

February
2009
Issue 3



Picket-Line Press NEWSLETTER



Annually Published by **Operation Christmas Cheer**

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252 Acts of Kindness = 527 Union Families Supported This Christmas!



TORONTO, ON – CEP local 132-0 Picket-Line
CEP Ontario Executive Board Officers Bob Huget, Kim Ginter and Barb Dolan are joined by members of CEP 27, 87M, 132-0, 247, 975 along with John Cartwright of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council and Paul Clifford of UNITE/HERE.

BRANTFORD, ERIN, THUNDER BAY, TIMMINS, TORONTO ONTARIO – Picket-line solidarity is one of the foundations of trade unionism where the smallest acts of kindness, encouragement, and support give members the strength needed to continue the fight for a fair settlement.

This past Christmas, my family and I had the privilege of spending 5 days, celebrating Operation Christmas Cheer's 5th year anniversary, on the 5 picket-lines of **ATU 685, CAW 397, CEP 132-0, USW 271G and USW 1-500**. Volunteers also rallied in Thunder Bay and Timmins to deliver the Cheer to the picket-lines **CEP 37x and USW 2693**. Each strike/lock-out has been prolonged and difficult. The solidarity, strength, and leadership of these 7 unions and their members, is commendable and inspirational!



Taking strike action and challenging an employer's corporate agenda and concession demands is not an easy decision...especially during an economic downturn. It takes a tremendous amount of courage and determination to stand up and fight for the future. It becomes even more difficult while enduring the holiday and frigid temperatures. It is not uncommon for the members of smaller locals on strike to feel isolated and forgotten.

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YOUR kindness, compassion, and action clearly had an impact and **YOU** helped to spread the Cheer this Christmas in record emails, meetings, phone calls, and faxes! **YOUR** efforts made Christmas much brighter for **527** union families struggling to make ends meet. **188** children received a toy Christmas morning because **YOU** cared enough to get involved. **YOUR** empathy resulted in **337** bags of groceries or over **2,900** non perishable food items being dropped off at donation locations.



Five years ago, Operation Christmas Cheer reached out to help 2 locals with 25 members. This year, **YOUR generosity** raised a record amount of donations totaling **\$39,451.88** which resulted in **over 1,000 grocery gift** cards being handed-out to our Brothers and Sisters walking picket-lines throughout Ontario.

Alone, we are a group of ordinary people. When we stand together in solidarity we are an **extraordinary** network of **86** volunteers, **146** union locals, **11** committees, and **9** labour councils.





Strength, Courage & Heart Shown on Picket-Lines

By Bob Huget - Vice-President, CEO Ontario Region



“Employers are using the economic downturn as an excuse”

Toronto, ON - Today, workers in Ontario on strike or in a lock-out are facing an economic environment which is grimmer than it has been in recent history. The current economic crisis has meant that virtually every day we are hearing of more closures and layoffs. Frankly, I believe that many employers are using the economic downturn as an excuse to take a tougher stance in contract negotiations and to turn their backs on their workers, but our union solidarity is not wavering. We have a lockout in its third year at Local 37-X in Timmins, and a forced eight-month strike at Local 132-0 in Toronto. The strength, courage, and heart shown by our members on the picket line is more than a match for the sheer heartlessness shown by their employers, however. Our members are standing together, as always, to fight for the rights and dignity of working people.



The Canadian Labour movement has also been fighting hard for the rights and dignity of working people. Broad labour support for our boycott of Petro-Canada helped secure a new collective agreement and preserve national pattern bargaining for our members who were locked out for thirteen months.

The CEP has been actively lobbying the government to step up to the plate and develop long-term job strategies to address the hundreds of thousands of manufacturing and forestry jobs lost in Ontario over the past few years. We have demanded stronger restrictions on media concentration and foreign ownership in telecommunications.

Labour and progressive organizations working together have, in the past few years, achieved a new federal program that entitles workers to immediate payment of lost wages when their employer goes bankrupt; and an increase to the minimum wage in Ontario.

