

# PROJECT REPORT

Summer 2021 – Spring 2023



USW FAMILY & COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION FUND



## USW Family & Community Education Fund

## **USW National Office**

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## Building up our union and each other

Steelworkers have a long history of investing in our communities and one another, empowering our union to be the best it can be. As always, Family and Community Education Fund (FCEF) contributors have demonstrated this commitment to strengthening the USW and the geographic areas they live within, developing meaningful activities that inspire and unite participants. Though the COVID-19 pandemic reduced our abilities to lead in-person programming, it gave us the opportunity to reflect on new and different ways to engage people in learning more about the union and its values.

Steelworkers were busy brainstorming during this period of reflection; we've received more than 50 Family and Community Education Fund project applications since July 2021!

Since our last project report, we've received project submissions for activities like an iftar meal breaking the Ramadan fast in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; a bargaining orientation series in LaSalle, Quebec; and a Halloween roller skate night for families in Brampton, Ontario. These and other submissions amount to the most project applications that the Family and Community Education Fund has seen since before the pandemic.

Since July 2021, the FCEF has distributed \$1,191,532.85 to locals, committees, and area councils leading educational and fun member- and community-engaged events. Read on to learn about the FCEF-funded initiatives that Steelworkers have led across our three districts.

# About the fund

## The fund

The FCEF is a grant program created at the 1989 United Steelworkers National Policy Conference. It's funded through locals' dues – hundreds of locals across Canada contribute! The fund pools contributors' resources, resulting in a larger pot of money that contributing locals can access, no matter their membership size. Once a local passes a motion to join the FCEF and contribute 1% of its gross total dues, it can begin applying for funds. It's that simple!



## The projects

The FCEF funds projects that include an active education component and meet one of our four pillars:

- ✓ Supporting Steelworker families
- ✓ Promoting USW in the community
- ✓ Supporting and engaging young activists
- ✓ Supporting and engaging new activists



## Active educational component

We require that active learning components be included in funded events because we know people learn best by doing. Without realizing it, we participate in active learning every day – through dialogue with friends, trivia nights, self-reflection and more. It's not complicated to include an education component in your project submission; just build in a straightforward activity that gets participants engaged and thinking, like a scavenger hunt, Jeopardy! game, or panel with a question-and-answer period.

The Fund Co-ordinator is always available to help you develop an educational component that will naturally fit with your project. And we've got many activity templates on our website! Knowledge is power; as we learn more, we become better unionists, community members and political activists.



## The review process

The FCEF funds projects of all sizes and has two review streams. Projects under \$5,000 are sent to applicants' corresponding District Education Co-ordinator for review any time. Projects costing more than this are reviewed four times per year by a Project Review Committee.

The committee is made up of the Administrative Assistant to the National Director, Fund Co-ordinator, and a member representative and Education Co-ordinator from each district. You can find these large project deadlines on the FCEF website at [usw.ca/FCEF](http://usw.ca/FCEF).



The FCEF's strategic direction is set by its Advisory Committee. It's made up of the FCEF and District Education Co-ordinators as well as representatives from three districts and the USW Canadian National Office. As of April 2023, our members are:

- Warren Luky**, Local 6166, District 3;
- Alexandre Lebrun-Picard**, Local 6818, District 5 \*;
- Liezel Cariaso**, Local 8300, District 6 \*\*;
- Dayna Sykes**, District 3 Education Co-ordinator;
- Maude Raïche**, District 5 Education Co-ordinator;
- Jackie Taylor**, District 6 Education Co-ordinator;
- Alexandra Eshelman**, Administrative Assistant to the National Director;
- Gabriele Simmons**, FCEF Co-ordinator;
- Earl Graham**, District 3 Staff Representative;
- Dany Maltais**, District 5 Staff Representative \*\*\*;
- Anita Bryan**, District 6 Staff Representative;
- Meg Gingrich**, Assistant to the National Director; and
- Adriane Paavo**, Department Leader, Education and Equality.

Local union representatives Bob Yates and Marco Ouellet's committee terms ended during this period. We are grateful for their thoughtful reviews and commentary over the years. Happy retirement, Marco!

Note: bolded names = also members of the Project Review Committee.

\* replaced Marco Ouellet, Local 7401 who retired Spring 2023.

\*\* replaced Bob Yates, Local 4610 who stepped down Fall 2022.

\*\*\* replaced Guy Gaudette, District 5 staff representative in Spring 2023.

