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FAIRNESS – THAT’S WHY WE HAVE A COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

The doors opened to reveal a thousand watt smile. The kind that makes you forget being stuck in traffic and nearly falling in slushy ice. Glona (Justine) Knight is a SEIU member for the past 15 years. SEIU Healthcare is a union of more than 55,000 frontline healthcare workers whose members work in retirement and nursing homes, homecare and community services, and hospitals throughout Ontario.



Her smile masks much, as I was soon to find out. An immigrant from Philippines, Glona arrived in Ontario on September 13, 2000, a significant date etched in her memory for having travelled across oceans after 9/11. She carried with her a vast array of skills; food service, customer service, sales, housekeeper, retail. All this whilst raising three children. Her personality exudes empathy and care, perfect for her new job in Canada as a housekeeper at a Peel Long-term Care facility. Her personal mantra of “stay positive, work with patience and always smile” kept her strong as each day brought a new challenge.

Glona’s work ethic was shaped by her grandmother, a spritely woman

of never ending energy. Grandmother would wake up each day at 3am to start work on the farm, feeding chickens, watering banana trees, weeding vegetable fields and raising four young girls with love and care. Glona and her three sisters grew up learning the value of hard work.

The smile dims a little as Glona speaks of her grandmother. The strength of care with focus is a skill that Glona now carries not just into her job but into her role as a steward in her bargaining unit. Glona says she became a steward because she decided to say no to feeling “used and abused”. Powerful words.

Burdened constantly with too much work, frequently having to work late, missing lunch, feeling taken for granted and much more, Glona’s chance meeting with an SEIU organizer resulted in her embarking on a dedicated journey of learning. She signed up for the SEIU Leadership Academy, read all the material the organizer gave her and soon stepped up into the role of steward. “I am thankful to SEIU for training me and for the community they gave me. I was so scared when I became a steward, I was shivering. I desperately wanted to represent the members well.”

Ask Glona if she sees herself as a leader and she confidently says “Yes, I am. The respect I get means I get to share information and knowledge to help people standup for their rights.”

A leader who leads from behind, she is one of two stewards in a 123 member bargaining unit. Her confidence mobilizes her to pull together teams to take on door to door canvassing of members, to educate one on one the importance of public healthcare and workers health and safety.

“There was a time when I did whatever my boss said, even if it wasn’t my job and now I have permanent shoulder pain because of it. I don’t want anyone else to go through that.”

Glona looks back on her 15 years in healthcare and see herself as being stronger, more confident now, and she is thankful to the SEIU leadership program for this. She says she was happy then but so much happier now. Her message to workers is simple and clear as her smile.

“All I want is fairness, that’s why we have a collective agreement. Don’t be afraid to stand up because no one else will do it for you.”

Glona is making sure her members are thriving with knowledge about health, safety and workers’ rights – making her grandmother proud.

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Interview by Kiruthiha Kulendiren –
Toronto & York Region Labour Council

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Canadian Labour and the Next Decade

This May thousands of delegates gather for the Canadian Labour Congress Convention in Toronto. Over the course of one week, leaders of the 3.3 million strong movement will be grappling with the big challenges ahead for labour. There are four key themes being covered by the convention, and they reflect the issues that will most impact on working families in the coming decade.

#Working for a Fair Future – from the effects of disruptive technologies to Trump's threat of trade wars, the future of work is getting more uncertain. How does labour tackle the growth of precarious jobs? How do we resist the massive onslaught of outsourcing a privatization? These are tough questions with no easy answers. But the Good Jobs for All Declaration from back in 2008 lays out a vision that is still valid today.

#Equity for a Fair Future – In greater Toronto, half of us were born outside of Canada and half of us are people of colour. How does our movement embrace equity, welcome workers from newcomer communities, and do our part to tackle racism and Islamophobia. Labour Council has developed an approach called "Step Up and Speak Out" that is featured in the Labour Action centrespread.

#Green Jobs for a Fair Future – The Green Economy Network, an alliance of union and environmental organizations, projects that we could create a million green jobs with the right investments in transit, energy and buildings. Labour Council's Greenprint shows how that approach could transform every sector of the GTA economy. Workplace Environmental Reps will be a vital part of building this future. You can read about one union's experience with WER's in the workplace on page 12.

#Organizing for a Fair Future – The last edition of Labour Action featured a breakdown of the greater Toronto economy – over 3 million workers but a unionization rate of only 25%. That means three out of four people go to work without the protection or benefits of a union contract. We can't wait till our density slips to the near

single digit level in the U.S. – we have to more organize tens of thousands of unrepresented workers every year. Labour Council is experimenting with a unique outreach to newcomer communities, but far more needs to be done. Get inspired by the stories in this Labour Action about the difference unions make to people's lives, and urge your union to devote more resources to organizing!

