

LABOUR ACTION

LABOUR
TORONTO & YORK REGION
COUNCIL

Spring | 2016



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SUPER HEROES AND GREEN JOBS

Super heroes are supposed to jump over tall buildings and have no fear. That is what we read. What if it were all true? What if super heroes walked alongside us, shopped in grocery stores, sat in gridlock? What if you sat next to a super hero on the commute to work and never knew?



We know one of many climate change super heroes whose green job makes him work on top of tall buildings, wear safety gear and have no fear of extreme cold, wind or sun... he is a Solar Panel installer with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Local 353). Brian Aguilar is a first generation child of Ecuadorian immigrants. His father arrived in 1973 with skills that helped paint Toronto into a brighter future for his son. Brian learnt well at his father's side, skills that would shape his determination to overcome great adversity and challenges as a youth struggling to find his path. Working side by side with his father, Brian knew that he had to push himself further and farther to build on all that his father had taught him and school was just not giving him enough. Change and opportunity happened when he connected with the Joint Apprenticeship Program with IBEW 353.

"I navigated the process myself and it was the hardest thing to do. I had to push myself because at first I did not have the basic skills. This was all

about determination and belief." Says Brian thinking back to the youth who left high school with no direction. But a lucky break provided him a soccer scholarship at a U.S. university, where he studied electrical engineering.

Back in Toronto he joined the IBEW. Through the Apprenticeship program he built skills that got him jobs working on the Trump Tower, the TTC expansion, even in Industrial Robotics. Working in harsh winter weather of -25c seemed easier compared to his electrical engineering degree that he pushed himself to complete. Working to install solar on school roofs across the Toronto District School Board, Brian recognizes that he is in the leading edge of an exciting and brand new field, where the electrical code will be in transition to deal with the nature of solar work.

He sees a need for courses that focus on solar and wind turbine technology, recognizing that "there is a bigger picture, bigger than mortgages, bills, homes and life itself". Brian is confident that the way forward in this bigger picture of dealing with the ultimate villain,

Climate Change, are green jobs such as what he does and that Union Training Centres are the best places to build the skills needed.

Hands on, real life and relevant.

Brian's sense of gratitude is evident as he feels his father's legacy live through him "who we are, what we contribute will carry beyond us." My father used to say, pointing to an entire street, "those houses, I painted them. I will tell my children that their schools, I put solar on them."

"Believe in your skills, channel the pain into your belief that you can do it." smiles Brian, thinking back to how he struggled through school and all that he learnt that has now made him an Electrician Journeyman with ClimbPower Canada.

Human life on this planet is dependent on how we build skills to create more green jobs for youth from all walks of life. Super heroes face real life villains. Our biggest villain today is Climate Change.

More info about the Joint Apprenticeship Council at: electricalapprenticeship.ca

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To receive the Council's weekly email updates, please contact Kiruthiha Kulendiren at kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca.



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BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Martin Luther King



For 2016 Black History month, Labour Council launched the video; "Welcome to Canada". In the history of the African diaspora the story of immigration to Canada is still highly relevant. On Tuesday April 27, 1954 the Toronto-based Negro Citizenship Association (NCA) made history when it went to Ottawa to demand changes in the discriminatory policies of the Canadian Immigration Act. Led by Donald Moore, the delegation included Bromley Armstrong and other union activists.

To order your copy email council@labourcouncil.ca.

Or download at youtube.com/labourcouncil

Sandra Bland, age 28; Andrew Loku, age 45; Tamir Rice, age 12; Jermaine Anthony Carby, age 33; and Freddie Gray, age 25. These are but a few of the African Canadian and African American workers and children that will forever be burned into the African Canadian history books for 2015.

Seared into the psyche of a generation, who will continue to hope, and pray, that these types of lethal police interactions never find its way to our children, our grandchildren, our families, or us, for that matter.

Black Lives Matter! we cry. All lives matter, others cry.

If we're not careful, this may very well be the great 2016 African Canadian debate that this generation discusses with the next generation when they ask us why, in 2036, they are still struggling with some of the same injustices that we struggled with in 2016.

This is not the type of conversation that I want to have with my grandchildren. Struggling towards the end goal of the same opportunities being available to all willing to work, for it is not an option for African Canadians. It is an obligation that we have to the next generation.

