

# PICKET-LINE PRESS

ISSUE 8  
NOVEMBER 2014

## 10<sup>th</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER

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[www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer](http://www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer)



### THANK-YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS!

BE UNION, BUY UNION, SUPPORT UNION • BE UNION, BUY UNION, SUPPORT UNION

**107** picket-lines visited, **2,000 + TOYS** handed out,  
**HUNDREDS** of **VOLUNTEERS**, over **1064**  
unions, labour councils and supporters raising **\$545,524** in the last  
**10 years** for **5537 FAMILIES** with an avg of 4 per  
household = **22,148 LIVES TOUCHED**. Travelled over  
**31,293 km'** delivering **22,148 POUNDS** of  
**FOOD** while consuming way to many coffees and timbits!

BE UNION, BUY UNION, SUPPORT UNION • BE UNION, BUY UNION, SUPPORT UNION







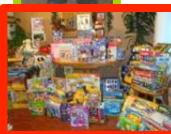
CEP 102-0  
Pembroke  
324 Dryden

**24**  
Families  
**\$2,000**  
raised



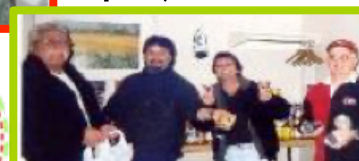
CEP 37X  
Timmins,  
IAMAW  
2243 Toronto  
COPE 343  
Hamilton

**219**  
Families  
**\$14,168**  
raised



CEP 37X Timmins,  
USW 271G Erin  
USW 2693  
Thunder Bay

**230** Families  
**\$34,172**



"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. Be Union, Buy Union and please... support union!" **Cas Robinson, Founder/Organizer Operation Christmas Cheer**

## REFLECTING BACK 10 YEARS

By Chas Robinson, UNIFOR 247 and ODLG Young Worker



10 years, it's amazing to think I had just turned 13 years old when Casandra and Richard Robinson, my parents started Operation Christmas Cheer to support 25 families in Ontario who were members of two locals. I'll admit at the time I did not fully grasp the idea of Organized Labour, strikes or the magnitude of what my parents were doing. 10 years later I can say I fully grasp the effect my parents and those who helped them had on those families dealing with severe hardship over the holiday season. 10 years later, through the extraordinary support of thousands of brothers and sisters in the Labour Movement we raised \$130,316.90 just last year alone.

Since 2004 they have done their best with the collective support of Ontario's Unions and those who make them the extraordinary forces for good they are! To really reflect and look back on it now that I have been directly helping is immensely over powering to think such a diverse group of people can band together in such a way really gives hope to those who need, especially during the holidays.

I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has given time, money, food or words of support to those brothers, sisters and families who have needed it most! All of coming together is a genuine show of Solidarity forever! ***I'm also very proud to announce, that plans are in the works for the Ottawa & District Labour Council and CUPE 4000 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL OCC Food + Toy Drop-Off event in Ottawa.***





## ONA WISHES THE OCC A HAPPY 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

By Linda Haslam-Stroud, President Ontario Nurses' Union

As the union representing 60,000 registered nurses and allied health professionals in this province, the Ontario Nurses' Association sends its best wishes and commitment to continue to support Operation Christmas Cheer on the picket lines.

As nurses, we care deeply about our patients and about every Ontarians. Though most nurses are considered essential workers with no right to strike, we understand how important it is to our communities that unionized workers have strong support and continue the fight for good jobs now and for the next generation.

Last year, ONA donated \$5,000 to Operation Christmas Cheer to help ensure that anyone walking a picket line during the holiday season does not have to go without gifts for their children and a good holiday dinner for their family.

Last Christmas, it was a privilege for me, interim CEO/CAO Marie Kelly and members of our board to come out to the picket lines to deliver gift cards in person.