And finally, an important anniversary takes place this year – 25 years since the Westray mining disaster in Nova Scotia. Thank you to the Steelworkers Union for relentlessly pursuing the need for laws to hold corporate directors responsible for workplace deaths. In Toronto, the monument to fallen Italian-Canadian workers unveiled at last year's Day of Mourning has now grown to over 1500 names. A sober reminder that while we mourn for the dead, we have to keep fighting like hell for the living.

John Cartwright – President for Toronto & York Region Labour Council

Resources for Unions

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council, founded in 1871, is the largest labour council in Canada. We support the work of our affiliates and their members in many ways – from strike support to issue campaigns and political bargaining.

We also offer a toolbox of resources for local unions – material that is designed to make it easier to take on tough issues and succeed in building more powerful unions. On the front cover you can see some of the publications that can be downloaded from our website, where you will find other useful material as well.

labourcouncil.ca/materials.html

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Good Jobs for All Declaration

Adopted by one thousand participants at the Good Jobs for All Summit in 2008, this Declaration still stands as one of the clearest summaries of what a good jobs economy should look like.

TORONTO – A PLACE OF HOPE AND CHALLENGE

Since the First Nations gave Toronto the name “a gathering place” the city and region have been the destination of choice for generations of immigrants and refugees, who come with their skills and dreams of making a better life for themselves and their families. While many found those dreams fulfilled, opportunity and prosperity were never fully shared.

Many factors contributed to our quality of life: active government engagement; a strong industrial base with middle income union jobs; a well-funded education system; cohesive public services and social programs; the struggles of women, immigrants and racialized communities for equality; the dedication of community activists for social justice; and a deep desire for environmental sustainability. However, the growth of inequality and environmental degradation challenges us all.

A SHARED VISION

We are living in a special moment in history. The dominant economic model of recent years is leaving many behind. We know from real experience that other ways are possible, even in a period of rapid globalization. **Together we can build an economy with good jobs for all.** Working people know those factors that are critical in providing good jobs:

- The right for every worker to be treated with respect and dignity

- The ability to have full-time, stable employment
- The right for everyone to have a living wage
- The need to have work that is safe and healthy
- The enforcement of labour rights and standards in all forms of work
- The right to have a collective voice at work through unionization
- The investment in public education and life long learning
- The recognition of diverse qualifications, skills, learning and creativity
- The provision of benefits for medical, dental, vision and disability needs
- The equitable access to work, extended training and advancement
- The opportunity to participate in a greener economy
- The ability to retire with dignity

GOOD JOBS FOR ALL

Decent work is central to our fulfilment and well-being. Decent work provides people with a livelihood, an identity and a sense of real belonging to the community. We must ensure there are good jobs for everyone, today and for the next generation. We reject policies which undermine and erode decent work.

WITH THIS DECLARATION, WE CALL ON PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE:

1. To demand an economy with good jobs for all.
2. To build social solidarity in our communities, our workplaces, our organizations and public institutions.
3. To insist on public policies from all orders of government that support the goals of a just, equitable and inclusive society.
4. To require all with power in our society to exercise that power for the common good.
5. To ensure that economic activities are sustainable, enabling future generations to meet their needs while living in harmony with our planet and with each other.

Message to Ontario - Make It Fair!

The Ontario government is again delaying the outcome of the Changing Workplace Review, with the report due some time in May and legislation not expected until the fall session of Queen's Park. The Ontario Federation of Labour held a media conference at the end of April demanding immediate action to fix labour law and employment standards. Meanwhile, the Make it Fair campaign is circulating thousands of petition cards in workplaces across the province. If you haven't signed one yet, ask your union. Keep up to date on the campaign by going to makeitfair.ca

FOOD SERVICE WORKER VICTORIES

UNITEHERE Local 75 members won ground-breaking victories this spring by striking at York University and U of T Scarborough campus. At both locations, wages of employees of multinational giant Aramark will leap to at least \$15 an hour within a year. In addition, full- and part-time workers have won immediate free dental coverage.



UNITEHERE LOCAL 75 workers celebrate historic strike win at UTSC 7 York

“Our amazing victory shows that a \$15/hour wage is absolutely possible,” says Jemilie Adajar, a food service supervisor working for Aramark at UTSC. “We work hard to look after our customers, the students, faculty, staff and visitors at UTSC. We deserve to make enough to support ourselves and our families, and we have shown what is possible when workers organize together to fight for what we deserve.”

“Our hope is that these landmark settlements pave the way for all sub-contracted workers working at anchor institutions to get to \$15/hour,” said Lis Pimentel, President of UNITE HERE Local 75. “None of this could have happened without the support and solidarity of a huge network of students, faculty, staff, community members, elected leaders and labour allies.”