Labour was also among the strongest voices demanding that the Harper government stop denying Canada was in an economic downturn, and put measures to stimulate the economy into its Federal Budget. While the Budget as it stands now is still very far from what we need to help the growing ranks of the unemployed who can't get Employment Insurance benefits, and to invest in a 21st-century industrial base in Ontario and Canada, it's also a far cry from what it would have been if union members hadn't spoken out.

Operation Christmas Cheer and our CEP sister Casandra Robinson have been compassionately reaching out to workers in strikes and lockouts for years now. The donations they gather for workers on the picket line bring much-needed kindness at a time when workers may feel their hardship the most. This past Christmas, CEP Ontario Region also gave \$1,000 each to our Locals 37-X and 132-0, on behalf of all of our staff and officers. We wish to give thanks to all who support Operation Christmas Cheer.

Budget Should Be Defeated – Harper’s Budget Leaves Ontarians Out, Spends Dollars Unwisely

By Wayne Samuelson - President, Ontario Federation of Labour



Toronto, ON - Although at the epicenter of the economic storm in Canada, Ontarians' hopes for help came down with a thud after details of the federal budget were released, says the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL).

After the Harper Government's hype and pre-announcements, the budget failed to do what Ontario needed most, says OFL president Wayne Samuelson.

“We needed to help people who have already lost their jobs and to spend stimulus dollars in ways that get us the biggest bang for the buck,” says Samuelson.

“It's pretty clear from their decisions on employment insurance, infrastructure spending, and tax cuts, that the Harper Conservatives are just not up to the job. This budget should be defeated.”



Job loss in Ontario has been mounting. In just the last three months of 2008, the province lost 67,000 jobs, and by all economic forecasts, more losses are ahead.

Only 30 per cent of unemployed Ontarians received regular EI benefits, compared to an average of 58 per cent in other provinces. Ontarians need increased benefits and better access to EI.

The measures in today's budget won't make one more unemployed Ontarian eligible for benefits.

“This budget should be defeated”

Samuelson welcomes training funding and an extended maximum period for EI eligibility from 45 to 50 weeks, but says that's not enough.

The \$2 billion in permanent tax cuts should have gone instead to infrastructure spending. Recent research shows that's the most effective way to increase GDP. According to Infrometrica, an economic consulting firm, \$1 billion of personal income tax cuts creates only 7,000 jobs, and returns only \$720 million to GDP. The same \$1 billion spent on infrastructure creates 16,000 jobs, and nearly doubles itself to \$1.78 billion in GDP growth. Samuelson says the infrastructure spending announced is insufficient, and comes with too many conditions.

The Ontario Federation of Labour advocates for 700,000 workers and their families. Affiliated unions represent workers in every sector of the economy.

Medicare Works! Keep it public. Keep it fair.

By Marlene Rivier, President OPSEU 479
Chair – Ottawa Health Coalition



Ottawa, ON - There are lots of injustices in our society: a minimum wage that is not a living wage, growing employment insecurity, rising tuition fees that limit opportunities but one of the great equalizers we have is our public health care system. No matter how poor you are or whether you have a job, you have the same access to health care as anyone else.

Access to care is according to need not ability to pay and we need to keep it that way. The privateers tell us we can't afford our public health care system but we know we can't afford to be without it!

"The privateers tell us we can't afford our public health care system but we know we can't afford to be without it!"

It's not public health care costs that are spiraling out of control. Those costs have remained a steady 6% of GDP in Ontario. It is private health care that is unsustainable. For instance, from 1985 to 2005 spending on drugs in Canada ballooned from \$4 billion to \$25 billion. Public health care is our best bang for our buck.

And that is why Labour is working alongside community organizations in health coalitions across Ontario and the nation to protect our public health care system and keep the public informed.

