

LABOUR ACTION

LABOUR
TORONTO & YORK REGION
COUNCIL

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Photo Credit: Kiruthiha Kulendiren

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EDITORIAL

Inviting the Difficult Conversations

Nearly two decades ago, the labour movement took a hard look at the reality of racial discrimination in our workplaces, our society, and in our unions. The Canadian Labour Congress National Anti-Racism Task Force presented a disturbing but insightful report that called on the labour movement to take this issue seriously. Today, the makeup of the workforce is rapidly evolving. In greater Toronto, half of us were born outside Canada, and half of us are people of colour.

South of the border, the images of torchlight parades of white supremacists chanting “You will not replace us, Jews will not replace us” was a chilling reminder of the Nazis rise to power. But Canada is not exempt from bigotry - there have been rallies by similar extremists in London, Hamilton, Peterborough, Toronto and Brampton, and an anti-Semitic newspaper distributed to thousands of homes in east Toronto.

Labour Council has decided to move forward and engage in the difficult but crucial conversation about systemic racism as widely as

possible. In the coming months, affiliates are being invited to join in a training program to give activists the tools to carry out that conversation. We need an understanding of how systemic racism works - that racism is not just individual acts or attitudes. Systemic racism is rooted in systems and policies that go back a long time, and may sometimes seem to be neutral.

Building a labour movement has never been a simple process. It takes skill, determination, courage, and an openness to learning. Our unions are called upon to provide a deliberate and systematic approach to address the root causes of racism and discrimination. It may be a difficult journey, but failing to do so would betray our core values.

Join the Uprising of Care

The United Way annual campaign is gearing up – and your donation and contributions to our charity of choice matters more than you think. Labour was a founding partner of the United Way in Toronto in 1956, and we support it proudly because of our common values of social justice. It provides

funding for key community services across the region, without which many people would live a much tougher life. I serve along with Lily Chang of CUPE 79 as labour representatives on the United Way Board, and thousands of union members work in this sector providing care and service to our neighbours.

The 2017 campaign is focused on our commitment to serving our local communities. So we invite every union member to be part of Toronto and York Region’s largest-ever Uprising of Care. We need one million people like you—change-makers, hand-raisers and engaged citizens—who will join with us to build a community where poverty has no power. We need your hearts, hands and generosity to raise \$103 million for our community. But this isn’t just about a donation at your workplace or online. There are so many ways for you to get involved.

Please visit www.unitedwaytyr.com/join-the-uprising for ways to get involved.

John Cartwright
President, Toronto & York Region Labour Council

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FIGHTING THE AIRPORT RACE TO THE BOTTOM

Contract flipping is endemic at Pearson, with both airlines and the Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA) switching ground handling and security contractors every few years in an effort to cut costs, making airport jobs among the most precarious in the country.



Teamsters 419 took an 80-day strike against Swissport at Pearson Airport this year to fight the “race to the bottom” their members endure. These members work as ramp attendants, baggage handlers, cabin cleaners as well as specialty jobs like aircraft weight and balance planners. Swissport used replacement workers to keep flights operating during the strike. The new 3-year contract includes some minor improvements to wages, benefits, and scheduling, but a key win was the company has agreed to stop using temporary agency workers within 60 days.

This strike brought together the labour community at Pearson. The Toronto Airport Workers’ Council held solidarity rallies that brought together strikers, other airport workers, and representatives from many unions. But conditions won’t fundamentally improve until contract flipping as a practice is regulated – and workers are guaranteed to keep their jobs, their seniority and their union. Those rights were established by the NDP Ontario government in the 1990’s, abolished by Conservatives, and are set to be restored in Ontario with Bill 148. It’s long overdue that the Trudeau Liberals fix the law at the federal level.

WHO BENEFITS FROM ONTARIO'S \$15 MINIMUM WAGE?



Vulnerable and precarious workers. Women and recent immigrants stand to gain significantly. Those working part-time involuntarily due to illness, disability, elder or child care will also benefit.



Adults 25 and older. In fact, baby boomers are about as likely to get a pay increase as teenagers.



Service industry employees. More than half the workers in retail, food and accommodation sectors would get a raise, and they are more likely to work for a big company than a small business.





FAIRNESS FOR FITNESS WORKERS

Last year, 650 GoodLife personal trainers in Toronto, Ajax and Peterborough formed the first fitness professionals' union in North America. Since their formation, they have been negotiating with GoodLife to improve the working conditions. Because the company is exempt from WSIB coverage, paid sick time is a major issue. The union has raised a number of other issues: being expected to work without pay, favoritism and arbitrary discipline, inadequate wages, insufficient hours, being kicked off of benefits for going under hours, and being required to pay for their own equipment, training and uniforms. The personal trainers at GoodLife feel like they are not receiving the respect or are being valued for the work they do for the company.

While GoodLife has implemented a system that allows workers to accumulate a percentage of sick days based on the amount of time they work, this does not provide workers with the time off they need to recover when they need it. "Forcing trainers to choose whether to pay their rent or work while they are sick or injured puts both trainers and our clients at risk," says veteran trainer Eris Collins, a member of the Union's bargaining team. "All workers need paid sick days."

All of this is in stark contrast to the message of Jane Riddell, GoodLife's Chief Operating Officer - "People who are healthy and fit are more productive at work. They're generally happier and they contribute more to society. We are in a unique position

because we are a fitness company. So we believe in living fit, healthy lives, and we encourage all our associates to do exactly that." This claim goes against the lack of sick days and WSIB coverage, and how GoodLife's lack of coverage for its personal trainers puts them at risk. DeJani Love, a GoodLife personal trainer, is only one of the examples for why there is a need for paid sick days. She suffered a concussion due to a workplace injury and was forced to take time off work to recover. Her story was raised at Queen's Park in May by NDP Labour Critic Cindy Forster. Forster encouraged the Provincial government to legislate emergency leave days so that people like Love wouldn't have to face financial problems while they take time recover.