Skilled Trades-Building the Foundation for the Canadian Dream

“I fell in love with the trades in general and it gave me a career” says Quoc Truong a 30-year-old recent graduate of the Central Ontario Building Trades Hammer Head program. Truong attributes his transition from dead end jobs to now having a solid career to his involvement in the program.



The Hammer Head Program is an employment based training program within the construction industry offering apprenticeship

career opportunities to the youth of under-resourced neighbourhoods.

Truong was 26 years old and had dropped out of both college and university before being introduced to the program by his brother.

“I took a leap of faith and I went through the program” says Truong. “There’s a lot that I needed to learn regarding being punctual, the way I dressed, the way I talked, and being accountable.”

Truong describes being skeptical while going through the program but the skepticism dissipating after graduation. He was able to visit nearly a dozen trade training centers which included electrical, HVAC, plumbing, welding and more before choosing to become a Steamfitter. His training included both hands on and in class training. The hands-on portion consists of working on major

jobsites which included Molson Coors, Ford Canada, Ripley’s Aquarium and more. That involved learning the different processes for connecting and installing the various pipes throughout the buildings. Steamfitters install and repair heating, ventilation, refrigeration, air-condition systems and more. Steamfitters serve five years of apprenticeship over 9000 hours, with in class training and 24 hours a year of night school. The in-class training took place at the UA Local 46 training center using top of the line equipment for eight weeks at a time. He completed basic, intermediate and advance levels of in class training with a written exam at the end of each level.

“When I started working in construction and became a Steamfitter” says Truong. “I became part of a huge family. My family at Local 46 is part of 8000 Sisters and Brothers. I went from dead end jobs to dead end jobs and now I actually have a career”. Truong describes that career as having a pension, benefits, good pay and a good safety record.

The safety training includes a forklift ticket, working at heights training,

CPR, working in confined space training and more. Truong believes that through Hammer Heads he was put into situations to succeed as an apprentice. At the time of writing this article Truong has written his exam to become a licenced Steamfitter, is awaiting the results and is excited about the opportunities that will come because of being licenced. He never thought that being a kid from Regent Park meant he could retire someday and the dream of retiring with a pension could now be his dream as well.

When asked what advice he would have for those seeking to enter the construction trades Truong spoke about the importance of knowing what you want to do and being serious about doing it. He went on to highlight “you must work hard and give it your all to achieve success in the construction industry. I’m proud because when I look back I know that I am making a difference”.

Quoc Truong is the Co-Chair of the Youth Advisory Committee of the Hammer Heads Program. Interview by Mark Brown, Co-Chair of Labour Council Equity Committee

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"WE OWN IT – LET'S KEEP IT"

Strong public services are the foundation of a decent society. Public services are, by their very definition, open to all members of the public and therefore of benefit to all members of the public. In the 150 years since Canadian Confederation, working people have struggled to establish programs and services that are universal, affordable, and accessible by people from all walks of life and all income levels.

After years of price gouging by private monopolies, the people of Ontario created a public electricity system and Toronto's first Black City Councillor William Hubbard led the fight to establish Toronto Hydro. A public referendum supported the Toronto Transit Commission replacing private streetcars, a public health office was established, water and sewage treatment systems developed, and public schools expanded.

After the Second World War we won public healthcare and pensions, built social housing, founded a community college system, expanded universities and social services, built airports and highways. Today's public sector includes everything from liquor stores to childcare centres.

On the other hand management and oversight of privatized services are, by their very definition, private and therefore of benefit primarily to investors. There is ample evidence that privatized public services provide lower quality services to fewer members of the public. There is also ample evidence that privatized public services cost more because of their need to generate profit for wealthy investors.

Proponents of privatizing public services have a consistent track record of breaking promises to maintain or even improve quality while reducing costs. From the billion pound fiasco of the London Underground to the sewage system in Hamilton, to the gouging of commuters by Highway 407, privatization costs more and delivers less.

Despite the immense pressure by global capital to gain control of public assets and services, a growing number of communities around the world are reaping significant benefit by insourcing services that had been previously privatized or outsourced. In Germany there is widespread "re-municipalization" of energy services in order to both save money and access a key lever for environmental achievements. In Toronto we have successfully resisted the plan of Mayor Tory to sell off Toronto Hydro and Parking Authority and contract out solid waste collection. At the federal level, CUPW has led the fight against privatizing Canada Post and is campaigning for the re-establishment of public banking.



We need to focus on shifting public opinion against privatization and encouraging more communities to call a moratorium on future privatizations and outsourcing. It's time to go on the offensive to realize the significant benefits of recapturing services and assets that should belong to the people.

The Labour Council will:

1. Continue to work diligently with affiliates, community partners and the NDP to protect all public services and assets owned by the Canadian people.
2. Campaign to restore public ownership of all services or assets that have been privatized.
3. Endorse OPSEU's We Own It campaign and CUPE's Toronto Can Do Better campaign.

