

Calling all CATs!

To hear people at SEIU 503 talking about CATs, you might think that we've been over-run with 4-legged felines.

But at SEIU 503, CATs mean "Communication Action Teams," a new program that has been ramping up over the past few months. Here is how they work: Members who agree to take on the role of "CAT Team Leader" work with their organizer to identify about 25 members who become their personal "CAT Team." These are most often members who live in their same neighborhood, are in their same sector, or have other key features in common.

Each CAT Team Leader receives monthly updates from their organizer about the latest developments and upcoming events at SEIU 503. Then, they spread the word by calling the members of their CAT Team, also known as their "key contacts." The ultimate goal is not only to inform others, but also to move others to action and to develop new activists and leaders among our members.

CAT Teams provide a great way to develop member-to-member communications so that members are not only informed, but they have the opportunity to network with each other. Because CAT team members typically live in close proximity to one another, they may also form carpools to events, or even go canvassing together.

Lelani Nussbaumer (Forest Grove) said that she became a CAT Team Leader as a way to get to know other healthcare workers in her community, adding that, "if I can find out what they're doing, and share with them what I am doing, then we can support each other."

Chuck Wynns (Salem) observed that, "because homecare workers do not share a common workplace, it can be difficult to connect with one another. But, when you call the same people on your CAT list every month, it allows you to develop a relationship with each other. And that's what union work is always ultimately about; relationships."

So, don't be surprised if you get a call from someone saying they're your CAT Team Leader. Please welcome their calls and remember that these are your fellow members who are investing their own time to make sure there is good member-to-member communication within our union.

If you'd like to be a CAT Team Leader yourself, just call your organizer, and they will be happy to work with you to create a list of key contacts of your own.