While the personal trainers fight for these issues, GoodLife's group instructors are still fighting to be unionized. When the unions were originally forming, GoodLife used as loophole that separates personal trainers from group instructors; they were forced to create two unions, but the group instructors did not have enough 'yes' votes to form their first time around. The issues they have addressed are the same as the personal trainers; however, they would also like to address the "non-compete" clause included in their contracts that prevents them from teaching a class elsewhere while working at GoodLife. This, in tandem with the insufficient hours, prevents instructors from relying on instructing for their job; they need to a separate job to support themselves.

The workers at GoodLife are fighting for the right to be valued by their employer. They want to be recognized for their time put into the company, and they want to help GoodLife reach the values they put in place for their clients. While their talks are moving slowly, they hope that they can set a standard for other fitness workers in Ontario and across Canada who hope to unionize in the future.

Interview by Jacque Swan @vexlis

ACE BAKERY ORGANIZES

After nearly a decade of discussions among co-workers and signing union cards, nearly 300 workers at ACE Bakery located near Eglinton Ave. West and Keele St. have finally formed a union becoming members of UFCW Local 175.



Ace Bakery Organizers: Uruthirasekaram (Sekar) Rasaiyah, Bayani Edades, Syed Nabi

ACE Bakery makes baked goods for Loblaw's and is owned by the grocer's parent company, George Weston Limited. Ace Bakery's employees include many who have been there for years, as many as 20 or more and is made up of many workers from Filipino and Tamil backgrounds. Despite the Weston business empire's healthy profits, workers at ACE Bakery were told they were getting a pay freeze in 2017, instead of their usual 2 percent annual wage increase.

Bayani Edades, a 16 year veteran of ACE Bakery had been collecting signatures on union cards since 2013 when the company delisted some medical services covered by their insurance, but says the wage freeze really expedited the process of certification.

"It didn't go so well because we were still getting increases to our wages, but there was no assurance of days off, different starting times, those kind of things. For most of the workers it didn't matter so long as they're getting their 2 percent raise," says Edades of his previous attempts to get cards signed. As one of the main organizers of the union drive in ACE Bakery, his job was to convince workers to sign cards.

But a wage freeze wasn't the only issue that workers had, and the union drive brought other demands out into the open. Air quality inside the workplace is a long time issue at the bakery. As was scheduling in a workplace that was open 24 hours.

"There's too much flour dust. I have a hard time breathing in it," says Uruthirasekaram (Sekar) Rasaiyah, who has been at Ace Bakery for nine years. "They were cutting our hours. Then they would give us overtime. I wanted a fixed schedule. You don't know what's coming up in the next schedule," says Sekar. "Some workers have to call in sick and are questioned later about why you missed work."

"Bayani and Sekar told me that we need to stick together and do something so we can have a better environment that's a safe and secure workplace so we don't have to worry that they could fire us anytime," says Syed Nabi, who has worked at ACE for ten years. "Lots of people quit due to health problems. There are no windows, poor ventilation. So I told them, okay, let's do this!"

Edades says that the main demands going into their first contract will be increased wages, respect from management, better scheduling rules, improved benefits, and job security.

ACE Bakery tried to flood the employee list with 364 names in order to increase the threshold to trigger a certification vote. Some of those names were of people who no longer worked at ACE Bakery. Rasaiyah says that he and other workers paid close attention to who worked at ACE Bakery and that he and others knew some of those names were not of current employees. UFCW brought this issue to the Ontario Labour Relations Board and won a ruling in their favour. In the lead up to the certification vote, ACE Bakery workers that have been active in getting a union reached beyond that workplace to rally support.

"We spoke to our grassroots and community organizations. We asked them to come to cheer outside on voting day. On the last three days (before the vote) we stood outside the building all day and night to contact every worker as they started their shifts. We would not be here without their help," says Edades. Now that ACE Bakery is unionized, Edades hopes other workers in Toronto learn about their success.

"I hope what we did inspires other workers."

Interview by Gerard Di Trolio @gerardDiTrolio

EDUCATION WORKERS AND SCHOOL SAFETY

The number of violent incidents facing school staff is rising. This is a growing health and safety crisis that the provincial government must address by investing in more front-line supports for students, including those with severe behaviours.



Our schools need proper funding now.

From September to June our union office receives daily violent incident report filings from teachers across all grades, from Kindergarten to Grade 8.

This violence takes the form of physical assaults, such as punches, kicks, and bites; the use of scissors, staplers, and chairs as weapons; and verbal assaults, including death threats.

We have seen teachers receive medical attention, pregnant teachers targeted, and, in one case, a teacher choked and repeatedly slammed against a wall—it is no surprise then that some teachers must now wear protective gear.

For teachers and students the mental and physical toll of these incidents is immense.

When a teacher is visibly hurt, or when a classroom is evacuated time and again, fear takes hold in the learning environment, jeopardizing an essential safe space.

Last year, more than 400 violent incident reports were filed, a number that has increased yearly—a disturbing trend that other education locals also report.

More troubling, these numbers are likely underreported, as education workers are often reluctant to speak-up and discouraged from reporting due to insufficient employer follow-up.

We need action. Our children are watching and experiencing this violence. Our schools deserve adequate funding for training, staffing, and programing resources to meet the needs of all students.

WELCOME NEW AFFILIATES

Labour Council is pleased to welcome four new unions as affiliates.

CUPE 2073 represents workers at the Canadian Hearing Society. They were on strike for ten weeks earlier this year to defend their working conditions and benefits, and saw the great support that came from our Labour Council family.

Over 400 members of **PSAC 533** were locked out at Woodbine Racetrack over the summer, and re-affiliated after the dispute was settled.