ONA's board has committed to donating gift cards for fellow union members who are walking the picket lines, and we urge other unions to join us in support our brothers and sisters. ONA is proud to continue to support this special cause and wishes the OCC a happy 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## THANK YOU OCC VOLUNTEER

By: Marty Warren - USW District 6 Director, Ontario and Atlantic Canada

Operation Christmas Cheer has always been with our members on the picket line at this special time of the year when they've needed the moral support to continue the fight. We encourage Steelworkers Locals and members across the province to donate funds, food and gifts, to join workers on the picket line, and to volunteer their time with Operation Christmas Cheer efforts in their communities.

On behalf of Steelworkers across Ontario, I congratulate and thank all Operation Christmas Cheer volunteers and supporters for the wonderful work you do.



## THE ESSENCE OF SOLIDARITY

By Paul Elliott, President, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

There has never been a shortage of worthy initiatives and traditions within the world of organized labour, but OSSTF/FEESO is particularly proud to support Operation Christmas Cheer, a project which, in so many ways, embodies the very essence of what it means to be part of the labour movement. Solidarity can take many forms – letter writing campaigns, physical support on a picket line, financial donations to a strike fund. But sometimes, particularly during the holiday season, the most meaningful expressions of solidarity lie in the simple, tangible comforts that we, collectively, can provide for the families and the children of union members who are walking the picket line in the ongoing battle for decent jobs and working conditions.

Like all committed union members, we understand that when workers take strike action, it is never just for their own benefit that they are fighting. Gains made by unions have always paved the way for better working conditions for all workers, and we know that every picket line is really the front line in a battle that will ultimately benefit the whole community. And we also know that it's not just the members on the picket line who are making a sacrifice, but their families as well. And as educators and education workers, OSSTF/FEESO members recognize these families not just as our neighbours, but also as our students and their parents. We understand how much positive difference an initiative like Operation Christmas Cheer can make during the holiday season in the life of a family affected by a labour dispute.

OSSTF/FEESO thanks and congratulates all the organizers and volunteers involved in Operation Christmas Cheer. We are delighted to be able to make our small contribution to what has become an invaluable annual expression of solidarity.







ATU 685 Brantford,  
CAW 397 Windsor  
CEP 37X Timmins  
CEP 132-0 Espanola  
USW 271G Cambridge,  
USW 1-500 Brantford,  
USW 2693 Thunder Bay

**527** Families

**\$37,292** raised



## AIL IN CANADA - UNIFOR LOCAL 247

By Roger Smith, CEO American Income Life Insurance Company

American Income Life has been in Canada for 25 years, and we are proud to say that we have supported Operation Christmas Cheer since its inception 10 years ago! Cas Robinson and her tireless team of activists have been a beacon of hope for striking workers, workers displaced by employers intent on destroying the labor movement and the middle class of Canada. In the ideal world, there would be no need for Operation Christmas Cheer, but not all companies take the high road, honoring workers and their right to organize, bargain in good faith and secure a fair contract.



Operation Christmas Cheer has supported thousands of workers visiting many Ontario picket-lines, serving hot cocoa, donuts, packaging food baskets, wrapping toys and raising money. We admire the give back attitude of union activists like our own Cas Robinson. As a company, we have stood against ruthless employers and their scurrilous attacks on union families. Be assured, until the time when we eradicate the need to walk a picket line, we will continue to support Operation Christmas Cheer and those who give it life! Thank you Operation Christmas Cheer!