Each District Education Coordinator reviews their district's small project submissions and votes on larger ones. They all bring their unique perspectives to reviewing applicants' projects.



**DAYNA SYKES,**  
*District 3 Education Coordinator*

"I am always impressed by the diverse array of applicants who apply for Family and Community Education Fund funding in District 3. These folks have found such creative ways to design and lead educational programming through the FCEF."



**MAUDE RAICHE,**  
*District 5 Education Coordinator*

"Since 2017, District 5 has had great success with projects designed for young and new activists. Demands for those projects increase every year. As the District 5 Education Coordinator I hope that, in the future, we will have the same success with educational projects for Steelworkers families and communities".



**JACKIE TAYLOR,**  
*District 6 Education Coordinator*

"When reviewing project applications for District 6, I look for innovation and creativity. It's great to see applicants thinking up unique ways of getting new activists involved in and excited about the union."

# Recent FCEF highlights

- Development of new FCEF education resources for our youngest Steelworkers after a call for programming proposals from Canadian educators. To view our resource collection, visit [usw.ca/add-edu-comp/](https://usw.ca/add-edu-comp/)
- Members began making use of our Family Care Reimbursement Program, which reimburses members of contributing locals for family-care costs like childcare incurred while attending authorized union events. To learn more, visit page 16 of this report or [usw.ca/fcef-care](https://usw.ca/fcef-care)
- New FCEF website unveiled, [usw.ca/fcef](https://usw.ca/fcef)
- We're onstage! The Family and Community Education Fund was highlighted at our National Women's Conference in Quebec City and National Policy Conference in Toronto
- We're on the road! The FCEF Co-ordinator attended and supported multiple FCEF-funded events across Canada and had a booth at district- and national-level gatherings
- Two new local unions joined the fund – welcome, locals 862 and 2014
- 57 projects funded

## Did you see the FCEF at the 2023 National Policy Conference in Toronto?

Huge thanks to panelists **Malik Draz**, president of Local 2014 in District 3; **Raul Gutierrez**, president of Local 7536 in District 6; and **Nicolas Lapierre**, assistant to the director in District 5. They did a great job representing their districts and sharing with conference delegates the ways in which the FCEF has helped them to engage their members.

The FCEF can help contributors make progress on USW policy resolutions. Chat with the FCEF Co-ordinator about how the fund can assist with projects that meet the union's goals.





# Projects

Our members came out of the pandemic shaken, but with a continued resilience and commitment to bettering outcomes for all. This period's projects prioritized building strength within applicants' locals and districts and enriching their local communities.

The FCEF accepts project submissions year-round from contributors. At this report's time of printing there is no cap on how many project applications contributors can submit annually nor on the amount of funding applicants can request. For assistance with filling out your funding application form, reach out to the FCEF Fund Co-ordinator or review the resources on the FCEF website.



## Example of a national project

### Practical Guide and Indigenous Liaison Persons – A Pilot Project

**Theme areas:** Promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging new activists

2022–2023	Districts 3 and 6
\$185,000	2,500 participants

**Education component:** presentations and meetings with audience question and answer

As a pilot program, two Indigenous liaisons were hired in Districts 3 and 6 to conduct interviews and discussion groups on how best to support USW local unions in their engagement of Indigenous members and communities. From these interviews, the liaisons are creating a practical guide that can assist USW local unions in furthering their engagement efforts with Indigenous peoples.



# Examples of projects from District 3

## National King Miner Contest

**Theme areas:** Promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists

Summer 2022	Thompson, Man.
\$27,000	75 participants

**Education component:** interactive historic display with interpretation by SOAR members; presentation and exhibition of mining skills

As part of the 48th annual Nickel Days festival, Local 6166 co-ran an aboveground mining competition for Steelworkers and the wider community. Participants helped the local celebrate its 60th anniversary while learning more about the history of USW and mining in Thompson.



## First Aid Series

**Theme areas:** Supporting Steelworker families

Fall 2022	Saskatoon, Sask.
\$5,120	20 participants

**Education component:** first aid training; discussions with union activists

The Saskatoon Area Council hosted a pilot program teaching Steelworkers and their families first aid and CPR skills. Participants learned health and safety basics to help them when they're on the job, volunteering, and out in the community.