2015 and the beginning of 2016 will forever be known to many, as the year that we compared the lead poisoning of the residences of Flint Michigan with the bottle water advisories on many of our First Nations' reserves.

Asking ourselves the question, why, in this modern era, can a person or persons poison an entire

city or an entire First Nations' reserve and no one goes to jail?

Looking back in recent Black history, we have made some advancement with the inauguration of Toronto's first Black police Chief, Mark Saunders.

While many of us disagree with the new Chief's position on carding (which has NOT gone away) many see the inauguration of Chief Saunders with new hope — hope that our children, the next generation, may also shatter what many of us see as a societal glass ceiling, giving our children some of the same opportunities that others have had for generations.

Continuing to look back, we see 2015 as the year that, as a nation, we achieved a public enquiry into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls across Canada.

Some reading this will ask the question, why in a Black History Month article we are talking about Aboriginal women and girls? Answer: because these are among the list of things that matter.

Dr. Martin Luther King said it best, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." If I may be so bold to take Dr. King's quote a little further, as workers and

as African Canadians, our lives begin to end the day we allow elected officials to put divisions among us — divisions between those that wear a hijab and those that do not; those that have status in Canada and those that may not; those that have Canadian citizenship and those who come as refugees or migrant workers.

2016 must be recorded in black history as the year where we, as a people, capitalized on the collective roles that African Canadians play in shaping Canadian society.

Whether we are exercising our collective voting power by electing or send packing our elected officials, or whether we are supporting a group of young women bold enough to block Toronto's Alan Expressway on our behalf, in order to let the world know that our lives matter also.

To quote the journalist Desmond Cole, "No social movement is won by catering to popular opinion." The edifice of our collective black history is not, and will never be, an exception to that rule.

by Mark Brown
Labour Council Equity
Committee
Published in PRIDE
February 4th, 2016

REMAKING TORONTO FOR A POST PARIS WORLD



Some criticize COP21 for lacking legal teeth, but reality is that U.S. Republicans could and would torpedo anything stronger. Labour failed to secure “just transition” language in the main document text, which was a set-back for workers in the resource sectors. And the elephant in the room remains the goal of raising \$100B annually to assist the green transition of developing countries.

On the other hand, unions in a number of countries are raising the slogan of “A Million Climate Jobs”, and laying out realistic proposals to achieve change at that scale. This is the framework that should define the infrastructure spending now being considered by all levels of government. If billions are to be invested, let’s make sure it results in real impact on GHG

Climate Change is far more real than many of us realize. That became crystal clear in the United Nations Conference (COP21) in Paris, where world leaders identified the urgency of the crisis, and signed an agreement calling on all nations to dramatically reduce greenhouse gases (GHG). I was one of three dozen delegates from Canada’s labour movement, working with our union counterparts from across the globe to press for ambitious targets, just transition programs, and funding for poorer countries to help mitigate and adapt.

reduction. Assuming that words spoken by our political leaders gets translated into reality; what could it mean for greater Toronto, Ontario and Canada?

Two decades ago Toronto created the Better Buildings Partnership as a catalyst to spur energy retrofits of major buildings. The program was a stunning success, resulting in thousands of jobs, lower operating costs and a significant reduction of CO2 emissions. The building code was improved and programs to entice homeowners to renovate for energy savings were introduced. And a massive transit expansion was proposed by the provincial government.

Once again it is time to prioritize initiatives that reduce the carbon footprint

for Canada’s largest urban centre; not for political purpose but because it helps us survive Climate Change. Initiatives such as:

- **Expand the Better Buildings** program to perform energy audits on public, private office and apartment buildings, to secure financing for retrofits and connect qualified contractors with clients. The same concept can apply to homes through the City’s recently adopted residential program. Provincial and federal support to tackle the \$2.6B backlog of repairs on TCHC buildings.
- **Amend the Ontario Building Code** to require much stronger environmental standards. Toronto has green building criteria that should be improved and made mandatory. Develop model designs for zero carbon buildings to set the stage for

WHAT MAKES A GREAT CITY?



Great people, who have the supports they need to thrive. That means having great services that are there for you, when you need them. Each and every day, City of Toronto workers are providing the quality services Torontonians depend on to live better, safer, more productive lives.