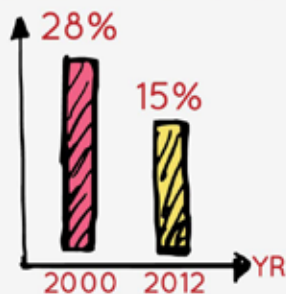
The largest new affiliate is **CUPE 1734** in York Region. The 3000 member local has members in eighty occupations

at the District School Board, and has focused on safety in schools. Their president Todd Canning spoke at last year's Day of Mourning in Woodbridge about the injuries some of his members have suffered on the job.

And the most recent addition is **CEIU 559**, part of the Public Service Alliance representing Service Canada employees at 65 St. Clair Ave East.

Labour Council now has *156 affiliated unions* representing over 208,000 members in every sector of the economy.

CANADIAN CORPORATE TAX RATES



CORPORATE TAX CUTS



Loss of \$14billion + \$2billion
(Federal) (Provincial)

TAX FAIRNESS MATTERS

WHAT DO TAXES PAY FOR?



less money for
PUBLIC
SERVICES



Average Canadian household needs
\$41,000/yr in Public Services

PRIVATIZATION TO PAY DOWN DEFICIT



PRIVATIZATION!

1% PROFITEERS
(a.k.a redirection of \$\$
meant for public services
into private 1% pockets)



Development Must be About Good Jobs

The Toronto region serves as the economic heartbeat of Canada. Municipal governments can have a profound impact on the day-to-day lives of working families and on the communities they work and live in. Recently the City of Toronto undertook to review its Economic Development strategies, and Labour Council brought labours' views to the table, calling for a high-skills, high-wage approach to inform all economic planning.

The recent media exposé of Fiera Foods operations, where a thousand immigrant workers toil for dozens of temp agencies at minimum wage, reminds us that just looking at the corporate side of the economic picture is short-sighted. Even though Fiera got a multi-million dollar cheque for its "job creation", its growth came from capturing market share from other companies that had been paying a living wage to bakery workers.

The story is repeated across the region in far too many locations, and there are other threats to good jobs. Developers who can realize massive profits from rezoning employment lands to residential or retail purposes create increased pressure on industrial jobs. The same is true of film and TV production, valued at \$2 billion per year. A number of applications have been made to convert hotels into condominiums, at a potential cost of hundreds of good union jobs and weaker tourism infrastructure.

But Toronto has a strong foundation of key economic clusters - including aerospace, food and beverage, transportation, hospitality, film, finance, construction, as well as fast-growing scientific and technical services. Public services also provide good, stable employment. To strengthen and maintain all these sectors, there needs to be commitment to a good jobs strategy by all levels of government. And because it's 2017, that strategy needs to have a strong lens on equity and sustainability. Low-carbon workplaces, living wages and diversity will be essential for decent work in the future. Let's work to make that the Toronto reality.



Go to labourcouncil.ca/policies.html to download TYRLC submission on divisional strategy for economic development & culture.

FLOODS, FIRES & 2 DEGREES OF CLIMATE JUSTICE

Naomi Klein, known for documenting corporate manipulation of the economy that squeezes the last drop of profit from almost everything, wrote at the end of this past summer:

“...with major cities submerged in water and others licked by flames — we are living through Exhibit A of the extreme warming climate scientists have been warning us about.”

The effects of climate change knows no boundaries. The smoke from Fort McMurray’s historic 2016 fire not only affected residents of Alberta but was felt by those who live in the eastern American seaboard. This was made possible as a result of wind and climate patterns. Those who suffer the most from extreme weather disasters tend to be the most vulnerable and marginalized.

People may become despondent or discouraged about our collective ability to hold warming increase to a maximum of 2 degrees celsius. Donald Trump’s threats to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate change accord, and his denial of the climate change in the face of recent hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria are a challenge to all humankind.

We are called to take action.

Steps to slow down, mitigate and adapt to climate change are happening at many levels. Labour Council’s Greenprint for Greater Toronto outlines carbon reduction initiatives for workplaces, transportation, building and energy. At its May 2017 convention, the Canadian Labour Congress adopted Green Jobs For a Fair Future, committing to help Canada become a leader in shifting to a green economy. In July 2017 Toronto City Council unanimously approved Transform TO, Toronto’s plan to achieve our commitments to reduce greenhouse gases by 80% before 2050. Ontario adopted June 2016 Climate Change Action Plan, and has commitment to spend up to \$8.3 billion in order to reduce GHGs. South of the border, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo established a major climate and jobs initiative to invest \$1.5 billion to help create 40,000 clean energy jobs by 2020.

Action must be taken quickly and there is an opportunity for all of us to lead on addressing climate justice. The best initiatives will result in providing workers with the tools and information needed to put forward a just and effective transition in our workplaces and communities. With a collective voice, workers can be agents of change. Labour Council is continuing to call on all levels of government to take practical steps towards achieving our Paris commitments while ensuring a just transition for all.

Here are specific steps we can take:

- Insist on the integration of Toronto’s Transform TO strategy across the city, and call on York Region to establish a similar strategy
- Bargain Workplace Environment Representatives and Joint Workplace Environmental Committee that will identify and help implement greenhouse gas reduction initiatives
- Establish a corps of activists through Labour Council’s Climate Justice Network and York Labour Environmental Action Group to deepen our engagement in climate issues
- Through Toronto Community Benefits Network, Good Jobs for All and Diverse Worker Networks continue to advocate that good green jobs are available to all of our communities
- Call for expanded public services including transit to help reduce reliance on fossil fuels

Email kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca to join the Climate Justice Network.

WHO KNEW?

Beginning in 2014, Toronto Education Workers CUPE Local 4400 began an interesting and innovative project based around Urban Farming in Toronto schools. The goals of the program were to revitalize school cafeterias with healthy menu options to the benefit of not just the student customers, but the unionized cafeteria workers themselves.