## Tools 4 Schools

**Theme areas:** Promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging new activists

Summer 2022	Saskatoon, Sask.
\$5,000	8 participants

**Education component:** presentation with audience question and answer

In time for the school year starting, the Saskatoon Women of Steel Committee engaged its new activists in a school supply drive. Participants discussed local child poverty with school administrators while packing knapsacks for children from low-income households.



## Union and Community Get Together

**Theme areas:** Supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists

Winter 2022	Saskatoon, Sask.
\$3,000	80 participants

**Education component:** film and presentation with audience question and answer

Local 2014 participated in the Saskatoon Folk Festival and as a thank-you gesture, invited festival volunteers to a social night at the union hall. Participants learned about unionization and got to know USW activists over a shared meal.



# Examples of projects from District 5

## Celebrating 40 Years with Our Families

**Theme areas:** Supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists

Spring 2022	Mont-Saint-Gregoire, Queb.
\$50,000	300 participants

**Education component:** union education workshop; presentations; kids' scavenger hunt

Building on the success of its 40-year history, Local 9414 held an orientation day for new members to learn about the advantages of being unionized with USW. Members' families participated in fun activities and a sugar shack meal at the end of the Steelworkers' training.



## Meeting of Presidents 2022

**Theme areas:** Supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists

Spring 2022	Lévis, Queb.
\$3,000	38 participants

**Education component:** union education workshop

In recognition of many of its unit chairs being brand new to leadership positions in the union, Local 9599 held a training session teaching these new and young leaders about the right of refusal, criteria of a good survey, and more. Participants deepened their understanding of their unit chair roles and their connections to their amalgamated local and unit chair veterans.



## Commemoration

**Theme areas:** Supporting Steelworker families, promoting USW in the community

Fall 2022	Beauceville, Queb.
\$5,000	80 participants

**Education component:** presentation; group reflection

Local 9153 held a commemorative event for the 1st anniversary of a workplace tragedy that killed three of their colleagues. Participants discussed the importance of health and safety and remembered these workers whose lives were tragically lost.



## Introduction to Solidarity and Mobilizing

**Theme areas:** Supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists

Winter 2022	Sorel-Tracy, Queb.
\$2,800	6 participants

**Education component:** orientation to striking; attendance at picket line

New and young activists from Local 3953 spent a day on a USW picket line tracking scab activities and learning about strikes and solidarity and why solidarity among workers is essential.



# Examples of projects from District 6

## All Candidates' Debate Sault Ste Marie

**Theme areas:** Promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists

Fall 2021	Sault Ste Marie, Ont.
\$2,300	65 participants

**Education component:** moderated debate

Local 9548's Political Action Committee hosted a federal election debate and invited labour activists and the wider community. Participants heard from candidates on their party platforms and developed a stronger political awareness.



## D6 NextGen Soccer Tournament

**Theme areas:** Supporting Steelworker families, promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists

Summer 2022	Ingersoll, Ont.
\$5,000	250 participants

**Education component:** team trivia

The D6 NextGen Committee partnered with Locals 2918 and 2020 on a fun-filled soccer tournament. Participants included Steelworkers and their families as well as members of other labour unions who played multiple matches, completed union trivia, and took part in family fun activities.



## Bus Trip to Women's Conference

**Theme areas:** Supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists

Fall 2022	Cambridge, Ont. – Quebec City, Queb.
\$18,000	56 participants

**Education component:** activist bingo; team trivia; delegate reflections on the conference

Delegates to the National Women's Conference in Quebec City shared a bus rented by the Southcentral Ontario Area Council. On the 10-hour bus ride, participants played union trivia and bingo games while deepening their connections with one another.



## Women of Steel Awareness Campaign

**Theme areas:** Supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists

Fall 2022	St. John's, Newf.
\$1,800	15 participants

**Education component:** presentation with audience question and answer

Inspired by what they learned at the 2022 National Women's Conference, female activists from Local 9503 held an event to launch their own Women of Steel Committee. Participants learned about the Raising the Bar on Women's Health and Safety campaign and got to know one another over lunch.



# FCEF Resources

## Project Templates

Being a union leader is busy work! We know that it can be difficult to find the time to design an original FCEF project submission. To accommodate this, the FCEF has created over 20 project templates on our website. Just search for the project type that interests you and use it and its suggested materials list as inspiration for your next FCEF application. Read our project templates here: [usw.ca/pages/project-ideas/](https://usw.ca/pages/project-ideas/)

## Educational Components

Every FCEF-funded activity requires an active education component. This is an activity that deepens participants' learning on a topic and encourages their reflection. The FCEF hopes that funded events inspire participants to enrich their activism and keep them involved in the union – meaningful education is key to this!