"Step Up and Speak Out"

Earlier this year, we all mourned the hate-motivated deaths of six Canadian men in Quebec City. Labour Council pledged to respond to this tragedy by building powerful movements to challenge Islamophobia and all forms of discrimination. Recognizing the immense challenge ahead, we worked with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to mark International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD) on March 21st. That night, Council Chambers at Toronto City Hall was packed with people demanding authorities do more to stop racism and Islamophobia, a first step in taking action.

Sowing the seeds of xenophobia is not new – it is part of a long history of hatred and division in this country. From our treatment of Indigenous peoples, to anti-semitism and anti-black racism, to today's Islamophobia, the ongoing chronicle of displacement, turning away, and discriminating against group after group is as much Canada's story as are other themes this country celebrates on its 150-plus anniversary.

Labour has often stood in solidarity with those who are oppressed, sometimes voluntarily and other times in response to pressure. In 1947 the Labour Council with the strength of its Jewish and black members created the Toronto Joint Labour Committee on Human Rights to combat anti-semitism and racism. Carrying on attempts by labour to learn about and challenge racism within the movement as well as in society, the OFL led a major public campaign in the 1980s entitled Racism Hurts Everyone. These fight backs had great impact in their day.

If left unchallenged, racist rhetoric and actions can stir up anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and anti-Indigenous sentiment. In times of economic downturn and diminishing opportunity, the seeds of division are fertilized by the same sections of the corporate elite who seek to divide working people. We have seen how right-wing populism can take hold, especially when people are frustrated with economic injustice. History shows us that at its extreme, such populism can be incredibly destructive. Today, challenging this situation is more important than ever for working people.

As CLC leader Hassan Yussuff said to the IDERD assembly on March 21st, "Our country has a racist past but doesn't have to have a racist future." To counter the rise in intolerance and xenophobia, participants at the Toronto event endorsed five themes for action:

Step up and Speak Out– Challenge Islamophobia anywhere it appears. Call on the federal government to declare January 29th as National Day



of Remembrance and Action Against Islamophobia. Ask every public institution to develop a plan to counter all forms of bigotry, particularly anti-Black racism. Support the Charter for Inclusive Communities.

Shut down hate– Use every means possible to limit the reach of hate-spreading media outlets such as Rebel Media. Demand full prosecution of hate crimes by police services across the country.

Challenge the Conservative Party– Demand that those with financial and political influence in the Conservative Party act decisively to turn their party away from the politics of division and intolerance.

Challenge Corporate Canada– From the Board of Trade, the Council of Chief Executives, to the Mayor of Toronto, those with the most power in society must take a firm stand against discrimination and sever alliances with anyone who promotes intolerance or xenophobia.



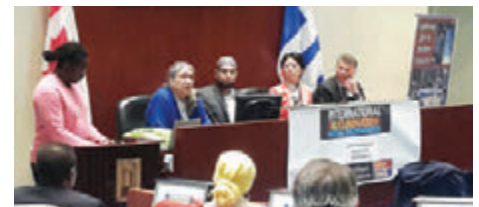
Build a sustainable economy with good jobs - for all instead of austerity. Recognize that right-wing populism thrives on people's frustration with economic injustice.

Labour Council is encouraged by both the number of participants at the event and the mandate they gave us to challenge xenophobia, hate and extremism in all its forms. A new movement towards inclusion including supporting the Truth and Reconciliation process with Indigenous communities has been kick-started. While we may point fingers at the hateful seeds that were watered and fertilized by the recent Trump election, we can and must take responsibility for action closer to home.

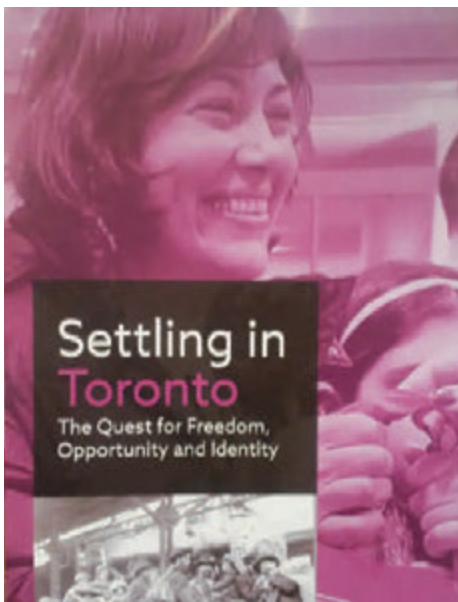
The Labour Council will:

- Endorse the five IDERD themes for action.