By introducing high-yield hydroponic technology to several classrooms along with Stefan Sommer, a full-time booked off caretaker from the Toronto District School Board to manage the project, local students were given regular hands-on education on the practice and importance of growing sustainable produce.

Starting with a small outdoor farm in

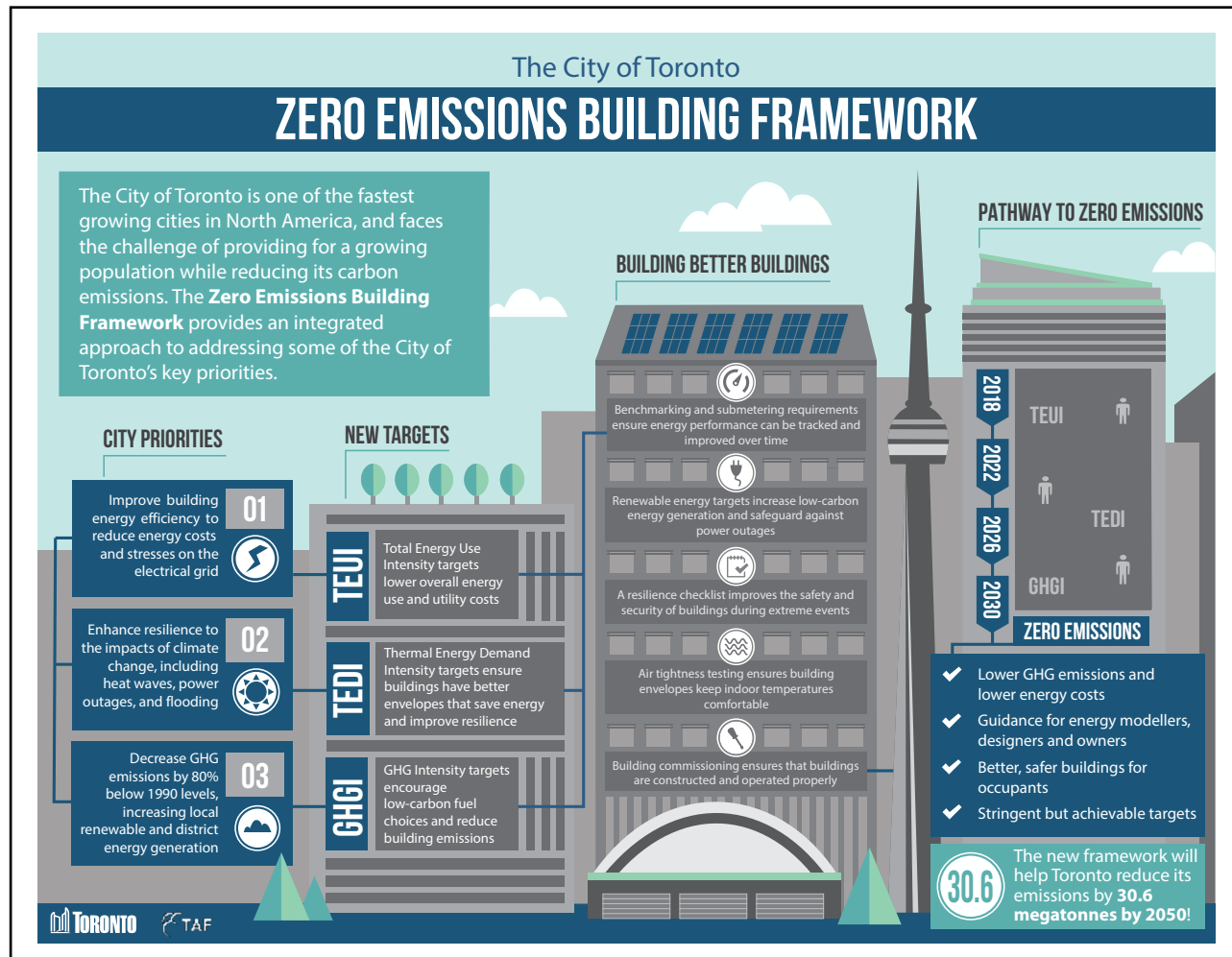
the interior courtyard of a Toronto high school, the program quickly expanded into several other schools, resulting in hundreds of students gaining access to this unique and incredibly beneficial program. Not only were fully-abled students given the opportunity to learn, but the program shined best when students with physical and mental disabilities were finally able to take part in gardening projects inside their school for the very first time.

As well as the young students of Toronto schools, the Urban Farming Innovation Project has also had quantifiable success in the area of senior care, as many seniors from an East End residence have been taking part in the growing and harvesting of fresh produce for the on-site cafeteria. By accessing the thousands of hours of gardening experience from the seniors in residence, the growing techniques have accelerated

and given seniors with disabilities and physical limitations the ability to continue their gardening hobbies throughout the winter months for the first time. Students are also brought in to take part in special projects during the school year, and some former graduates of the program are even hired to part time jobs in order to maintain the farms during the summer months.

In summary, the Urban Farming Innovation Project is a multi-faceted program that has touched thousands of Toronto lives and introduced hydroponic gardening to both previous and future generations, all while being led and funded by an organized Labour group!