Is there a local health coalition in your community? Think about joining as an individual or a local. To learn more visit the Ontario Health Coalition and Canadian Health Coalition sites at:

<http://www.web.net/ohc/>
and
<http://www.healthcoalition.ca/>



Union Insurance Company Publicly Supports Public Health Care

By Daryl Barnett – Canadian Director, AIL in Canada

Ottawa, ON - As a director of American Income Life Insurance Company (AIL) for Canada and speaking on behalf of AIL we are pleased to be associated with and continue to be a supporter of "Operation Christmas Cheer". At AIL, we are extremely proud of our Ontario Public Relations Representative, Casandra Robinson. She is a key organizer of Operation Cheer and is an active executive board member of her union CEP local 247. Casandra's endless commitment to ensuring that union members have an enjoyable holiday, regardless of life's barriers, is a testament to her character. Many thanks to Cas and all the Sisters and Brothers that make Operation Christmas Cheer possible.

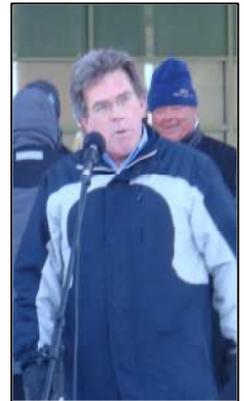
"unions form an important part of our social fibre"

Many may find it strange, that AIL as an insurance company supports the union activity of their employees and representatives. We are pleased to work within the trade union movement and have a unionized work force. AIL actively supports the rights of workers to organize into a union. AIL's CEO, Roger Smith, has been and continues to speak out and support the "Employee Free Choice Act". As an organization we also support the right to health care for all citizens. In Canada AIL supports the same principles and believes in the need to protect the Canadian universal public health system.

As 100% Union Company with 100% union products, AIL believes that unions form an important part of our social fibre. We are a strong voice for working families and we believe it is important now and in the future that unions continue to grow. Many of AIL's employees and representatives across Canada are active in their union, communities and engage in progressive politics. As a director of AIL I am proud of all our employees and representatives for reaching out to have a positive impact on working families in Canada.

Labours Strength Has Persevered For Thousands of Years

By Sean McKenny
President,
Ottawa and District Labour Council



Ottawa, ON - It seems at times that no matter what ills have befallen us blame is thrust upon working people. Never has this been as prominent as the last several months. We have an economic crisis that has manifested without any borders. We had lengthy strikes at York University in Toronto and Canada's capital was hit with a 53 day transit strike which ended recently.

Whether it's the riders, drivers and mechanics of Ottawa's public transit; students, personnel and faculty at York U in Toronto; or workers, those with investments or businesses in communities that have seen economic hardship each of these are significant, especially to those affected

"We have an economic crisis that has manifested without any borders"

That significance allows itself to be played out on talk radio and editorials. Letter writers are kept busy and there is a seemingly endless supply of sound bites or politicking that reaches those inner circles of every level of government.

Workers become fodder for the blame and blame is thrust upon all workers. Memories become selective and the tremendous contributions through out history by working people and their unions are forgotten.

It is indeed these times when we are at our most vulnerable that we must stay together or come together. It's not just workers and their unions but all people in our communities especially our families. That's our strength that has persevered for thousands of years.

It is the strength that will sustain us as a people and as a nation for yet another thousand years.

To YOU: From the Locals and The Members You Generously Supported

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 685 - Brantford

On Monday December 22nd, 2008 Santa's helpers (Casandra and her family) arrived at our picket line bearing warm wishes and baskets for all strikers donated and funded by Brothers and Sisters across Ontario. I saw the smile and tears in my members when you spoke and assured all of them how united all Unions remain. We have been on Strike against Operation Lift since September 29th, 2008 in attempts to establish our first Collect Agreement.

No time is a good time to be on Strike but with the holiday season coming and worries of providing for our families Operation Cheer was there. We thank you for making it possible to celebrate our Holiday Season to the fullest. It is at this time of year that the true spirit of giving is reflected in Union principles as demonstrated by you and your Organization. Once again on behalf of our members and all Brothers and Sisters across Ontario we thank you. We will not forget what you have done for us.