The Fund Co-ordinator is available to support you in deciding what education component fits best with your project and can even help you create the activity. There are also many education components on the FCEF website for your use. Visit [usw.ca/add-edu-comp/](https://usw.ca/add-edu-comp/) to search our activity library.

## Family Care Reimbursement Program

Recently, the FCEF unveiled an initiative that reimburses members of contributing locals for the family-care costs (like childcare) they incur while attending authorized union events. Members can claim caregiving fees for dependent family members who reside with them, like children and those living with a disability. Overnight care is eligible too!

Taking part in union activities helps members learn new skills, build social networks, and gain experience which can qualify them for new roles in our union and in the workplace. With supports such as the Family Care

Reimbursement Program, more Steelworkers will be able to participate more fully in the life of the union, sharing their activism and leadership. When promoting engagement opportunities like membership or committee meetings and/or conferences to your members, let them know about this unique opportunity available to them! For more information, visit the Family Reimbursement Program's webpage: [usw.ca/fcef-care](https://usw.ca/fcef-care)

## In-person and Virtual Presentations

The FCEF Co-ordinator is available to present to your membership on the fund virtually and in-person! Invite us to your next area council meeting or to speak with your local's committees. We can also present to your executive on how best to use the FCEF to meet your local's goals or to your general membership if you are considering motioning to join the fund. To arrange a presentation, reach out to the FCEF Co-ordinator at [fcef@usw.ca](mailto:fcef@usw.ca).







# What People are Saying

Members make use of the fund for all sorts of reasons! Read on to learn how three activists from across Canada have made use of the FCEF.



**Darrin Kruger**

USW Area Co-ordinator  
Saskatoon, Sask.

## Engaging Saskatoon Steelworkers and supporting their community

### Project descriptions:

In 2022, with the help of FCEF funding, USW activists in Saskatoon organized several projects that engaged Steelworker families and supported their community, including:

- A “Tools for Schools” initiative by Women of Steel that provided clothing, hygiene products and other essentials to hundreds of students in need at two elementary schools in the city.
- First aid training for USW members and their families, offered through St. John Ambulance.
- A family day and barbecue, with activities for USW and SOAR members and their families, also attended by local community, political, Indigenous and labour leaders and activists.
- USW Local 2014 and District 3 activists hosted an appreciation event for Saskatoon Folkfest volunteers who ensured the success of the multicultural festival held the previous August. USW members had an exhibit space at the festival to promote the union and help build community solidarity.

### Q: When and how did you first learn of the FCEF?

A: I don't remember exactly when, but it was after the union began promoting the Fund quite a bit, and I think we came across that information at a conference and that's when we began to consider what we could do with it.

### Q: What prompted your activists to make their applications to the Fund?

A: Once we learned that these funds were available, that this was members' money and it was there to support worthwhile projects for our members and for the community, we started with an application for one project and it grew from there.

### Q: What were the various locals and their activists in your community able to achieve as a result of the Fund's support for their projects?

A: I think our people have seen the value and the rewards of promoting the union and what it does, not only in terms of working and living standards for our members and their families, but also what we can do in the community. These projects are very impactful for our members who are involved. It can really be a rewarding experience.

### Q: How do you hope to build on the success of your projects? Will your local use the Fund again?

A: Absolutely, we've already seen it with members who have been building on the work that was done last year. They've been planning to repeat some of those projects and make them bigger and better, and they've been working on other projects as well. We've actually had more ideas for projects than we can actually handle, but that's a good thing.



## Chantal Lalancette

USW Local 9414 President  
Montréal region (Quebec)

### Celebrating 40 years as a union family

#### Project description:

With more than 50 bargaining units and 3,000 members, USW Local 9414 is one of the union's largest locals. In April 2022, Local 9414 celebrated its 40th anniversary with a day-long event to engage and mobilize activists from its many bargaining units in the Montréal region, followed by a dinner for these members and their families.

#### Q: When and how did you first learn of the FCEF?

A: We've discussed it regularly at our District 5 annual meetings, where a representative always presents a report and promotes the Fund. Our local decided to join before the pandemic, so we've been contributing to the Fund for about four or five years now.