Great services make our city safer and cleaner, and help provide everyone with the support they, their families and their communities need to realize their fullest potential. The work City of

Toronto employees perform every day touches the lives of most Torontonians every day.

We enjoy good quality of life thanks to public services. Torontonians know they can count on public services to be accountable, accessible, locally-controlled and a wise investment of tax dollars. When services are public and well-funded, they deliver a solid, reliable foundation residents can count on.

Libraries, parks, arenas and community centres enrich our quality of life. Elderly and frail residents can live with dignity



in City-operated long-term care facilities that 'set the bar' for other facilities. Waste management and water quality protect our environment and keep our neighbourhoods clean and safe. Shelter staff provide the support our most vulnerable residents need to get back on their feet.

In big ways and small, visible and barely noticeable, City of Toronto workers are going the extra mile to deliver the great services people need to help every resident have a better life.

To find out more about the people who serve Toronto go to betterlivesTO.ca

new competencies in architecture and construction.

- **Increase green energy contribution** of building owners and residents, with financial support for solar installation on roofs and building facades along with high-tech storage capacity. Toronto Hydro and municipal utilities should be key players in this work, as should publicly owned Hydro One.
- Move forward with decisive investment in public transit. The federal government needs to develop a true national transit strategy and the province needs to restore traditional levels of support for operating

costs. Municipal property taxes can not shoulder the burden of this vital work. Transit should remain publicly owned and operated.

- **Re-think how people move around** on a daily basis. Urban planning should emphasize local communities where amenities are easily available in walking distance. Sprawl curtailed and suburban areas intensified. Vehicle emissions dramatically reduced, and systems put in place to support hybrid and electric cars.

None of these ideas are new. The new urgency means we need to make them part of every decision made in

our society. For the labour movement, an essential ingredient for success is equity – ensuring that newcomer and racialized communities share in the career opportunities in a green economy. We are modelling that approach with Community Benefits for transit projects, but much more can and needs to be done.

In the U.K., unions negotiated a role for Environmental Representatives in thousands of workplaces. They help perform energy audits, promote recycling and waste reduction, suggesting ways to green

work processes. From hospitals to schools, factories to grocery stores – there are untapped opportunities to drive a green agenda at work.

Canadians returned from Paris with a renewed sense of optimism. As a society we face a crucial juncture and decision in our planetary existence; we must choose to work together as allies with one goal – a healthy, vibrant interdependent relationship with Earth and each other, where we ALL thrive.

By John Cartwright
Published in the Toronto Star,
January 31, 2016

Employer Exploits - Workers Suffer

One autumn evening in 2015, Mila Viernes showed up on Bay Street in downtown Toronto to start her second job of the day. Just like at her first job, she is a cleaner here too. Every weekday, between 5:00 and 10:00 p.m. she empties trash, clean floors and bathrooms so that office staff, lawyers, financiers and their visitors can enjoy a sanitary environment each day. But this day was different.

When Mila went to the security desk to get her access card for that evening, she is told by the guard on duty that she no longer works there anymore. What happened?

Mila had worked for multiple employers during the nine years she had been a cleaner at that location. Not unusual in downtown Toronto where independent contractors bid on and flip cleaning contracts regularly. The winning contractor would in turn hire sub-contractors who then classify their employees as independent contractors. "I work for MCC, MCC works for Impact . IMPACT got their contract from DREAM REIT" Mila explains.

Mila never saw a pay raise for 9 years. On the contrary, she would get a pay cut each time a new company took over operations. From about \$1000 a month, her salary went down to a little bit over \$600 before Empora got the last contract. "They cut our money, but not the workload" she says, pointing out that she would also pay for her own cleaning materials



"They cut our money, but not the workload" she says, pointing out that she would also pay for her own cleaning supplies sometimes.

sometimes. She was told that she can leave if she's not happy; "there many people out there who would be happy to take your spot" her employer would say.

So when Empora won the bid this time, a pay cut was the worst case scenario Mila was expecting.

She was not ready to find out that she and her co-workers no longer had a job. "The salary from my first job is for my mortgage payment. My cleaning job used to pay my bills" says the single mother of two, now struggling to make

ends meet.