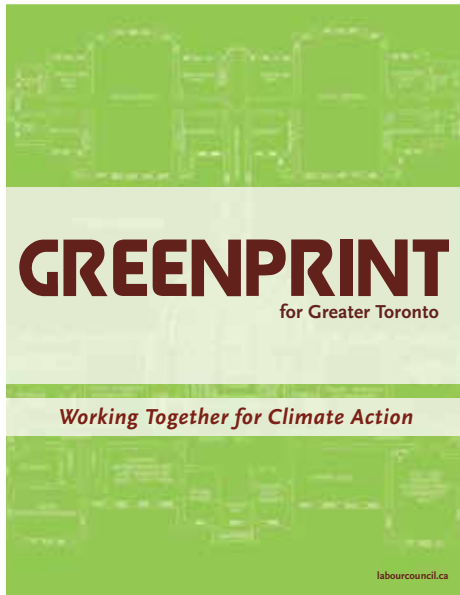
Stefan Sommer is incredibly proud to be the driving force behind this project, and can be reached at stefan.sommer@cupe4400.org for more information.



THE NEXT STAGE OF INVOLVEMENT:

JOINT LABOUR-MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEES

One year ago Labour Council published the Greenprint for Greater Toronto. It lays out a comprehensive approach to moving every sector of the economy to a low-carbon future. But the real question remains - how will we find the activists to drive this agenda of climate action?



In order to achieve the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions set by all levels of government in Canada, all workplaces must transition towards a lower carbon footprint. For the labour movement, taking collective action by engaging our members at their workplaces provides the best way to tackle important issues. The Labour Council is proposing to establish joint labour-management environmental committees to power the climate change agenda both within workplaces and in society as a whole. The concept mirrors the creation of joint health and safety committees in the 1980's and 90's.

Joint Workplace Environment Committees would engage workers and management in achieving the lowest possible carbon work process. This could include:

- energy and waste audits;
- work process reviews;
- recommendations on building retrofits and maintenance;
- supply chain and material reviews;
- identifying ways to re-use excess energy or heat;
- cleaning regimes;
- cafeteria and food options;
- suggesting improvements around movement of materials and staff commuting.
- training for the union participants would be provided by the Labour Council or affiliated unions.

Using a Life-Cycle Lens

A life-cycle analysis of the costs for any work operation reveals the advantage of adopting sustainable work practices. For a small investment in capital or human resources, the payback can be significant. For instance, the early energy retrofits of commercial buildings yielded utility cost savings of up to 40% year after year. Major industries in Toronto have reduced water use by over 30%. Food waste disposal can be reduced through composting or by introducing vermiculture programs. Better air and light quality improves productivity and worker satisfaction.

Environmental innovation

New technological breakthroughs are driving down the costs of low-carbon solutions. A commitment to environmental innovation will help provide decent jobs for the future. For the public sector, environmental innovation would allow greater resources to go to frontline services, as well as creating healthier and more sustainable workplaces. For the private sector, it enhances long-term viability and becomes a competitive advantage.

In the Greenprint for Greater Toronto, the labour movement outlines a comprehensive approach to climate change in every sector of the economy. It is grounded in a commitment to equity, strong public services, and life-long learning. These should be the guiding principles of a sustainability plan for a modern economy.

THIS WOULD BE A TRULY “JUST TRANSITION”!



The Canadian Union of Postal Workers has created a vision for a new Canada Post for the 21st century. It's one of the finest outlines of how to create a transition for workers and their communities to be written anywhere. Here is – Delivering Community Power!

What would you do if you owned...

The biggest chain of retail outlets in the country? A way to easily communicate and connect with every household from coast to coast to coast? A logistics network that can mobilize people and move materials to every corner of the world's second-largest country?

We do own it! Canada Post isn't just a mail and parcel delivery service; it's a powerful national logistics network that could address some of our most pressing challenges, such as:

- climate change,
- delivering services to an aging population,
- providing financial services to low-income communities
- using revenues to help fund other public initiatives.

For over a century, Canada Post has provided the same world-class service to everyone in the country. By reinventing our post office as the engine of the next economy we will connect people and communities into the next century. Canada Post's vast infrastructure and delivery network has the potential to become the hub of a green and social economy. Here's how we could do it:

- Create Postal Banking in 6,000 locations to serve small towns, people using payday lenders, families sending remittances home, and finance for the green economy.
- Transition the Canada Post fleet to 100% renewable energy. Canada Post has the largest public vehicle fleet in the country. Infrastructure funding could add a nation-wide network for charging electric vehicles
- Supporting a broad shift to low-carbon vehicles. Electric charging stations could be added to every post office and depot, which would encourage public use and build infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- Expand door-to-door delivery services. Door-to-door delivery reduces emissions, unlike customers driving to pick up their mail.
- Support for elders and those with limited mobility. Mail carriers, already the eyes and ears of their neighbourhoods, could check in on elders, deliver medicines and connect residents to other public health and social services.
- Turn post offices into community and digital access hubs. Local entrepreneurs can use the post office as a meeting space or pop-up shop to connect with customers and collaborators. Post offices could help bring affordable internet access, and digital training and support to the 3.4 million Canadians who lack it.

deliveringcommunitypower.ca

COMMUNITY BENEFITS HITTING HOME



Toronto is building; and the labour movement is seeing benefits hidden in pockets of talent all over our City. Thanks to the Community Benefits Framework negotiated with Metrolinx, the community is now starting to see real jobs for residents living in historically disadvantaged neighbourhoods along the Eglinton Crosstown LRT.

The Framework established two paths to employment – apprenticeships in the construction trades; and careers in professional, administrative and technical (PAT) occupations for internationally-trained professionals or recent graduates from diverse communities. To date, over 100 people have been hired into PAT jobs with the builder Crosslinx or their related firms, and 29 new apprentices have been hired to work in skilled trades on the Project.

This success is made possible by unions and communities coming together as a coalition to negotiate formal and informal arrangements with the owner developer and contractors. This sets the conditions for economic growth and intensification of urban areas around a network of mobility hubs. The Crosstown will serve as a model for future Community Benefits Agreements

and form the basis for policies and programs currently in development at all levels of government.

The Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) has over 70 member organizations, including nine local unions. TCBN with the help of select partners are hosting a series of Ready to Build tours to educate residents about jobs and opportunities created through Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs). The next event will take place to discover the Carpenters and Labourers Trades on November 8, 2017. We believe that all Torontonians should have access to the opportunities stemming from infrastructure investments, learn more about our growing movement today. Go to the TCBN website for more information and links to videos of previous events.

communitybenefits.ca



GOT FOOD - THANK A FARMWORKER ... GOING BACK TO THE 60s

The Thanksgiving season is a time to highlight agricultural workers' contributions to society and the precarious conditions that so often characterize their work and life. Farm labour activists have riffed on a popular motif which recognizes farmers, modifying it to some variation of: "Got Food? Thank a Farmworker."

In Canada, these messages have drawn attention in particular to migrant farmworkers, who represent a crucial

component of the country's agricultural labour force.

While the history of migrant labour can be traced back centuries in Canada, state-managed guestworker programs have been a permanent fixture since the mid-20th century. In agriculture, the most important program has been the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), founded in 1966, which brings workers from Mexico, Jamaica, and other Caribbean countries to work on Canadian farms.

Migrant justice advocates have criticized the structure of programs, under which migrants in practice have far fewer rights than Canadian workers. Migrant labour scholar Adriana Paz has referred

to this as a system of "labour apartheid." In the SAWP specifically, migrant workers are barred from unionizing in Ontario (by far the biggest receiving province), have almost zero access to permanent residency, often face dangerous work conditions and subpar living arrangements, and find that their employers have almost unchecked control over their immigration status. Complaining about conditions on the job or in the bunkhouse can often result in summary deportation and exclusion from future participation in the program.

To learn more about the Migrant Farmworker program's history visit twhp.ca

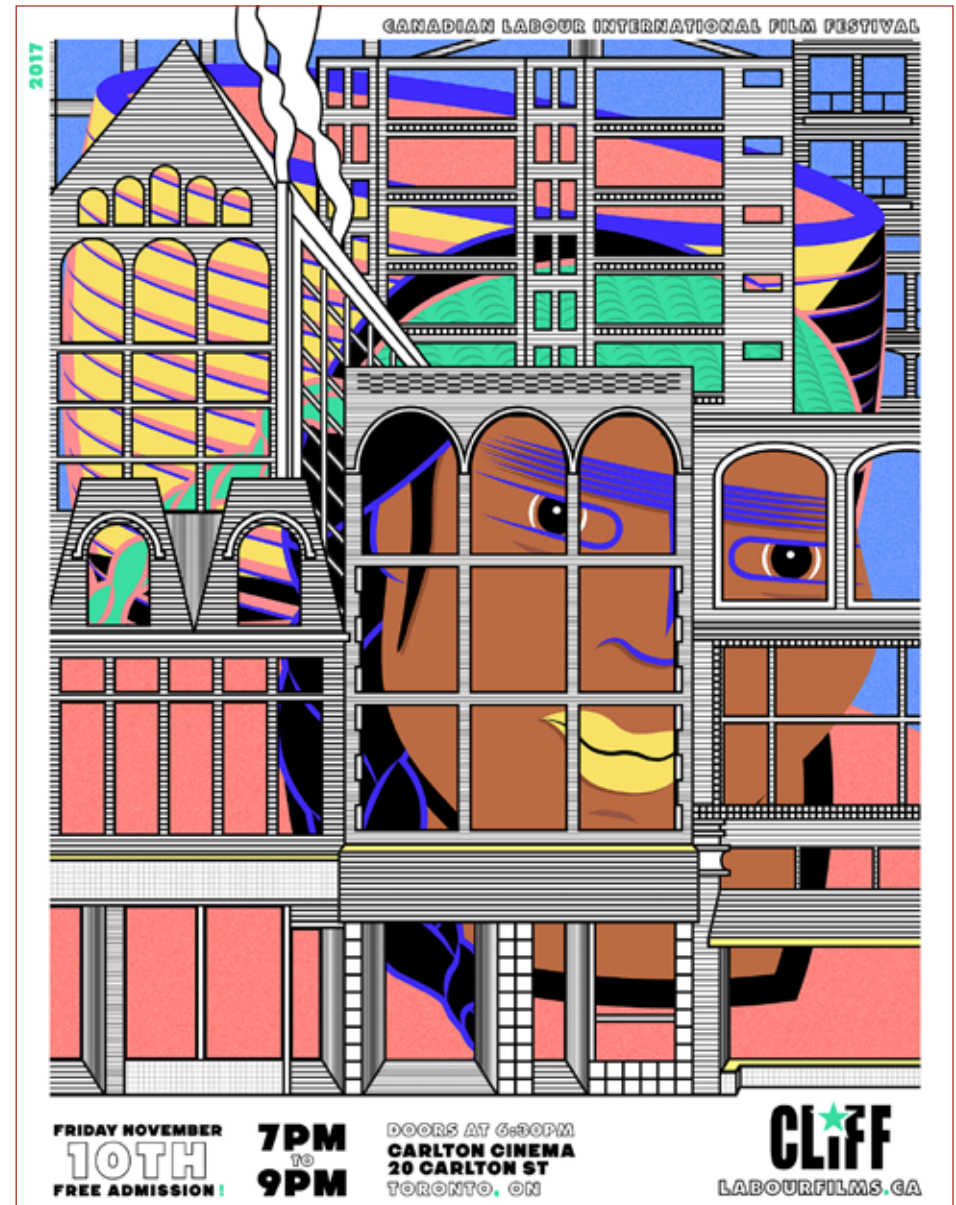
OPEN LETTER TO PREMIER WYNNE REGARDING JUSTICE FOR DAFONTE MILLER (Sept 2017)

We, the Equity Committee of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, are no longer surprised when a Black youth is subjected to brutality at the hands of a police officer. The injury sustained by Dafonte Miller in his encounter with off-duty police Officer Michael Theriault has become all too familiar for Black youth in our society. Such frequent cases are painful reminders that anti-Black racism is actively thriving in the GTA.

