

**Announcing the
Fifth Annual**

Union Values in Action Award

***For improving the lives of members,
enhancing the influence of the union
and advancing the mission of public education.***

This award recognizes the efforts of local LFT chapters to promote the union agenda and express commitment to the values that make us strong.

It is a cooperative, rather than a competitive award. The aim is to provide inspiration and examples to other local chapters. More than one award may be presented.

The award will be presented at the LFT convention in Bossier City on November 20.

Sample justifications for receiving the Union Values in Action Award include:

Pay raises above and beyond those mandated or provided by the state, that the local was instrumental in delivering (other than legislative raises or mandated MFP growth money, for example). Specific actions by the local should be included.

New school board policies that improve the workplace for teachers and school employees, including specific policies and actions by the local that helped to create these policies.

Representation of members in landmark decisions that affect the rights and conditions of all members.

Community outreach programs that enhance the image of the union and have an impact on public education and the children served.

Award Application

Name of local chapter: _____

Name & title of local officer applying for award: _____

Title of eligible program: _____

Date of program implementation (October 2010 through October 2011): _____

Type of program: Pay raise New school board policy Member Representation Other

On a separate sheet, please provide a 150-200 word essay explaining how your program met the award criteria: Improving the lives of members, enhancing the influence of the union and advancing the mission of public education.

Please submit application by Monday, November 7, 2011

Last year's winners of the Union Values in Action Award: Six Federation chapters win Union Values Award

(Lake Charles – November 22, 2010) Six local chapters of the Louisiana Federation of Teachers today received the Union Values in Action Award for improving the lives of members, enhancing the influence of the union and advancing the mission of public education.

The award recognizes the efforts of local LFT chapters to promote the union agenda and express commitment to the values that make the Federation the largest professional organization for teachers and school employees in Louisiana.

“These Federation chapters exemplify what the LFT stands for,” said LFT President Steve Monaghan. “The Union Values in Action Award serves as an inspiration and a road map for other chapters around the state. It shows how much can be accomplished when we are true to the principles that led us into the union movement in the first place.”

The awards were presented at the 46th annual LFT convention at the L’Auberge du Lac Convention Center in Lake Charles.

Beauregard Federation of Teachers and School Employees: When Beauregard Parish voters approved sales taxes for schools in 1966 and in 1990, their intent was clear: the money was to be used for the salaries of teachers and school employees, and any additional revenues were to be distributed as supplements in June and December.

Those supplemental checks have been steadily declining, and this year, the school board adopted a budget that dedicated only 20% of the tax proceeds to salaries. An internal audit has been unable to determine what has happened to the money that should have gone to teachers and school employees.

The Beauregard Federation of Teachers and School Employees and President Bonnie Maines are fighting to win back the lost supplements, having filed a public records request with the board and presented evidence to state auditors. The Beauregard Federation deserves this Union Values in Action Award for its efforts to determine whether the school board has misappropriated funds, and to win back the supplements that teachers and school employees deserve.

Calcasieu Federation of Teachers and School Employees: On two important issues, the Calcasieu Federation demonstrated its passion for defending the rights of teachers and school employees.

Before the school year began, the board attempted to cancel annual step increases in the salary schedule. President Jean Johnson organized the opposition to the attack on teacher rights. The union orchestrated a campaign that saw more than 3,000 messages sent to board members, asking them to reinstate the step increases. President Johnson then appealed to the board at several meetings. Finally, the board capitulated and reinstated the step increases.

When the school board attempted to privatize school food service in the parish, jeopardizing cafeteria workers’ jobs and adversely affecting the nutrition of children, President Johnson stopped them. In forceful presentations to the school board, she reminded them that state law prohibits privatizing public school cafeterias. Her victory on behalf of school employees was complete when the board cancelled its ill-conceived privatization scheme.

Jefferson Federation of Teachers: At the start of the 2009-10 school year, Jefferson Parish conducted two-day technology conference in downtown New Orleans. Teachers and paraeducators were required to attend. That required teachers and paras to leave home much earlier and get back home much later than their normal schedule.

Because of the hardship the conference imposed on educators, Jefferson Federation of Teachers President Melodie Munch filed a grievance against the board on behalf of teachers, and a complaint on behalf of paraeducators.

JFT's action was successful. The district eventually granted a half-day off to recompense educators for their lost time. Because the half-day wound up being called on April 1, some employees thought it might be a joke. In reality, it was union values in action.

Monroe Federation of Teachers and School Employees: For several years, the Monroe Federation of Teachers has been tantalizingly close to achieving collective bargaining agreements for city educators. The vote on the school board has always been just one shy of victory for teachers and school employees.

This election year, Federation President Sandie Lollie conducted an all-out campaign to elect a pro-bargaining school board. Union volunteers concentrated on key races, donating thousands of hours phone banking, walking neighborhoods, erecting signs and waving at intersections.

Thanks to their efforts, one more bargaining vote was elected to the Monroe City School Board, and the pieces are falling in place to achieve that goal in Northeast Louisiana.

Richland Federation of Teachers and School Employees: When the Richland School Board needed to pass a bond issue to properly equip schools, it was bound by state law that prohibited it from actively campaigning for the issue.

The Richland Federation of Teachers and School Employees and President Launa Martin stepped up with the help the board needed. In a laudable example of cooperation, the Federation was the only organization to work ceaselessly for passage of the issue. The union printed and distributed fliers, contacted teachers, school employees and parents, and worked to make sure voters understood the need.

As a result, the measure was approved, and Superintendent Cathy Stockton extended her warm regards and gratitude to the Federation for this example of union values in action.

St. Tammany Federation of Teachers and School Employees: As one of Louisiana's few collective bargaining agents, the St. Tammany Federation and President Elsie Burkhalter had a lot at stake in the recent school board election. The wrong outcome could threaten hard-won teacher and school employee contracts.

In partnership with the American Federation of Teachers' "Path Forward" program, President Burkhalter set an ambitious goal: to re-elect all serving board members, and to replace one good friend, Sorola "Jody" Palmer, who passed away in late 2009, with another pro-union board member.

The Path Forward team, which included President Burkhalter, Patricia Craddock, Patrick Daniel, Archie Galloway and Sarah Green, organized an election strategy that, in a year noted for the unprecedented number of officials who lost their re-election bids, was completely victorious. Every candidate endorsed by the union won their race.