Mila's story is not unique. Under the current employment standards in Ontario, employers and businesses have zero obligations towards the workforce they leave out in the cold in a constant race to the bottom. What ensues is a class of cleaners, security guards, airport staff, food service and homecare workers whose livelihoods can be disrupted at the whim of the employer.

To see the video "Mila's Story" go to youtube.com/labourcouncil

As The Changing Workplaces Review

process continues, union members need to keep the pressure on the Ontario government to offer adequate protection for all workers in the province. Successor rights must be extended to all workers in the contract sector. The unfolding of a low wage economy doesn't only threaten the Milas of our society. Our failure to stand with the most vulnerable workers might soon undermine our own union standards.

ARE YOU IN PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT?

Want to be heard?
Call us on 416 441-3663 x223 or
email council@labourcouncil.ca

Who benefits from a higher minimum wage?

WHAT PEOPLE THINK

Teenager
Works part time after school
Lives with parents
Earning extra spending money



THE REALITY

Average age: **36 years old**
89% are not teens, they're 20 or older
37% are **40 or older**
56% are **women**
28% have children
57% work **full time**
On average, they earn **more than half** of their family's total income



What If...

The Ontario government actually wanted to fix the laws that govern work? They would listen to what Dr. Harry Arthurs said in his comprehensive review of the federal labour code:

“Labour standards should ensure that no matter how limited his or her bargaining power, no worker in the federal jurisdiction is offered, accepts or works under conditions that Canadians would not regard as “decent.” No worker should therefore receive a wage that is insufficient to live on; be deprived of the payment of wages or benefits to which they are entitled; be subject to coercion, discrimination, indignity or unwarranted danger in the workplace; or be required to work so many hours that he or she is effectively denied a personal or civic life.”

Join the DAY of ACTION Saturday April 15th

to show the Ontario politicians that we expect real change.

For locations go to www.15andfairness.org

Join the Facebook group “Fight for \$15 and Fairness Day of Action”

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO KEEP HYDRO PUBLIC

Recent revelations about behind-the-scenes moves to privatize Toronto Hydro have raised alarm about yet another threat to public power.

Wynne Liberals are trying to sell 60% of Hydro One to private owners. Defenders of public utilities are stepping up to save these strategic public assets. It is not too late to keep hydro public.

Privatization is a preferred corporate tool to transfer wealth and power from the people to the 1%.

Privatization is a preferred corporate tool to transfer wealth and power from the people to the 1%.

Hydro privatization is just one of many assaults on the public sector. Defenders of public health care, public education and other public services have been fighting off privatization for decades. Although polls consistently show that the vast majority of Ontarians oppose privatization, the private power lobby is relentless. Our immediate challenge is connecting the dots within communities, making politicians realize their responsibilities and personal impact if they choose to support privatization.

In 2003, Dalton McGuinty won the election by saying that he would not privatize hydro. He then went full steam ahead with

Conservative plans for privatization of ALL new hydro generation.

Kathleen Wynne barely mentioned hydro when she ran for office and is now a leading privatizer. Mayor John Tory ridiculed Karen Stintz's plans to privatize hydro and said he opposed a "fire sale" selloff.

We have won the battle for public opinion. We must now concentrate our efforts on putting on putting the heat on Liberal MPPs and remind City Councillors that the people of Toronto oppose the sale of our hydro utilities.

WHY KEEP HYDRO PUBLIC

Public power must be protected

Our economy, our society, our homes depends on electricity. It directly impacts quality of life.

Private power always costs more.

Despite the Liberals' assurances that regulation will protect the public from gouging on hydro rates,

history across Canada has shown that the cost of electricity will soar even higher. Private power interests have decades of experience overcoming "regulated" barriers to achieve extensive profits.

Special interests that convinced Premier Wynne to ditch her value system and embrace hydro privatization will have no challenges achieving higher prices for privatized electricity.