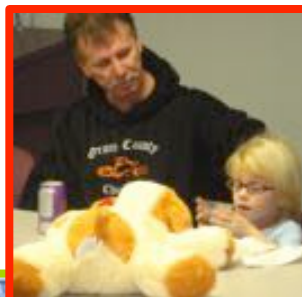






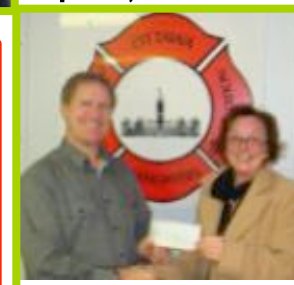
USW 9511 Ontario, CEP 2003 Toronto, CEP 37X Timmins, USW 8911 Toronto, USW 6200 Port Colborne, USW 271G Cambridge, USW 1-500 Brantford, PSAC Ottawa, USW 6500

Sudbury, **993** Families, **\$64,307** raised



USW 1005 Hamilton  
USW Woodbridge  
USW 8782 Hawksbury  
USW 271G Erin, USW 1-1000 Pembroke  
OPSEU 426 Ottawa  
USW 1-500 Brantford  
CEP 37X Timmins  
USW 526L+7531 Toronto,

**1257** families,  
**\$93,274** raised







USW 13571 Toronto, CEP 87M, USW, ATU 1587+113 Newmarket + Toronto, USW 1-1000 Pembroke, USW 9597 Ottawa, OPSEU 334 Kawartha, OPSEU 666 Sudbury, CUPE 4989 Pembroke, USW 1-500

Brantford, USW 526LToronto **1040** families, **\$100,826** raised







CEP 5011 Toronto, USW 1-1000 Pembroke, USW 526L Toronto, OPSEU 235 Owen Sound, CUPE 4616  
Bonfield, **198** families, **\$58,669** raised



**TOGETHER**

**By Sean McKenny, President Ottawa & District Labour Council**

It has been ten years yet I can still recall with a fondness meeting with Operation Christmas Cheer founder and coordinator Casandra Robinson when she approached the Labour Council in Ottawa with an idea. An idea that would see those union members on strike or lockout in Ontario during Christmas provided with much needed food, toys, money, vouchers to share with their family. Donations would be needed of course explained Casandra but what more a caring group especially at Christmas and during times of a strike or lockout is there than organized labour, she stated without missing a beat. Simple enough – but not so fast. Casandra attended several meetings with presidents of local area unions and although receptive most met out of a courtesy. Our own Labour Council although supportive was somewhat cautious. That there did not exist something similar was surprising to most of us. All knew that a union local whose members were on strike during the holiday season would usually ensure those members were provided with extra for themselves and their families. But not all did and certainly not one organization undertook fundraising for all those union members on strike or lockout. An incredibly detailed and significant undertaking. Casandra persevered. She knew and slowly others became to know how serious she was and just how beneficial this could be and would be to those working families who without her leadership, dedication and passion would be without or at the very least with a lot less during Christmas.

The holiday season is stressful for most of us because it can be such a busy time. If you're on strike or locked out the stress felt increases significantly for obvious reasons. Casandra and her family spend the better part of the month of December travelling to cities and communities across Ontario. They have driven in some of the biggest heaviest snow storms all in an effort to deliver items to members and their families on picket lines. Her efforts prior to December are spent encouraging others to donate to this most worthwhile of causes. Over the last ten years Operation Christmas Cheer has collected toys, food, vouchers, clothing for numerous union locals whose membership numbers in the thousands.

When contemplating who to donate to this holiday season please consider Operation Christmas Cheer. Perhaps at the same time and in helping you to make your decision consider the efforts Casandra Robinson, a proud member of Unifor 247, put forth in the creation of Operation Christmas Cheer and her family's continued efforts ensuring that union members and their families who are on strike or locked out are provided with a happier holiday season each year.







**35** PICKET-LINES VISITED, HUNDREDS OF TOYS  
 HANDED OUT, **135** SUPPORTERS RAISING  
**\$130,316** FOR **954** FAMILIES

**Operation Christmas Cheer** traveled the province and delivered the CHEER to over 35 picket-lines Christmas. Every member of **UFCW 175/633 Toronto**, **UFCW 175/633 Trenton**, **OPSEU 262 Oakville**, **USW 1005 Toronto**, **CUPE 1281 Toronto**, **CUPE 4616 Bonfield**, **USW 9176 Toronto** and **USW 1-1000 Pembroke** collecting strike pay received food hampers, grocery gift cards and toys for their children. I am proud to report that no family on strike/lockout with these locals last Christmas was forgotten or went without on Christmas day!