- Work in partnership with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations to organize further community meetings in York Region, Etobicoke and Scarborough, as well as other meetings as appropriate, giving a voice to those communities in shaping actions that will challenge hatred and division.
- Work with affiliates to create "flying squads," rapid response teams that can peacefully counter organized expressions of hate on short notice.
- Look for opportunities to partner with civil society, employers and governments to increase awareness and support of the need for equity.
- Work with affiliates to build an anti-racism movement that will challenge hatred at every level.



The Irish and the Fever Sheds



Settling in Toronto exhibit at the St. Lawrence Market Gallery

Conservative politicians are trying to stir up anxiety over the handful of refugees crossing the border from the U.S. in recent months. It's not the first time Canada is dealing with refugees – from the Vietnamese boat people to the Tamils fleeing violence in Sri Lanka, Toronto has seen huge numbers of desperate families arrive seeking shelter.

The biggest ever influx of refugees was in 1847. Toronto had a population of only 20,000, but in one year alone over 38,000 strangers arrived at our shore. They spoke a different dialect, had a different religion, huge families, and were rumoured to be prone to violence. They were the Irish - fleeing disease, poverty, and the potato famine that devastated their homeland.

Some were welcomed, but many were met with distrust and suspicion. It is recorded that 863 Irish immigrants died of typhus in the fever sheds erected by the Toronto Board of Health at the northwest corner of King and John Streets. Survivors were sent to the Convalescent Home at the corner of Bathurst and Front. Most of the dead were buried beside St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church at Queen and Power St.

Despite the overwhelming number of newcomers, Toronto somehow survived and prospered. Our history is worth remembering when someone starts trying to stir animosity to the next wave of newcomers trying to find a better life by becoming our neighbours.

Investment in Our Communities to end Poverty

Liyu Guo is an activist who is passionate about social justice, our labour movement and the not for profit sector. Liyu immigrated to Canada from Beijing, China and made Toronto her home. As a union steward for OPSEU 594, Liyu understands the importance of solidarity between the labour movement and the community sector, because we achieve more when we do it together.



Liyu started her life in Canada experiencing cultural shock like many new immigrants who have chosen to call Canada home. She shifted careers from the private sector to the not for profit sector due to her educational experience in community services by working for one of the city's oldest and most vital social service organizations - Family Services Toronto (FST). The organization's roots go back to 1914 and the birth of the Neighbourhood Workers Association – an organization of concerned citizens who began to address the growing levels of poverty faced by many low-income workers and families. Today, FST's focus has shifted to counselling, social action and community building rather than relief, but the focus remains on providing innovative programs and services to individuals and families facing challenges as the result of mental health issues and/or socio-economic circumstances.

Liyu works for the social action department which coordinated a national campaign called Campaign

2000. Since its inception in 1991, Campaign 2000 has grown over the years to become a vibrant network of national, regional and local partner organizations that have come together with a commitment to working to end child and family poverty in Canada for good.

Liyu worked with Margaret Hancock, the executive director of FST to bring forth evidence based solutions to ending child and family poverty. The focus on research would not have been possible without the support of the United Way. As a founding member of the United Way, FST has partnered with UWT to provide social services and advocate for policies with the goal of eradicating poverty. As the organizational home for the Campaign 2000 national coalition of more than 120 organizations, FST works closely with labour partners across Canada to affect social policy on poverty issues. Liyu credits the partnership between the labour movement and the United Way for changes in policy-making. The United Way has the reputation of bringing all stakeholders together, all the resources to focus on the problem. The Labour movement provides support and thought leadership in building our movement for a better society.

The approach focused on research that brings analysis to policy tables, public forums and the streets by working with people with lived experience to have their voices heard is what

Hancock describes as one of the core functions of the important partnership between labour, the united way and the communities we serve. According to Margaret Hancock – “The Canada child benefit (CCB), which was introduced in July 2016 and replaced the Canada child tax benefit, is the best result of decades of work. C2000 proposed the policy years ago and we have advocated for it diligently ever since. “ The advocacy is supported by communities who organize through the diverse workers networks.

Liyu joined the Chinese Workers Network, the first such network nurtured by the Toronto & York Region Labour Council. Liyu got involved because she appreciates that many workers from diverse communities have limited or misinformed experiences with the labour movement. Her involvement as co-chair of the network has focused on educating members of the network of the benefits and importance of the labour movement.

Liyu's advice to our readers is simple – please get more involved with your Union especially through the diverse workers network, or join the wider Labour movement. We can only accomplish victories against poverty through collective action and it starts with your participation. More info at campaign2000.ca.

Interview by Walied Khogali,
Labour Community Services

"Sharing economy" work in the GTA

They are young and highly educated, but many "sharing economy" workers in the GTA are selling their services under precarious working conditions, according to a new survey released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. While most workers in this survey say they like what they do, the work has downsides: more than a third of survey respondents say the hours are unpredictable, it's hard to get enough work, they don't make enough money providing these services, and if they get sick they don't get paid.