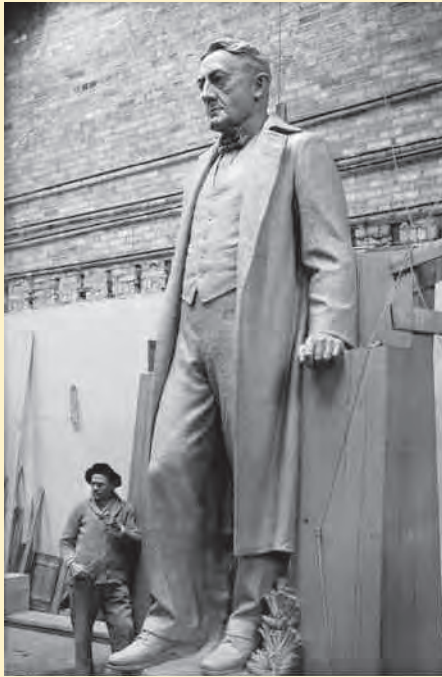
Privatization silences climate change fight

Ontario needs public electrical utilities – with effective environmental programs that are not driven by the thirst for profit. With privatization, climate change mitigation initiatives will encounter the profit focusses goals.

Privatization hurts working people

Ever higher electricity prices are especially bad news for people on fixed incomes and people who are precariously employed. Measures to reduce this impact are window dressing and create demeaning

Privatization Threat—Going Back a Century



Sculptor Emanuel Hahn with his memorial statue of Sir Adam Beck, February 2, 1934

Municipal governments across Ontario, led by London Mayor and MPP Sir Adam Beck, led the fight to defeat the early private electricity robber barons. In a short time private electricity systems had created

fabulous wealth for a select few. - Toronto's Casa Loma was home to of one of them. Wealthy private power owners fought Beck tooth and nail. American journalists speculated that he might have ties to the Russian revolution!

The efforts of Beck and others were successful and led to the creation of Ontario's electricity system. It was one of the first public electric utilities in the world.

When public power first reached cities and towns across Ontario, celebrations and parades were held to mark the arrival of electricity.

The heart of the system was a provincial utility, Ontario Hydro. It generated electricity and transmitted it to the municipal utilities.

Municipal hydro utilities were established to ensure municipal control and quality local service. Putting local electricity distribution under municipal control was also a measure to keep hydro in public

hands.

Sir Adam Beck was truly a visionary. He recognized the importance of public ownership in the very early days of electric power. He established the policy of "Power at cost", believing that power generated from Niagara Falls should be provided to Ontario municipalities at cost.

Beck was less successful with his other great vision: In the early years of the last century, Beck tried to establish an electric passenger rail network linking Ontario cities and towns!

On his death bed, Sir Adam Beck is reported to have said, "I wish I could have lived long enough to build a band of iron around hydro to keep it safe from the politicians."

We have a great responsibility to protect this public asset and to pass it on to future generations.

Rob Fairley is Director of Strategic Services with Labour Council

hurdles to be jumped for a basic life necessity, electricity.

Higher hydro bills are huge burden on public sector

Hospitals, school boards and other public institutions already devote a significant portion of their budgets to hydro bills. Privatization would increase this cost, diverting precious funds

away from public services, and into private pockets. Yet one more way of re-directing taxpayer funds into private coffers.

Hydro privatization is a one-time, dead-end source of funding

Premier Wynne says privatization will fund transit expansion. But bridges, buses and

railways have a limited lifespan. When repairs and replacement are required, what will the Premier suggest? Sell more public assets until there is nothing left?

A flash in the pan funding that buys a thimble full of services does not create equality and equitable quality of life for working families for generations to

come. To sell a Public asset is like selling the roof to pay for new flooring. A plan that lacks vision and does NOT put the wellbeing of Ontario Families first.

The Ontario would lose hundreds of millions of dollars in hydro revenues – forever. A shameless betrayal of future generations.

Let's defeat the privatization sellout!
Together we can keep Hydro public!

Targetting Labour Victories for 2016

2016 can be a year of important victories for Canada's labour movement. In this interview he speaks to four key goals for the new year: workplace justice, climate action, equity, and union renewal.



Q: *Canadians seem to be feeling optimistic about the overall direction of the country as the New Year begins. What do you see happening this year?*

A: I think this is a year with huge potential if our movement decides to act boldly and seize the opportunities in front of us. The most important is the once-in-a-generation chance to make serious reforms to the laws that govern work -- the Employment Standards Act and Ontario Labour Relations Act. There is a big conversation happening about income inequality and increase in precarious work. We need to fix the laws to turn that around. People's incomes and working conditions are tied to how strong unions are in each sector, and in union density in society as a whole.