We are heartened that the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) laid charges in this case. Furthermore, we welcome the establishment of the Anti-Racism Directorate, through the enactment of Bill 114, Anti-Racism Act, 2017, and the government's 3-year Anti-Racism strategic plan – A Better Way Forward. However we remain skeptical as to the depth of impact the Directorate will have on transforming police interactions with the Black community.

The Dafonte Miller case has revealed the dire need for policing of the police, to ensure that those tasked with safekeeping of civilians do not themselves become the threat to fear and hide from. We feel strongly, that the Ontario Government needs to:

- expedite implementation of Justice Tulloch's 129 recommendations;
- take them further by implementing legislative reform whereby the SIU is not populated by ex-police officers but by community members trained in the necessary investigation practices and tools;
- tighten the loopholes currently in place that allows for broad interpretation of who and when must report incidences of violence perpetrated against civilians by police officers;



- legislate consequences for those police officers that choose not to report incidents of violence perpetrated against civilians by police.

It is traumatic and frustrating for the community to repeatedly present evidence, narrate personal testimony and wait for progressive change while both young and old suffer from the racism and violence. We ask you, for fairness and transparency in justice for ALL Ontarians. An injury to one is an

injury to all.

It is our intention to make both this letter and your response available to the public to ensure transparency of dialogue. We trust you will give these concerns serious attention worthy of immediate resolution.

Excerpts from Equity Committee Letter to Premier Wynne—full letter available on labourcouncil.ca

STANDING WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKERS



Ontario's community colleges were established fifty years ago to play a crucial role in supporting economic growth and educating students for the jobs of tomorrow. The people who deliver the education and services at our community colleges deserve to be respected for the vital work they do. Whether they are full-time or part-time – college workers should be treated fairly and have a strong, effective voice at work.

That is why the Labour Council has supported college workers in their contract struggles in past years; has supported the recent organizing drives of part-time workers so they can have a union; and supports the just demands of striking faculty today.

Years of government under-funding have created a situation where Ontario's public colleges now receive the least per-student funding of any

province. The numbers over the last decade tell a disturbing story. As the number of students continues to climb, the share of full-time faculty has fallen while the number of part time staff and administrators has skyrocketed.

No union can stand by as good stable jobs hemorrhage out of the system. Part-time, partial-load, and sessional faculty now outnumber full-time

faculty nearly three to one, without accounting for the large number teaching in continuing education, online and part-time studies. This is intolerable. Ontario's colleges must commit to creating good jobs for its workforce, not a "low-road" approach that expands precarity and insecurity.

Our colleges are meant to provide the next generation with the tools they need to prosper in Ontario's economy. They should make sure their own workers have a fair share of that prosperity as well. Labour Council calls on all unions to stand with community college workers in their struggle for justice!

Go to collegefaculty.org for more information

#StandWithFaculty



- Fairness and equal pay for contract faculty to create job security and improve the student experience
- A minimum 50:50 ratio of full-time to non-full-time faculty to maintain stability and improve quality
- Academic freedom and a legitimate voice for faculty and students in the way our colleges are governed

JOIN THE UPRISING OF CARE

We need 1 million people to help
fight local poverty in all its forms. Are you in?
itlookslikeme.ca



CUPE 905 Invests in Labour Community Advocates

I wanted to take the Labour Community Advocate Program for some time. When CUPE 905 ran it for five full days I saw my opportunity.

The course trains union members to provide information and referral services for union brothers and sisters. It also stresses the importance of ongoing support and follow-up. Since I work in a public library I thought this course was a perfect fit with reference and referral services we offer to our library patrons as well.

I learned a great deal during the program. Topics included mental health, family law, tenant issues and addiction, to name a few. The guest speakers who shared their expertise on

a wide variety of subjects helped me to better understand these issues. Najib Soufian, program coordinator, made each day engaging with his obvious passion and commitment to the course.

In the end I have a bigger appreciation for my fellow union members, realizing some of them may be silently dealing with issues. I find myself attentive as staff members chat, perhaps dropping a hint or phrase that signals they may need a listening ear or an offer of help. I feel confident after taking this course that I will be able to point them in the right direction for any assistance they might need. The program also gave me some renewed enthusiasm for my job. It gave me new skills such as a better understanding of how 211 Ontario works and refreshed my outlook. This educational opportunity broadened my horizons because the group shared their personal experiences. Since I live and

work in a small community it reminded me that the problems we all face are often similar.

I would like to commend Labour Community Services for recognizing that the need for this program is important enough to have a full-time coordinator. I would also like to thank CUPE 905 for offering this five day course on a trial basis and acknowledging that educating their members is an investment in the future of union growth.

I will be encouraging others to take this course. It benefits all union members to build understanding, unity and solidarity.

Tina Brophy - CUPE905

Visit labourcommunityservices.ca for more information about the Labour Community Advocate Program

JOIN THE CIRCLE OF RECONCILIATION

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) has endorsed a bill by New Democratic Party MPP Michael Mantha to make June 21 – currently National Indigenous Day across Canada – a statutory holiday in Ontario. To introduce the Bill on September 21 at 12 noon, OPSEU held the Circle of Reconciliation Pow Wow on the South Lawn of Queen's Park.



"It's time we do this," said Linda Broer, chair of OPSEU Indigenous Circle June 21 Campaign, who organized the Pow Wow with Indigenous community and union members. "Rather than a typical labour-type rally, we chose a Pow Wow as the best way to introduce the bill and to celebrate Indigenous culture and traditions which are at the heart of the legislation."

R. Stacey Laforme, Chief of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, said his community was "happy to partner with OPSEU on this important initiative toward reconciliation."

