



SEIU UHW - WEST & JOINT EMPLOYER  
EDUCATION FUND

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## Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 11, 2009

### EDUCATION FUND HONORS 2008-2009 GRADUATES

LOS ANGELES, JUNE 11, 2009: With the healthcare industry facing some of the toughest challenges of our time, the SEIU UHW-West & Joint Employer Education Fund is helping employers to maintain a highly skilled workforce by training incumbent employees in the industry's most pertinent skills.

Over 100 Southern California employees who have graduated from training programs leading to new positions such as Registered Nurse, Phlebotomist and Sterile Processing Technician will be honored by the Education Fund at an Academic Recognition Ceremony and Jazz Brunch on Saturday.

"We are extremely proud of these graduates in particular and the Education Fund in general," says Cherie Kunold, Education Fund Trustee and Director of Diversity and Organizational Development for Catholic Healthcare West and the keynote speaker at Saturday's event. "These workers have not just moved up the career ladder and improved their lives - the healthcare workforce and ultimately, patient care has been improved. It's an example of what can be accomplished when the employer and the union work together towards a common goal."

Along with Kunold, the following three graduates are scheduled to speak:

- **Albert Moser**, a resident of Downey and employee of CHW's St. Mary's Medical Center, Long Beach. After working for more than seven years as an Exercise Physiologist, Moser, 38, entered the Registered Nurse program at Long Beach City College in the fall of 2006. He received an Education Fund stipend, paid time off of work to attend the two-year nursing program. In the short time, less than a year, since he graduated Moser has completed a rotation on the medical surgical floor and now works as a Registered Nurse in Intensive Care. "I would not have been able to attain my life-long dream of becoming a nurse without the support I received from the Education Fund," he says.
- **Walter Small Jr.**, a Lakewood resident and Licensed Vocational Nurse at Daughters of Charity St. Francis Medical Center. Small is a graduate from the RN program at Rio Hondo College as part of the Education Fund's Southern California LVN-to-RN Training Program. He

entered the program after taking a Physiology course offered by the Education Fund at Los Angeles Harbor College in the spring of 2008. Small received a stipend to reduce his work hours to attend school and is now studying for the nursing board exam, the NCLEX. He is looking forward to moving into an RN position.

- **Doris Thompson**, a Reseda resident and former 11-year Shuttle Driver at Kaiser's Los Medical Center. With the support of the Education Fund, Thompson opted to become a Phlebotomy Technician in the wake of Kaiser's decision to redeploy its parking force. Thompson had not attended school in more than 35 years when she entered the 240-hour training. Upon receiving her textbook she was taken aback by the complexity of the material she would have to learn but she persevered, completing the program and passing the state certification. As a direct result of her success, her co-worker and fellow shuttle driver Andy Santillana entered the program stating, "If Doris can do this, so can I."

The three are among 138 Southern California employees who graduated from Education Fund training programs in 2008 and 2009. Family and friends will join in Saturday's celebration. "These graduates have studied long and hard to attain success and rise up the career ladder in their fields," says Mary Ruth Gross, executive director of the Education Fund. "We congratulate them and honor them for their achievements."

The Education Fund provides opportunities for union-represented healthcare employees to improve their skills and make a better life for themselves and their families while also providing participating employers with highly-skilled workers to fill in-demand positions such as Registered Nurse, Medical Coding Specialist and Sterile Processing Technician. The Education Fund is a benefit negotiated by employers and the unions as part of their collective bargaining agreements. Programs and services are paid for by contributing employers and offered at no charge to eligible employees. In addition to the training, Education Fund also provides participants with career counseling and academic support and better access to prerequisite science courses at community colleges. For more information about the Education Fund visit our website at <http://www.seiu-uhweduc.org>.

#### **Event Details**

Date: Saturday, June 13

Location: Millennium Biltmore Hotel

Time: 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

*This event is by invitation only. However, media and press representatives of all types (print, television, radio, web) are welcome.*

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