Q: *Most union members never "joined a union"; they got a job at a unionized workplace. How can union density become important to rank and file members?*

A: This calls for an immense effort on our part to educate union members about the source of their workplace standards. It's more than just repeating the fact that the advantage is more than \$5 per hour over non-union workers. There is a deeper narrative required about where bargaining power comes from. It is possible to do -- the building trades took this on 25 years ago and I saw a huge change in outlook of activists, leaders, and staff as a result.

Q: *So the main focus is on making it easier to organize with card-check certification?*

A: That is certainly a major goal. After the Harris government stripped away card-check, organizing rates fell dramatically. Workers were overwhelmed with a climate of fear in the days leading up to a workplace vote. A union card is a legal document that should be respected, but that is only one part of the solution. Successor rights for contract workers would put an end to contract flipping in the service sector where people lost their jobs and have to start at the bottom again. Employment standards should be significantly updated and enforced to tackle the exploitation that is so prevalent in the jobs young people get today. There are many problems and a wide variety of remedies available.

Q: *You attended the COP21 Climate Change summit in Paris in December, in a delegation led by CLC President Hassan Yussuff. What can we expect to come out of that?*

A: The world's leaders came together and reached a remarkable consensus on the urgency of climate change -- 195 countries signed the final agreement. Canada played an important role, and our political leaders all pledged to come home and bring in aggressive measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Labour has a huge role to play in

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building a sustainable green economy with good jobs for all. We can look at every sector of the economy and lay out a plan. We will be partnering with environmental and social justice groups to frame our vision that includes equity and just transition. I am proud of the work Labour Council has done through the Toronto Community Benefits Agreement for the Eglinton Crosstown transit project. Early this year, Labour Council will work to develop a “Greenprint for Greater Toronto” to build a more environmentally sustainable city.

Q: *What else will you be focusing on?*

A: Two things that are very closely related. Labour Council adopted a strong equity agenda many years ago and our work has been guided by that ever since. But across the movement there is much to be done. In the fall of 2014 we published a Leaders Guide to Equity to help affiliates undertake deep work on equity. I will be meeting with every union leader this year and asking them to engage in the hard

work necessary to see more diversity in our ranks at every level.

The second part is union renewal. The fight we undertook to stop Tim Hudak from bringing so-called “right to work” laws to Ontario was crucial. It revealed the gap that existed between organizations and their members, and started a process to re-engage members on why their union is important both in the workplace and society. We need a consistent effort to engage in a two-way conversation with members, to be more strategic in our campaigns, and train leaders and staff to operate differently.

We must remember the fact that half of Toronto’s working class was born outside of Canada. For many, English is not their first language, and they don’t always feel welcome in the settings we have created. So we have to create new ways of outreaching. One approach has been the creation of Diverse Workers Networks led by union activists from different communities -- Chinese, Filipino,

Tamil, Somali and Ethiopian/Eritrean. Another is the interest of young workers in creating a space to engage their peers. These things give me great hope for the future.

Q: *Union renewal has been a subject of many studies in recent years. How realistic is it?*

A: It may not be easy, but it is absolutely necessary. New challenges will throw up unique solutions to organizing and collective representation. But workers need to be in motion in order to discover new forms of power. Every leader needs to feel the sense of urgency to rebuild the power of Canada’s labour movement. Seven generations ago -- in 1871 -- workers came together to create a collective voice in Toronto to bargain a better deal with those who ruled society. I am confident that we can continue that legacy of building labour power in Canada’s largest urban centre in the years to come.



Diverse Workers Networks



Join the Chinese Workers Network
Call Minerva Hui 416-441-3663 x225
mhui@labourcouncil.ca



Join the Somali Workers Network
Call Faduma Awow Mohamed 416-445-5819 x24
fmohamed@labourcommunityservices.ca



Join the Ethiopian/Eritrean Workers Network
Call Najib Soufian 416-445-5819 x26
nsoufian@labourcommunityservices.ca

THIS POSTCARD WANTS TO MEET
YOUR LOCAL'S NOTICE BOARD... CAN YOU HELP?



YOU ARE INVITED!