"In other words, the 'sharing economy' looks a lot like traditional service sector jobs: precarious," says CCPA's Trish Hennessy. "The only major difference is the business model they're using to find work. They are turning to businesses that connect them with customers through online

platforms, or apps, to provide a wide range of on-demand services — cleaning, rides home, meal prep, food delivery — using their own skills and their own assets."

Among the survey's key findings:

- It's a small but significant part of the GTA's labour market: Environics Research conducted the online survey of 2,304 people in the GTA in late 2016. Among those respondents, nine per cent of survey respondents say they've worked in the "sharing economy"
- They're young, educated, and many are raising families: 90 per cent have post-secondary education, 71 per cent are under the age of 45, and 51 per cent have children under 18.
- It's not necessarily a short-term gig: 48 per cent have been selling

"sharing economy" services for more than a year.

- In a tough job market, it's a way to get by: 58 per cent say it makes up more than half of their personal income, 55 per cent say it's the only way to make a living right now, and 53 per cent say it's something to do until they can find something better.

"There is a strong appetite for better protections in this sector," says CCPA economist Sheila Block. "78 per cent of respondents see a need for more health and safety standards in this emerging line of work, 72 per cent support regulations for the businesses providing the platform for these service transactions, and 65 per cent say there should be worker protections."

policyalternatives.ca

25 years after Westray



Day of Mourning: every year on April 28th a ceremony is held in York Region and one in Toronto to mourn all those killed or injured through work

In the early morning of May 9, 1992, an explosion caused by a fatal buildup of methane gas and coal dust at the Westray Mine in Nova Scotia killed all 26 miners working underground.

- Justice K. Peter Richard, who led the public inquiry into the disaster, uncovered "a complex mosaic of actions, omissions, mistakes, incompetence, apathy, cynicism, stupidity, and neglect." Despite years of police investigations and public inquiry, no one was ultimately held responsible for the 26 miners' deaths.
- The United Steelworkers lobbied for years and won changes to the Criminal Code so that employers could be convicted of criminal negligence. But since the Westray Law was enacted in 2004, it has led to just a handful of criminal charges and

only one prison sentence—despite the thousands of workplace deaths and serious injuries that occur year after year.

- Not every workplace fatality is caused by employer negligence, but special training for Crown prosecutors, police, and health and safety officers will ensure every case is properly investigated for possible employer negligence. Union health and safety activists also play a key role.

Add your name to the petition asking the federal government to take steps now that will help ensure enforcement - go to RememberWestray.ca

Economic Opportunity and Climate Change

On a cold spring weekend, thirty UNIFOR Workplace Environment Representatives (WERs) gathered at an annual meeting in Port Elgin, to share, learn and improve on strategies to combat climate change. Just like any other stereotypical enviro gathering, reusable water bottles and minimal paper was evident but this group had a unique difference. These individuals all work in the automotive industry!

Each WER stands up to present their on-site innovations, lessons learnt and plans for the future. Never shying away from naming the challenges, each bluntly shares their frustrations, then they start to speak of their innovative approaches to problem solving.

Knowing that when money is saved management would engage, WERs from Brampton, Windsor, Oakville, Oshawa, Ingersoll and St. Catherine's, all present their climate actions as economic opportunities. Shying away from the usual enviro language of saving the planet, they presented precise evidence of energy saved from implementing LED lighting, of the impact of non-toxics on health and safety mandates, and the simple yet profoundly effective cost saving from the re-purpose and re-cycle of plastics, lubricants and packaging.

Debbie Valentine and Rick Hill, the WERs at the Chrysler Brampton plant work to a simple mantra "Enviro initiatives should be of benefit to the ENTIRE community not just workers." The Brampton plant has approximately 3,500 workers whose families are impacted by each and every environmental initiative - a responsibility not taken lightly by any of the WERs gathered at this conference.

The work of the WERs is supported by UNIFOR's educational department, whose courses are available to members on an annual basis. National environment rep Kelly Bondy puts it simply "The courses teach everyone how to become an activist! At work, at home, in the community; activism makes room for everybody." This philosophy is seen in the broad spectrum of environmentally focused courses from knowing household toxics to unpacking climate change and its acronyms. Empowering members with the building blocks of climate change also allows each worker to face personal



anxieties around reduction of fossil fuels. End producer responsibility is taken very seriously in the UNIFOR enviro curriculum and innovatively seen as an opportunity for job creation – a living example of Just Transition.

In Windsor, WERs Debby Grant and Scott Thomson explain that the transition to LED lighting alone is saving \$340,600/year! Now they are pushing to recycle scrap aluminum and have started coolant reclamation. The latter has a significant impact on the health and safety of workers, reducing eczema and slippages. The new filtration system if implemented across the plant will recycle oily mist from 120 CNCs – a huge impact to all the workers in the plant.

