. When



Maureen Henshaw says people now eat more salads, veggies, and other unprocessed foods.

SANDY HUFFAKER, JR.

she started, meals were built around red meat. Today, people eat more salads, veggies and other unprocessed foods. The cafeteria makes its own fresh pasta, pizza dough and sauce, but no longer makes soups from scratch.

"You have to come up with new menus to reflect new tastes and what is considered nutritious," she said.

California Federation  
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AFT, AFL-CIO  
A Union of Professionals

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