1st Filipino Workers Network Conference

Uniting Filipino Workers towards a strong and effective labour unions!

Saturday, April 9, 2016
10am - 4:30pm
25 Cecil Street, Toronto
Register Soon! Limited Space!
Union Member \$30
Community \$25
visit filipinoworkers.org
Find us on Facebook or
call Paulina 416-320-8703



Keynote Speaker:

Maria Castaneda
Vice President of 2.1 million
member Service Employees
International Union
www.1199seiu.org

Bromley L. Armstrong Award

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council has established this prestigious award in 2004 to commemorate the courage, dedication and outstanding service of Bromley L. Armstrong to the Labour and Human Rights Movement in Canada. This award is presented to a member of the affiliated Locals of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council who has demonstrated excellence in some area of Labour Equity and Human Rights.

Selection Criteria

- ✓ A person who has made a true contribution to labour equity and human rights.
- ✓ A person who exemplifies the spirit, dedication and ideas of the labour movement.
- ✓ Has organized and educate members around Human Rights and Equity Issues.
- ✓ Has helped confront human rights violations
- ✓ Provided assistance and support for members who experience harassment and discrimination.
- ✓ Promoted equity within their union and in the labour movement.
- ✓ Ensuring that the employer and the union comply with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code
- ✓ Has demonstrated leadership in the labour movement and the community.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from labourcouncil.ca

Completed forms should be sent by April 6th, 2016 to:

Labour Council Equity Committee
15 Gervais Drive, #407
Toronto, ON M3C 1Y8
or e-mailed to council@labourcouncil.ca

RETIREMENT – SECURITY FOR ALL

What are we asking for?

The Canadian Labour Congress, representing 3.3 million union members, has been campaigning for retirement security for all Canadians. We are asking the federal government to double the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) retirement benefit for Canadians so that it replaces 50% of a Canadian's pre-retirement employment earnings up to a maximum amount.

Today, the CPP retirement benefit replaces about 25% of a Canadian's average preretirement employment earnings. We are calling on the government to phase in a universal expansion of the Canada Pension Plan that includes every working Canadian, including those who are self-employed.

The CPP is not just the main way in which most workers save for retirement out of their employment earnings. It is the only way that millions of Canadian workers put aside a portion of their wages for retirement. CPP benefits offer secure, predictable and protected against inflation retirement income -- for virtually all working Canadians.

The CPP is a cornerstone of retirement income

The Canadian Pension Plan provides a monthly benefit to retired Canadians and nearly everyone who works in Canada and their employers are required to contribute to it. Currently, the maximum retirement benefits one can receive from the CPP is \$1,092.50 per month. On average, Canadian retirees receive \$640 a month.

The CPP is portable. It follows workers anywhere in Canada, no matter how many times they change jobs.

The CPP is cost-effective. Without the excessive management fees found in other retirement savings plans, the CPP keeps up with the cost of living (it is indexed to inflation) and pays out benefits for life. Canadians will not run the risk of outliving their CPP pension benefits.

The CPP is safe. The CPP is protected against the ups and downs of the stock markets, which makes it a secure and predictable source of retirement income.

The CPP is sustainable. The Chief Actuary of Canada, who monitors and reports on the health of the CPP, indicated in his last report that the CPP is well on track to pay benefits, as promised, for the next 75 years.

.....
Canadianlabour.ca

Give A Voice, Find A Voice



For most of her life, Linda Bowen was convinced that nobody else around her could sympathize with her problems – that she would have to deal with things alone. *So she told no one.*

All of that changed when, four years ago, she arrived in the union classroom for an evening training session after spotting a poster in her workplace. Over the ten weeks that followed, Linda was surprised to find that she was hearing her own struggles echoed in the stories of the other participants.

“It was a personal awakening,” she describes. “As I listened to the others talk about their struggles, I began to realize that it wasn’t just me facing these issues. I wasn’t alone.”

Linda had spent over thirty years working at various financial institutions while raising her now-adult son. “I was not a very talkative person,” she recalls. “I was shy, and I stayed within my personal circles of friends.”

Since graduating from all three levels of the Labour Community Advocate Training programme, Linda has been able to transform her role within her friends to that of an advisor. “My friends often call me up to ask me for advice now,” she smiles.