The Ford plant in Essex saw an opportunity in repurposing lint free wipers used on the shop floor, realizing a cost saving of \$79,000/year, while the Oakville assembly plant has successfully implemented lineside recycling to realize a cost savings of \$150,000/year. The Cami assembly in Ingersoll created a certified wildlife habitat while the

Oshawa assembly plant is increasing biodiversity by protecting precious pollinators and creating fish habitats.

Workplace Environmental Reps across southern Ontario see the opportunity to build a better world – a labour vision that workers historically share. Their tenacity, imagination and activism builds a better future for not just workers and their families but communities where the automotive plants are. The cost savings to the corporations offers significant evidence that Workplace Environmental Representatives are a must in all large workplaces if Climate Change is to be effectively addressed in Ontario. No amount of reports or research can equate to a determined worker, making the health of their team and community a daily priority. All that is needed now is the political will from all levels of government to mandate WERs across Ontario, and to support Unions as they educate and inform members to lead the greenprint for a sustainable Ontario.

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Interview by Kiruthiha Kulendiren,
Toronto & York Region Labour Council



Welcome Susan McMurray

Susan joins Labour Council as Executive Assistant after years of senior government and non-profit policy, consultation and equity experience. Before that, Susan worked in retail, clerical, manufacturing, agriculture and road construction sectors. An OPSEU steward and member of her local's equity committee in her early years working for the government, Susan has also been a member of IBEW, the former Ontario Liquor Boards Employees' Union, Steelworkers, and AMAPCEO. In chairing two community organizations, and previously as treasurer and secretary of others, her focus is on community and political engagement. As a child of the sixties, the struggle to make the world a better place is her guiding principle, while she also adheres to the motto: "if I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution!"



INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY - 2017



REALLY NAFTA?

The Canadian government holds up NAFTA as an example of how free trade deals are supposed to be good for us. NAFTA's supporters don't mention the inconvenient realities. Income inequality has worsened considerably in Canada, Mexico and the United States in the past 20 years. Manufacturing jobs have disappeared, leading to a greater economic dependence in Canada on raw resource exports (and in Mexico on punishingly low wages). NAFTA

also contained investment rules that stop us from requiring companies to process those resources before they export them.

The most anti-democratic legacy of NAFTA is its investment chapter (Chapter 11), which protects foreign corporations in Canada from all kinds of public policies that could get in the way of profits. There have been twenty investor lawsuits filed by U.S. firms under NAFTA, many of them challenging environmental policies

such as a ban on gasoline containing the suspected neurotoxin MMT. These lawsuits are heard in private by a three-person panel of paid arbitrators whose decisions are final and binding. It's the same issue at the core of CETA – the European deal that Trudeau supports. Let him know that Canada must stand up to Trump on NAFTA and fix it instead of making it worse.

Go to Canadians.org to send a message to the Prime Minister.

HEALING THE YORK REGION SCHOOL BOARD

At the start of the year, as public controversy built around issues of racism and disrespect at the York Region District School Board, the Labour Council wrote to the Board urging Trustees to show leadership in tackling racism and Islamophobia. Labour Council staff had been working with parent groups calling for action, and knew that change was urgently needed. Not long after, the Minister of Education appointed two investigators to review the situation.

The investigators, Patrick Case and Suzanne Herbert,

interviewed 140 people including Labour Council President John Cartwright and the education affiliates representing teachers and support staff. They found a culture of fear and distrust at what they described as a dysfunctional school board. They laid blame on trustees and the Director J. Philip Parappally. In April Mr. Parappally was finally let go by the Board. That is a key step in starting any healing process. Labour Council will continue to advocate for a new culture of accountability and respect for both employees and families at the YRDSB.

TradeLinx welcomes Gavin



The Labour Education Centre welcomes Gavin Lawrence, LEC's TradeLinx construction pre-apprentice program's instructor. Gavin spent several years swinging a hammer before starting his own company, Red Door

Painting. He has also worked with Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training, and with Kagita Mikam Aboriginal Employment and Training. Gavin has worked with First Nation communities across Ontario in trades related engagement activities and has worked closely with the Aboriginal Apprentice Board of Ontario.

The Labour Education Centre is a project of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council.

www.laboureducation.org

TRADE LINX

12-WEEK PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Get certified to work in the Construction Industry

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Basic safety
- Working at heights and confined space
- Elevated Work Platforms Operator - Scissor Lift
- Globally Harmonized WHMIS
- Working with propane
- M.O.L. Approved Basic Certification
- Construction Certification Part II - Workers Health & Safety Centre

INCLUDES:

- Hands-on experience
- Employability essential skills - Construction Industry Focus
- Power and hand tool awareness
- Machine training
- Industry tours
- Construction industry expert speakers



Is this program for you?

