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UFCW-SAFEWAY PROUD! First Ever Lunch & Learn at Southgate Store a Roaring Success!

On June 14th members of UFCW Local 401, with the support of their Union Representative Sam Nuako, kicked off the first ever “Lunch and Learn” sessions at the Southgate Safeway in Edmonton.

We are very excited about this new way of getting information to all members in each store around the province and thrilled to report it was a roaring success!

Always looking for ways to connect with members, employees at the Southgate Safeway store warmly embraced the Lunch and Learns as a wonderful way to get them more involved and encourage others to learn more about their rights in the workplace and ALL that membership in this great union brings to themselves and their families.

Without the invaluable support and participation by the Stewards, and many other members at Southgate, this project just would not have been the success it was.

After weeks of hard work and passion, the organizing members, affectionately dubbed the “Council of Leaders”, divided themselves into five sub-committees and delivered to the delight of all who attended. The three Stewards, (Vern Dufva, Janice Brough, and Barbara Roy) were the key facilitators and talked to their coworkers about things like, UFCW Canada’s FREE online learning courses through webCampus, part-time benefits, and the numerous scholarship opportunities for members and their dependents. Also flagged for everyone’s attention were some of the most important areas of their contract, which outlines their rights within their workplace. There were also great conversations around diversity and leadership and just how easy it is to be a leader within their workplace. We are very happy to say there was a lot of interest in the leadership development aspect of the Lunch and Learns.

The Lunch and Learns are designed so that it’s really the members within each store that drive the content and delivery. Each store will have its own unique needs, and future Lunch and Learns will continue to be structured to ensure they are fun, informative and relevant to what people want to hear and learn about in a particular location.

The “Council of Leaders”, who are from various departments in the store, are under no obligation to become full-fledged Shop Stewards; they would be the eyes of their departments, note the trends within these departments, offer suggestions for solutions to their immediate supervisors and managers, and where necessary, bring any issues to the Stewards or the Representative. Participatory leadership, or “grass-root leadership”, is key to the success of any union and all involved realized quickly that they were really on to something special. It is Sam’s hope that by engaging these individuals in leadership, some of them could end up becoming Stewards – thus ensuring that a succession plan is in place.

Union activist Jan Brough says, “the response and appreciation from staff was overwhelming. Everyone that attended was very grateful for all of the information. And the door prizes were also a tremendous hit!!” Jan also tells us that a number of people told her they were excited to learn about all the different scholarships and FREE webCampus learning opportunities available and they intend on taking advantage of these and many other benefits offered exclusively to UFCW members, all of which they learned about on this fun day.

To the members who made this happen, facilitators of the Lunch and Learns and participants alike, thank you! UFCW Local 401 also wishes to send a shout out of appreciation to Canada Safeway management for recognizing the value in these sessions and agreeing to have it right at the store. Special recognition also goes out to the manager of the store, Gord Petruk, for being such a good sport with all of the activities that went on that day. He even got “pied” by members, customers, and Sam as part of his annual fund raising for the cure of cancer, which was tied in with the Lunch and Learn. His participation and support did not go unnoticed and we look forward to working with other Safeway managers in delivering more of these across the province.



Key facilitators Barb, Vern, and Jan



UFCW 401 Proud!



UFCW members participating in the Lunch & Learn



Talking about all the benefits of membership in 401