Phil Hotte - President/Business Agent ATU 685



United Steelworkers Local 1-500 - Brantford

On behalf of our striking USW Local 1-500 members, we would like to thank Operation Christmas Cheer and all our Sisters and Brothers for the bags of food, grocery gift cards, toys, lunch, and words of support and encouragement. Our members have been on strike for over 5 months against an employer's who's corporate agenda is to break the union with unconscionable concession demands.

The support of all the volunteers and contributors of Operation Christmas Cheer meant so much to our members. Our solidarity is strong and your tremendous support and good will definitely lifted many spirits! We would like to thank Sister Casandra Robinson and her family for attending our picket line on behalf of Operation Christmas Cheer and presenting the gift cards, food, and toys to our members. Your support came during a challenging time and we will never forget what you did.

Bruce T. Weber - President USW 1-500



United Steelworkers Local 271G - Erin

Well here we are again 1 year later. Who would have thought we would still be walking the line. It's because of such unforeseen circumstance that Operation Cheer is so important! Thank-you to all, who contributed to and helped out with the distribution of the gifts, food, and vouchers. Just knowing there are those who care enough to try and make things a little more pleasant at that special time of the year, when it can be tough at the best of times, gives you hope for better times ahead.

A special thanks to Casandra Robinson and Family. The long hours of organizing, driving, and delivering need strong people like you to carry them out. A smiling face, a hug, a hand shake and then off again to the next group in who knows what kind of weather and for what length of a drive. Thank-you Again!

Mike Gilliam - President, USW 271G



Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union of Canada Local 37x - Timmins

Our third Christmas has come and gone, and once again we were fortunate enough to have received your generous donations. As our labour dispute continues it is reassuring to know that we are still part of this great Union the CEP. Once again we would like to thank Casandra for her hard work and dedication to the Christmas Cheer.

It was heartfelt to be able to give the vouchers to the many families in need during the festive holidays. We would also like to thank the many Locals who contributed to this very worthy cause, for without your generous donations this past holiday season would not have been the same. Once again thanks to all and to all a very merry Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year.

Pick Racine - President Local 37-X

United Steelworkers Local 1-2693 – Thunder Bay

Once again this year, on behalf of the striking members of USW Local 1-2693 we would like to express our heart felt appreciation for the Christmas food vouchers that they received. Your gift went a long way to assist our members who have been on strike for 35 months against an employer that wants to gut their collective agreement. An employer that wants to reduce and or eliminate their benefits and force employees to take wage cuts of more then 50%.

It is with support from people like Sister Casandra Robinson that Operation Christmas Cheer is even established so that individuals and unions can donate in order to help other union members in their time of need. These gift certificates not only assist our members and their families, it also assists the local economy that has been hit hard by the down turn in the forest industry. Again, thank you to everyone that made a contribution to show your support for our striking members. From all of us, to all of you, we wish you and your families all the best for the New Year.

Joe Hanlon – President USW 1-2693



Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union of Canada Local 132-0 - Toronto

The Sisters and Brothers of CEP Local 132-0 would like to thank all those who participated in Operation Christmas Cheer 2008 for the gift cards, toys and bags of food.

Our local has been on strike since June 2, 2008 and we have been fighting to keep our jobs and our existing benefits. We have been negotiating for a contract since April 2007 that expired in June 2007. The company proposed over 100 negative language concessions and numerous monetary concessions. Our company KOREX ULC, has forced us to go on strike when they instituted a new set of work rules with no collective language. CEP local 132-0 is committed to ensure this American owner does NOT break our long standing Canadian union. Your support and your donations were deeply appreciated by all our members to keep our solidarity strong on the picket-line.

Tony Borg - Secretary Treasurer CEP 132-0

Canadian Auto Workers Local 397 – Brantford

The year 2008 was one of the most difficult years CAW Local 397 has ever faced in its 70 years. Workers across Ontario and Canada are being faced with the threat of lay-offs, aggressive employers who are trying to take back gains that took years and in some cases decades to achieve and workplace closures that union members will never recover from. The federal government has failed to work with the labour movement and come up with a strategy to STOP manufacturing jobs from leaving our country.