A large part of the programme’s impact, she explains, depends on the attendees. Since the participants in the programme come from a wide variety of unions across Toronto, she was able to hear from people that she would normally never meet. “It’s a good way to enrich your thinking on how others with very different lives deal with their own issues – problems and solutions that you never would have thought of on your own.”

Each session of the ten-week course covers a different topic – like addiction, unemployment, divorce, and other issues that face regular working people – and features an expert guest speaker with experience in the field.

Linda no longer feels powerless to help when friends and co-workers talk to her about their problems.

“Now that I have the right tools, I can go beyond listening. I can support them and offer them help, too.”

When co-workers found themselves stressed during

labour grievances or family troubles, Linda is confident that she has the right information to offer them. And in the case of an addiction struggle, Linda was able to point her co-worker toward resources in Toronto that helped them get back on track.

“These struggles wouldn’t have to get this far if supervisors had the right training,” Linda believes. “That’s why I think a programme like the LCAT should be mandatory as part of leadership training.”

In four years, Linda’s “awakening” has transformed her: she has become an advocate of change within her own circles, rather than waiting for change to come.

Most importantly, explains Linda, “The programme encourages you to find time to take care of yourself. Not a lot of people remember to do that when they’re working.”

.....
Labour Community Advocate
Program call Najib 416 445
5819 x26 or nsoufian@
labourcommunityservices.ca

Meet Kiruthiha Kulendiren ... Labour Council’s Communications Coordinator



Kiruthiha Kulendiren is joining Labour Council in the position of Communications and Administration Coordinator. She has been a community advocate and activist for the past 20 years in Canada, working on issues of poverty, human rights and the environment. She has lived and worked in Asia, Africa and Europe both within the corporate and non-profit sectors and has worked with all three levels of governments in Canada. With degrees in Engineering and Astrophysics and experience in Social Service and Environmental Policy sectors, Kiruthiha believes in being the champion for local voices and ideas, and a groundbreaker for healthy communities. In 2014, Kiruthiha ran for Mississauga City Councillor. At home, Kiruthiha is a mom of two children and her partner is an OPSEU activist.
kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca 416 441 3663 x221

Connecting Communities with Jobs & Training

After three years of organizing, the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) is expecting to see residents from some of Toronto's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas trained to work on the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit line later this year.



Work is expected to begin on the western end of the 19km line this spring. Construction along Eglinton for the past few years has been related to digging the tunnels for the line and moving utilities. Last July Metrolinx awarded the multi-billion dollar contract to Crosslinx Transit Solutions, a consortium that includes Montreal based engineering firm SNC Lavalin and Toronto construction firms EllisDon and Aecon.

Labour Council affiliated projects, Labour Community Services and the Labour Education Centre have been instrumental in building the TCBN, which has over 40 member community, labour and workforce development organizations. Last July the TCBN held nine resident engagement meetings from Weston Road to Scarborough for residents that are interested in joining building trade unions as apprentices and to work on the line. Work has been funded by the Metcalf and Atkinson Foundations, the United Way and by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. It is hoped that some 6-800 apprentices will work on the line over 5 years of construction of a construction force of up to 3,000 workers.

An objective of the TCBN is to diversify the make-up of the construction workforce on the

line. Many of the participants in the TCBN engagement meetings are from the Somali, Filipino South Asian and other communities that are under-represented in the industry. All are expected to enter the training centre of the relevant Building Trade training centre.

Co-ordination of the recruitment effort is done through the Community Benefit Working Group composed of Metrolinx, CTS, the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, and the TCBN. Work is expected to be complete by the end of 2021.

The TCBN has also ensured that internationally trained professionals are finding work with CTS, and that social enterprises are receiving contracts to provide services.

Metrolinx is expected to release a Request for Proposals to build a second, shorter LRT line along Finch West in the next few weeks. It will run from the soon to be opened (2018) TTC subway stop at Keele and Finch to Humber College. Work on the Finch line is expected to start in 2017, the TCBN has begun to work with Finch communities for a similar community benefits program.

More information about the Toronto Community Benefits Network available from www.communitybenefits.ca

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NO TO RACISM & ISLAMOPHOBIA | BLACK LIVES MATTER
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