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SEIU-West



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SEIU-West Rallies at Caleb Village in Support of Fired Worker

KINDERSLEY, SASKATCHEWAN--(Marketwire - March 29, 2010) - Unionized workers from across Saskatchewan came together on Thursday, 25 March 2010 to host an information picket in front of the Caleb Village Retirement Community, an assisted care facility in Kindersley, SK. The Caleb Villages are constructed and managed by Saskatoon's Caleb Group.

Over twenty workers from SEIU-West and the UFCW came from across the Province to support Valerie (Val) Lafortune, a Shift Supervisor in the Housekeeping Department, who was fired from her position for talking to a Union.

Val's co-workers at the Caleb Village Kindersley were saddened to discover, on Tuesday 16 March 2010, that their long time colleague had been fired.

At the rally Val made the following statement;

"Thank you for coming out today. For those of you who don't know me my name is Val Lafortune and I am the reason you are all here. Last week I was fired from my job at the Caleb Village, Kindersley for talking to the Union." My last review was a couple of weeks ago and it was high and I even filled-in for my manager when she went on vacation" said Val "But when she called me in the office and told me I had to go, she couldn't look me in the eye or tell me why...and so I knew she heard that I was talking to the union."

"It makes me proud to know that so many Union Workers were willing to get on our bus and head to Kindersley to show their support for our friend Val," said Barb Cape, President of SEIU-West. "SEIU-West rallied in Kindersley, not just for Val, but for every worker in Saskatchewan who wants to exercise their right to Organize. We are here to show the Caleb Group that they can't fire you for wanting a Union and they can't stop the union."

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MEDIA CONTACTS
 INTERVIEW REQUESTS: SEIU-West
 BARB CAPE, President
 306.652.1011 or Mobile:
 306.631.4713
 306.652.1392 (FAX)
barb.cape@seiu333.org
 or
 SEIU-West
 JOHN BENOIT
 Director of Organizing
 306.693.7922 or Mobile:
 306.631.6179
 306.692.2807 (FAX)
jbenoit@sasktel.net
 or
 CALEB GROUP
 866.352.2532
 306.934.0059
headoffice@calebgroup.ca
 or
 WEBSITES
WWW.SEIUWEST.CA
WWW.EYEONCALEB.COM

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"In Saskatchewan every worker has the right to organize." said John Benoit, Director of Organizing for SEIU-West, to the assembled crowd. "The Caleb Group has three other SEIU unionized facilities, in Regina, Moose Jaw and Swift Current. It puzzles me how Caleb could fire someone in Kindersley for talking to the very same union."

"Caleb Village Kindersley is like a big family. The residents have always told me that every time a staff member gets fired, it's like a death in the family. I started at Caleb Kindersley when it opened its doors on the 1st of June 2009 and since I was fired last week there is now only one person left from the original staff still in the building. For a small town like Kindersley that's a lot of people fired.

It is estimated that since Caleb Village Kindersley opened its doors last year it has experienced a turnover rate close to 90%. Ms. Lafortune was one of only two remaining original staff since the facility opened its doors. "Stability is important to the residents..." said Val "They like to see the same faces everyday. They don't like it when it's always new people."

SEIU-West is planning to continue action on the Caleb Group until this matter is satisfactorily resolved. Further information pickets are planned for Caleb facilities across the Province of Saskatchewan in the upcoming weeks.

Photographs of the Kindersley SEIU-West information picket are available for download to the media on request, or by visiting WWW.EYEONCALEB.COM

SEIU-West represents over twelve thousand (12,000) members across the province of Saskatchewan of which approximately eleven thousand are health care providers within acute care, long term care and home care sectors.

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