Our local has was hit with two labour disputes in 2008, OLG and Alumetco. Our 85 newly organized members at Alumetco were trying to negotiate their basic first collective agreement when the employer locked them out. They went on to claim bankruptcy protection throwing our members out of work and refusing to pay any termination or severance pay. Both these employers decided they would try to force language into the collective agreements that would allow them to lay-off union members and hire temporary workers. In November, I had the wonderful opportunity to talk with Casandra Robinson, a sister from a small CEP local in Ottawa. 5 years ago she founded Operation Christmas Cheer which makes a difference by lifting the spirits of our Brothers and Sisters walking the picket-lines at Christmas.

What Sister Robinson and her family do every single year for members and the trade union movement is amazing to say the least. The members of my local learned that solidarity comes in different forms and sizes. To realize that the entire Ontario Labour Movement was supporting us through this difficult time made a difference to my members and their families. Through Sister Robinson, the message of solidarity, support and caring came through loud and clear! Thank you for your support and for making this past Christmas a little easier for my members and one they will never forget.

Douglas Aitchinson Sr – President CAW 397



**In Memory of Ralph Downing
February 23, 1953 – December 24, 2008**



The Executive of CEP 132-0 regret to inform you that the president of CEP 132-0, Ralph Downing has passed away. He has been a Brother of the union since April 28, 1975.

He will be sadly missed by his Brothers and Sisters in CEP and the labour movement. We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife, children and family.



5 Days, 5 Different Picket-Lines & 86 Volunteers!



In Their Own Words - Notes From The Families you've Helped

As a member of CEP 132-0 I would like to thank you and OCC very much for your generosity at a time when it was really needed. Myself and my family wish you all merry Christmas and a happy new year **Dean Mcguire CEP 132-0**

Operation Christmas Cheers arrival in Erin on that stormy Friday gave all in attendance a huge uplift in spirit. Thank you so much! **John.Salter – USW 271G**

On behalf of myself and my family I want to say thank-you for all the groceries and gift cards I received from OCC. Moral has been so low on the strike line at this time of year. This act of generosity from so far away has meant more than words can express. You gave us renewed hope for the year to come. Thank you. **Charles Long and Family – USW 1-500**

I wish to thank you all of you for the generous support you gave CEP 132 today. When I read your letter I realized that we are not alone and that we are striking for what we believe in. It has been tough year but our local will stay strong and fight to the end. Thank you for your encouragement, **Sister Marlene Pritchard CEP 132-0**

Thank you very much for your generous gift I received today from the CAW 397 it means a lot during these tough times. Though times are rough I'm sure we will all rebound from this and we can repay the favor (what goes around comes around) I live my life by this. Thank you, **Domenic Fuoco – CAW 397**

I came home today from the strike line with groceries, gift cards and toys for my 2 children. I cried because I had a Bratz doll for my daughter and Air hog helicopter for my son! Money has been so tight thank you for doing this. The generosity and kindness and encouragement we've been shown by OCC has given me a renewed sense of hope and strength that our local will get through these rough times. God Bless you! **Anonymous**

Those who can, do. Those who can do *more* Volunteer!

Special Thanks, to these OCC Angels below. Each of you came though and made an impact in different way. Your involvement made Christmas much brighter and brought some much needed cheer to many in hardship.