- ✓ On Ontario Works? (contact your case worker for a referral)
- ✓ Have Grade 10 English and Math or equivalent?
- ✓ Interested in a career in the construction industry?
- ✓ Like to work outdoors and use tools?

CONTACT RYAN FOR MORE DETAILS
rpik@laboureducation.org
 416-537-6532 x2222

PROGRAM LOCATION
 16 Northwestern Ave, Unit 3
 (Eglinton Ave W & Keele St)



CUPE Local 2073 members went on strike for the first time in decades against the Canadian Hearing Society. The graphic explains their basic demand in sign language.

2073.cupe.ca

UNITED PROBLEM SOLVERS UNIONIZE

Empowered by each other, workers at Vaughan-based UPS Supply Chain Solutions voted this March to join UFCW Canada Local 1006A.

“Everyone is happy—the workers now have a voice,” said Saturday Okoukoni, who works at UPS and is a member of the bargaining committee. “A workplace without a union is a place full of repression.”

Local 1006A now represents more than 100 workers at the UPS warehouse. They work in a variety of roles such as warehouse associates, dispatchers, and much more.

Leading up to the union drive, workers were grappling with a wide range of issues including mistreatment, job security, seniority and having no voice at work.

“There was mass frustration —people weren’t too happy,” said Dan Anani, who works at UPS and is a member of the bargaining committee.

Workers searched for a way to change their situation until they found UFCW Canada.

“A lot of people came together, and decided union representation was the answer,” said Jackie Clarke, who works at UPS.

The campaign moved quickly, revealing the determination and support of the workers.

“Many of us knew the strength behind the numbers in here,” said Dan. “With the union, there is definitely a shift in the workplace now. The key was staying strong, united and positive.”

Wayne Hanley, President of UFCW Canada Local 1006A, commended the workers on their victory.

“It takes courage and solidarity to affect



change and we look forward to working with UPS workers to strengthen their workplace now and into the future,” Hanley said.

As a result of the organizing campaigns, Saturday said the workers at UPS are stronger now.

“No worker can fight the employer on their own—you have power when you come together with your co-workers,” said Saturday. “That’s why having a union is an advantage to every worker in Ontario and Canada.”

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE 2017 - Working Today to Build a Better Tomorrow

The Institute ran over two weekends in March, was an intensive learning experience based on the extensive experience of participants and facilitators. Participants had held a union office or a position of responsibility, or been active in the union or community and/or social justice work such as organizing drives, campaigns, etc. The goal of the Institute was to build skills amongst emerging labour leaders: to MOBILIZE WORKERS in the workplace; ANALYZE FORCES at play and the challenges for workers in their sector; RECRUIT ACTIVISTS for broader collective



campaigns; ACTIVELY WORK for an equity agenda within their union; GENERATE SUPPORT for their union’s engagement in political action; REACH

OUT to unrepresented workers in their sector or their community; BUILD the solidarity of workers.

Aboriginal & Workers of Colour Conference 2017 REJECTING THE POLITICS OF DIVISION

KEYNOTE: MICHAEL ETHERINGTON

Native Canadian Centre of Toronto

PLENARY SPEAKERS

Sandy Hudson - Black Lives Matter Toronto

Gilary Massa - National Council of Canadian Muslims

Crystal Sinclair - Idle No More & Indigenous Mobilization Unit

WORKSHOPS (IDENTIFY 1ST & 2ND CHOICES)

- ☐ Indigenous People - Reality & Struggles in 150+
- ☐ Resisting Islamophobia
- ☐ I can't work if I can't breathe - Mass Incarceration
- ☐ Nobody Chooses to be a Refugee
- ☐ Youth - Building an Interactive Labour Movement

Name: _____

Union/Org: _____

Address: _____

City & Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Childcare: ___Y/N Number of children & ages _____

Allergies: ___Y/N Details _____

Support needs for Differently Abled _____

All food is Halal with vegetarian options. Childcare booking deadline May 15th.
Space is limited - No on-site registration. All attendees must be pre-registered.



Sandy Hudson
Black Lives Matter



Crystal Sinclair
Indigenous Mobilization Unit



Gilary Massa
National Council of Canadian Muslims



Michael Etherington
Native Canadian Centre of Toronto

Saturday June 3, 2017

Registrant check-in 8:00am. Conference 9am to 4:30pm
1377 Lawrence Ave East (IBEW Local 353), North York

Registration fee \$60 Early Bird deadline April 30. \$75 from May 1 onwards
Cheque payable to Toronto & York Region Labour Council

Mail payment & registration to 15 Gervais Drive, Ste 407, Toronto ON M3C 1Y8
Info? council@labourcouncil.ca or call 416 441 3663 x221

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