#### Q: What prompted your local to make an application to the Fund?

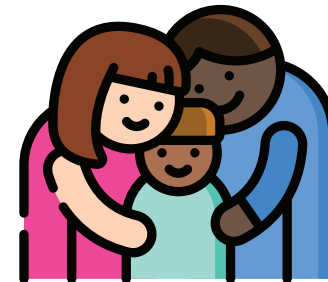
A: Our local's 40th anniversary was coming, and we wanted to do something to celebrate the occasion. We were looking at what we could do that would involve education and our families, and when I spoke to Maude Raïche (USW Education Department Leader in District 5) she helped us draw up a plan to submit an application to the Fund, and that's how it got off the ground.

#### Q: What were your local and its activists able to achieve as a result of the Fund's support?

A: The idea was to bring our activists together to share their experiences, to learn more about the history of the union and the support and services the union offers to members. During the day, each bargaining unit president gave a brief report on their unit. Jocelyn Desjardins from the union's Communications Department helped us produce a historical video of our local, and it turned out to be a real gem, tracing our 40-year history and the battles that have moved the union forward over that time. And then in the evening, we had our family event, with a dinner at a sugar shack where the activists' spouses and children attended. It was a great experience.

#### Q. How do you hope to build on the success of your project? Will your local use the Fund again?

A: It's possible, because our project certainly was a success, but not in the short term because next year is an election year for us, and with some 50 units having elections, we're going to be very busy and there may be changes, with new people coming in. So we may pursue another project with the Fund's support, but not before the end of 2024 or in 2025. One possibility, which has worked in the past, is to hold annual meetings of our local, to bring together and engage activists from all of our units every year.





## Justin Andrews

Vice-President, USW Local 5795  
Iron Ore Company of Canada  
Labrador City, N.L.

### Keeping young workers safe in Lab City

#### Project description:

In May 2022, USW Local 5795 representatives visited Labrador City's only secondary school, Menihék High School, and met with more than 400 students to promote workplace health and safety and the importance of young workers knowing and defending their rights. They also engaged and encouraged students to talk about their own experiences and concerns as young workers or soon-to-be workers.

#### Q: When and how did you first learn of the FCEF?

A: I heard about the Fund around the time we were coming out of the pandemic. A few of our local leaders had learned about it, at a conference they attended, and when they heard me talking about this project, they mentioned the Fund and suggested it might be possible to get funding. So it was a good coincidence.

#### Q: What prompted your local union to make an application to the Fund?

A: Our local was involved with the Young Worker Awareness program with high school students in the past, but it kind of fell by

the wayside at one point, and with Covid, we didn't offer it for a few years. While we were digitalizing the files in our office, I came across a file on the program, and I thought it would be a good time to revive it, and when I learned about the Family and Community Education Fund, we applied for financial support to help us deliver the program to our high school students.

#### Q: What were your local and its activists able to achieve as a result of the Fund's support?

A: A lot of students from our high school, when they leave school, they end up getting employed as summer students at the mine. So it's important to our union to be able to educate young people about workplace health and safety and their rights. We delivered the project towards the end of the school year, when a lot of students were preparing for summer jobs, and it was clear they were interested in what they were learning and they appreciated it. The Fund allowed us to obtain all of the materials we needed and some Steelworkers' swag that we handed out to every student. So it was a valuable learning experience for the students and a great way to promote the union in the community.

#### Q: How do you hope to build on the success of your project? Will your local use the Fund again?

A: Our project really was a big success, so I'm sure we're going to want to continue with it, in the future, with the Fund's help. And we've already had conversations at our executive table about other ways we could make use of the Fund for other educational and community purposes.



# Thanks

In just four short years, the Family and Community Education Fund's reach has grown to all corners of our three districts! Each year the number of project applications that we have received and funded has multiplied and it's all thanks to you. We are grateful to those who have thoughtfully drafted project applications and who have led meaningful member- and community-engaged activities in your areas. We are also grateful to those who were unable to submit applications to the FCEF during this project period for your continued participation in the fund. Remitting to the FCEF creates a larger pot of money that contributing locals can access. While you may have not sought funds this past period, you have unlimited opportunities to do so in the future. Thanks as well to those who spread the word of the fund, recommending it for use by locals and area councils.

As always, thank you, too, to the members of our Advisory and Project Review Committees, including those who subbed in for committee members who were away on leave. Your guidance and attention enable the USW to more deeply support our members and communities.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabriele". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gabriele Simmons  
USW Family & Community Education Fund Co-ordinator

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