- **Gary Macdonald** of the Brantford and District Labour Council for allowing us to use their building and all the volunteers he rallied who helped sort, bag and deliver groceries and, wrap presents.
- **Marlene Rivier, Fay** and the many members of OPSEU 479 Ottawa. Your local has a GIANTIC heart and you are the epitome of Operation Christmas Cheer
- **Sean McKenny** our fearless leader (and good friend!) and President of the Ottawa and District Labour Council. Thank you for putting up with me these past 5 years and for all the support you've shown since day one!
- **All my Brothers and Sister in CEP...especially Bob Huget** CEP Regional VP Ontario, **Kim Ginter** and **Barb Dolan** CEP Regional Admin VP's. **Steve Wanless** and **Terry Monture** CEP Rank & File members for your support spreading the word & for being on the picket-line helping to hand-out the donations
- **Marty Warren** who volunteered and coordinated all the USW area offices as drop-off locations for donation...and for rounding up toys in the eleventh hour so no child went without! **Joanne Aubry** at the USW Oshawa office who collected all those toys and stayed late so we pick them up
- **Bruce Weber** and Don Bowden of USW 1-500. Two Brother who would do anything for their members, even get arrested :) **Steve Holmes** and **Mike** of ATU 741 for coming though with more toys when we thought we'd be short.
- **Mary Simns** and **Herb Danheir** USW District 6 Staff Reps. Both of you are incredible people/activists and you bring so much strength to your locals.
- **Dan Lacroix** of UFCW 175/633 for arranging the purchase of the grocery gift cards from Metro Food
- The executive board of USW 271G, USW 1-500 and CAW 397 for helping to sort, bag and deliver the groceries
- **Brad Honeywill** and the members of CEP 87M for providing the location and the volunteers who sorted and bagged the groceries. **SPECIAL thanks** to **Sister Maureen Dawson** who's commitment and kindness helped us sooooo much! **CEP 975** for donating all the stocking stuff with toys!
- **Dave Moffat** CEP Staff rep, **Joe Hanlon** USW 1-2693 President and **Rick Racine** CEP 37x President and **Kelly Eden** and **Larry Kinnear** ATU 685 Officer for all the phone calls back and forth helping me coordinate the deliveries.
- **Wayne Samuelson** of the OFL, **John Cartwright** of the TYRLC and the **Ontario Nurses Union** for collecting toys
- **Kenneth Coran**, President - OSSTF, **Elaine MacNeil**, President OECTA and **David Clegg**, President ETFO. Teachers have HUGE hearts. Combined, these three unions have helped over 200 families the last few years! A
- **Alan Wall** president CEP 247 is one of OCC's biggest advocates. He spreads the Cheer and networks better than any one I know!
- **Daryl Barnett, Debbie Enstedt, Diana Crosby, Denise Bowyer** and **Debbie Gamble** from AIL HO. You've all been there since day rooting us on and contributing to this worthwhile cause.
- **Richard, Chase** and **Dylan Robinson** who never complained once over the 5 days that we loaded and unloaded the trucks, sorted, bagged and delivered the Cheer to 5 different picket-line. My mom **Thomasina**, for giving me the strength to go on during her illness over the Holidays. You guys are my pride, my joy, my young workers/activists under 30 :)

A BIG THANK-YOU To The Following People, Unions, Committees, Councils and Companies Who Make OCC Possible