"A statutory holiday recognizing our Indigenous peoples would be a fitting tribute as we work toward reconciliation," said OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas. "I'm proud of the role my union's Indigenous Circle played with other Indigenous activists in having Mr Mantha draft his private member's bill. I urge the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties to support it every step of the way until it becomes the law in our province."

www.opseu.org/committees/indigenous-circle

THE GOOD JOBS FOR ALL COALITION
PRESENTS

WHAT'S UP WITH NAFTA?

THE IMPACTS ON JOBS & EQUITY

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2017

Teach-in (pizza provided)
5 PM TO 6:30 PM

Public Forum, 7 PM
Steelworkers' Hall
25 Cecil St, Toronto*



MARJORIE COHEN

Economist, author of
"Free Trade and the Future of
Women's Work: Manufacturing
and Service Industries"



HASSAN YUSSUFF

President, Canadian Labour
Congress and member of the
federal Advisory Council on
NAFTA

Join this timely public
forum and teach-in on
the current NAFTA
agreement and potential
impacts of its
re-negotiation, in
particular on
employment, women and
racialized workers.

*parking in back, southwest of
College and St. George/Beverly,
west of Queen's Park subway stop

Updates at Toronto and York Region Labour Council
www.labourcouncil.ca



HEALTH & SAFETY ACTIVIST AWARDS 2017

Congratulations to this year's recipients of the
Health & Safety Activist Awards,
presented at the annual dinner sponsored by
the Workers Health & Safety Centre,
Toronto & York Region Labour Council and
the Central Ontario Building Trades Council.

Errol John - Carpenters Local 27
Merv King - United Steelworkers
DJ Sanderson - Ontario Nurses Local 124
Sang-Hun - Injured Workers Network



Pharmacare for Ontario

CANADA IS THE ONLY DEVELOPED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WITH UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

Many workers in Ontario pay out of pocket for prescriptions because they don't have a prescription drug plan, or because their plan doesn't cover the full cost. A national survey by Angus Reid in 2015 found that 24 percent of respondents in Ontario said they or someone else in their household hadn't taken medication as prescribed because they couldn't afford to.¹ Many are splitting pills, skipping days to stretch their prescriptions, or not filling their prescriptions at all.

Women are less likely than men to have prescription drug coverage, in part because more women work part time.

Younger workers are less likely to have prescription drug coverage, especially because they're more likely to be stuck in low-wage, precarious jobs.

Nobody should be forced to choose between paying for groceries and paying for the medication they need. That's why Canada's unions are calling on the federal government to establish a single-payer, universal prescription drug plan, in coordination with all the provinces and territories.

¹ www.angusreid.org/prescription-drugs-canada/

Fast Facts

- Today, public spending in Ontario covers less than half the cost of prescription medicine.
- An estimated one in three of the province's 6,923,200 workers – 2,307,733 – don't have health benefits.²
- In Canada, only about 27 percent of part-time workers have prescription drug coverage.³ That means that in 2015, about three quarters of Ontario's 1,305,000 part-time workers didn't have prescription drug coverage.
- In 2015, there were 1,088,000 self-employed workers in Ontario without employer-based health benefit coverage.
- Ontario's Drug Benefit covers seniors, but they still pay an annual deductible of \$100, and co-payments of \$6.11 on every prescription.
- The province's Trillium Drug Program is available for those paying more than three percent of their net household income on prescriptions, but they still pay a deductible, and co-payments of \$2 per prescription.
- Even charges as low as \$2 have been found to deter patients from taking medication as prescribed.⁴
- In 2017, the Ontario government announced a partial Pharmacare program that will cover full prescription drug costs for anyone under the age of 25. If approved, the program will start January 1, 2018, and will cover 4,400 drugs for the province's children and young adults.

Join our call for a universal prescription drug plan at aplanforeveryone.ca.



Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada



USING NEW TOOLS FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE



In early 2018, Bill 148 will become law. When it does, unions and workers will have a new set of tools to use for organizing and winning economic justice for ALL Ontarians. They won't be everything we want, and still not everything need to correct the imbalance of power in the modern economy. But over the years workers have created wonders using the most basic tools – when given a chance to apply their skills and creativity.



Here's what we will have won:

- **Card-check for sectors dominated by contractor competition** – cleaning, food services, security and community home care. That means once a majority of workers sign a union card, they get certified as the union for the workplace. No more mandatory vote interval tainted by intimidation and fear.
- **Successor rights for workers in cleaning, food and security services** – if the contractor changes, people keep their jobs, seniority and union agreement.
- **Easier access to unionization** – including the right to get a full employee list once 20% of workers have signed union cards. And a lower bar for automatic certification if the company engages in reprisals, threats or misconduct.
- **Equal pay for part-time, contract or temp agency employees** doing a similar job as permanent employees. This has massive implications – many companies have built their business model on poverty wages, enforced by the insecurity of temp agency employees in the workplace.

Imagine what it would take to empower all these workers who have new rights. What would "organizing to scale" look like in Ontario in 2018?

- A mass information blitz to tell people about opportunities to join a union or get a raise
- Hundreds of new organizers to fan out and support union drives wherever people are being exploited. These organizers must be as diverse as our population, and speak the many languages found in today's workplaces
- Test cases taken to the Labour Board to assert the new conditions for automatic certification and ensure employee lists are actually being provided
- Labour and community allies leading very public fights with company owners who try to use loopholes to keep paying temp or contract workers less than the law requires
- High profile contract bargaining struggles to set the stage for even stronger legislation to address issues left out of Bill 148, such as sectoral bargaining and banning strike-breakers

Every union should step up to help create this new environment for hopeful and courageous action. We are about to win the "once-in-a-generation" improvements to labour law that we have worked years to achieve.

Let's make sure we pick up the tools needed to complete the job – and start building a fairer economy for all!