Workers’ Memorial Day 2009

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Historical Background

- The first Workers’ Memorial Day was observed on April 28, 1984 in Canada, and became internationally recognized in 1996.

- It is also the anniversary of the day the Occupational Safety and Health Act went into effect in the United States.

- Purpose: A day to bring to light the preventable nature of workplace accidents and ill-health; the promotion of campaigns and unions’ actions for improvement in workplace safety, and lastly to bring public awareness to health and safety issues.

- Importance: Also a day to honor and remember those who have been killed or severely injured at work.

- The slogan for the day is “Mourn for the dead - fight for the living” – Mother Jones.
Population and Demographics

- WMD was an event intended for all workers of various occupations; these jobs normally tend to be low-wage and high-risk

- Typical participants/observers are local union members, immigrants, day laborers, temporary workers, young workers, family and friends

- Some examples of the occupations that attended in 2009
  - Carwash workers
  - Steel and iron workers
  - Taxicab drivers
  - Port drivers
  - Agricultural workers
  - Day laborers
UCLA-LOSH, SoCalCOSH, & UCLA Labor Center present
Workers’ Memorial Day: 04.25.09
Organizing Committee
Funeral Procession

- Event began with welcome speeches followed by the decoration of cars and a funeral procession around McArthur Park

- Signs had statistics about work-related deaths and injury and powerful messages about the issues
Car Decorating
Resources, Information and Union Fair

CLEAN Car Wash Campaign

CAL/OSHA

Levy, Stern & Ford

Institute of Popular Education of Southern California (IDEPSCA)

UCLA-LOSH
Memorial Posters

Placed around the facility, both inside and out, these posters described the occupation of individuals who died on the job and their cause of death.
A diverse group of more than 200 came out for the day...
Guest Speaker

Hank Cierpich – Fatality Investigator & Safety Engineer, California Department of Public Health
Guest Speakers

Young Workers
LA City Councilmember Ed Reyes
Father Richard Estrada
Family and Worker Testimonies

Family of Pablo Garcia – Long Beach Port Driver
  - Crushed by chassis of his own truck
  - The effects it had on his family

Mike Fehr in Memory of Sheri Sangji – UCLA Lab Assistant
  - Lack of proper lab equipment training
  - Failure to enforce safety regulations and to correct safety violations

Followed by an Audience Speak Out
Ironworkers

- Ironworkers Local Union 416
Recognition of workers who took action in their workplaces

UCLA Film & TV Archives

Riverside Superior Court
Results

- Workers’ Memorial Day was a success!
  - “Great event held for a tragic reason”
  - Honored those who have been killed or injured at work

- Participants were provided useful information and resources about their rights as workers; they also learned about the hazards of a variety of occupations

- Participants were empowered to help create change in their workplaces

- The event heightened public awareness about workplace health and safety