Amalgamated Transit Union locals 1587 Toronto, 741 London - **Canadian Auto Workers** locals 598 Sudbury, 1520 St Thomas, 1120 Sault Ste Marie, 483 Cardinal, 27 London, 599 Timmins, 1524 Kitchener, 1106 Kitchener, 1451 Kitchener, 1917 Guelph, CAW IPS Council - **Canadian Union of Postal Workers** 580 Ottawa, 566 London, Ottawa Women's Committee - **Canadian Union of Public Employees** 4000 Ottawa, 855 Lindsay, 1979 Ottawa - **Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada Ontario Executive Board and** locals 156 Espanola, 30-0 Kingston & Belleville, 34-0 Ottawa, 67 Sault Ste Marie, 105 Dryden, 15 Komoka, 1178 Burlington, 36 Corbeil, 6 Timmins, 191 Media Union of MB Winnipeg, SONG 87M Toronto, 16-0 Goderich, 27 Don Mills, 517G London, 12 Plattsville, 914 Sarnia, 691G Fergus, 31X Little Current, 323 Mississauga, 848 Wyoming, 65 ECWU, 87m Toronto Star Unit, 975 Scarborough, 72M Toronto, 52 Newmarket, 266 Milton, 591G Toronto, 37-o Goderich, 247 Eastern Canada - **CEP ONTARIO – Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario - EFTO** Stouffville, Kawartha Pine Ridge, Toronto Office, York Region, Ottawa Carleton, Superior Greenstone, Durham Teachers, Simcoe County, Kenora, Grand Erie Brantford, Ottawa Carleton Elementary Occasional Teachers Association, Toronto Elementary Occasional Teachers Assoc – **Int Brotherhood of Boilermakers** locals 128 Burlington - **Int Union Of Elevator Constructors** locals 96 Ottawa, 50 Toronto, **Ontario Nurses Association** Executive Board, 51 Coburg, L 125 Scarborough, 95 Brampton - **Ontario Public Service Employees Union Provincial Office**, locals 479 Ottawa, 499 Royal Ottawa Hospital Ottawa, 443 Hotel Dieu Hospital Kingston– **Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association** Bruce Grey, Peterborough, Eastern Ontario, Kenora, Simcoe - **Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation** Provincial Executive Board, District 25 Ottawa, Adult High School Ottawa – **PACE** 7-0548 Marathon – **Int Brotherhood of Teamsters** locals Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, Teamsters Canada Rail PLBO – **Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees** 80 Kitchener/Waterloo - **United Food & Commercial Workers** 175/633 Toronto/Ottawa – **United Steelworkers District 6 Executive Board and** locals 4464 Marathon, 9422 Thunder Bay, 838 Kitchener/Waterloo, 5481 Thunder Bay, 9597 Ottawa, 1-500 Hanover, USW Education Fund – SCAO Cambridge, 8698, 650 Thunder Bay, 9415 Red Lake, 665 Terrace Bay, 733 Brantford, 11-00001 Colummbus Montana USA,

Individuals; Gisele Pageau Ottawa, Daryl Barnett Victoria BC, William Murray Toronto, Frank Juzenas Brampton, Reg Duguay Kitchener, Marlene Rivier Ottawa, Dave Meinzinger Orleans, Barbra Kosow Toronto, Tina Main Cambridge, Stephanie Haskell London, Sister Laura CUPW Ottawa, Brother Nathan ODLC, Marilyn Young

Councils & Committees; Ottawa District Labour Council - Kingston District Labour Council – Kenora & District Labour Council - Timmins & District Labour Council – Brantford District Labour Council – Toronto & York Region Labour Council - Guelph & District Labour Council – United Steelworkers North Western Ontario Area Council, United Steelworkers Eastern Ontario Area Council - CUPW Ottawa Women's Committee – CEP Ontario Primary Forest Council - CEP Communications Council - Ontario Federation of Labour.

Unionized Company Companies; American Income Life Insurance Company in Canada - Sheraton Toronto - A&P - Metro Foods.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On behalf of the locals and the union families you've helped, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your involvement and steadfast solidarity during their time of need. In December, OCC was nominated and was one of 8 groups chosen to be featured on the CBC News - The National – Cool to Be Kind segment. A family emergency and bad weather in Toronto on Dec19th made it impossible to make the interview. Unfortunately our story was not aired on The National but we were deeply honoured to be nominated, chosen and for the opportunity to represent every local, committee and Brother and Sister who pays it forward not only during the holidays, but all year long.

When we all commit to one act of kindness, we act as one and that's when we can really make a difference. You directly helped 527 union families who were struggling to make ends meet over the Holidays. Equally as important were your words of encouragement. You let them know that they were not alone or forgotten. Make no mistake, you made a difference, and your kindness, support, and volunteer time spent will never be forgotten.

Operation Christmas Cheer is only possible because of you because in essence, YOU are Operation Christmas Cheer! It is an annual, worthwhile cause that brings a lot of happiness to union families facing adversity during the Holidays. On November 5th 2009, we will again start to mobilize by collecting one can of food and one dollar at a time, and we will continue to help as many members as possible.

In Solidarity,

Casandra Robinson
Founder, Operation Christmas Cheer
AIL Canada - Public Relations
CEP 247 – Secretary Treasurer