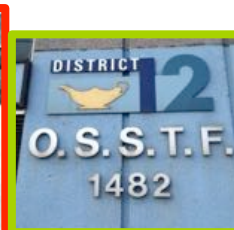
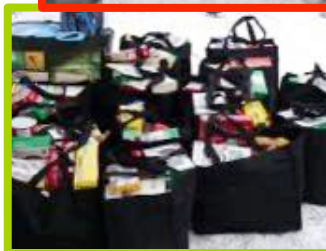
In addition to the 9 locals listed above, OCC made every effort to get out to as many SEIU Healthcare picket-lines as possible. Hundreds of grocery gift cards were delivered to dozens of GTA picket-lines. OCC also committed to deliver hampers, toys and gift cards to every family in Eastern Ontario. Weather was a huge challenge but we got it done with our final stop in Carleton Place on Christmas Eve! From the bottom of our hearts and on behalf of everyone who benefitted from your kindness, compassion and generosity...

# THANK-YOU!

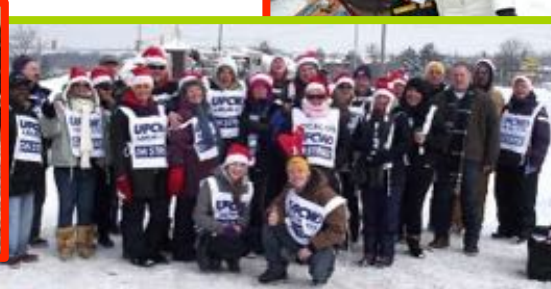
Each strike/lock-out was prolonged and difficult. Christmas was a little bit brighter for so many families facing hardship because you took action by volunteering and donating to Operation Christmas Cheer last year!



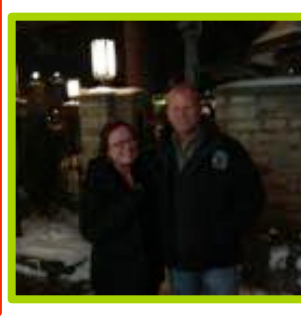
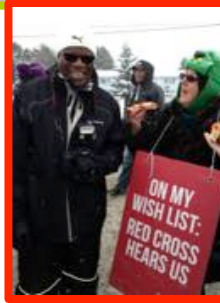




On behalf of the striking members and all 55000 members of SEIU, I send sincere thanks and admiration to all USW strikers who shared with others during difficult times themselves. Your comments of solidarity and compassion are so true. For anyone who thinks unions are not relevant anymore needs to hear this story and visit either one of these picket lines. An injury to one is truly an injury to all! It is an honour to be affiliated to such generous, caring people in USW and the Operation Christmas Cheer program. **Sharleen Stewart - President SEIU Healthcare**







## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHEER PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLE - BY: CUPE ONTARIO

Any worker who has ever been on strike or locked-out understands the importance of support from the broader labour movement. For the last ten years, during the holiday season, Operation Christmas Cheer has been delivering that solidarity to picket lines across Ontario. Members of CUPE Local 4616 and 1281 experienced that support first-hand last year. It was a long winter for the 16 municipal workers in the town of Bonfield, west of North Bay, Ontario, who won their fight against concessions after a ten-month strike. And expressions of solidarity from across the country, like a visit from Operation Christmas Cheer, helped them stand strong. "The workers in Bonfield are an inspiration to all working people who are being told we need to accept less for our futures, less for our communities, less for our children," said CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn. "Operation Christmas Cheer played an important role in supporting the Bonfield workers and their families through challenging times. Acts of solidarity, like Operation Christmas Cheer, make a real difference to workers on the line." Operation Christmas Cheer joined with labour leaders from across the province for a solidarity rally in Bonfield last October and helped raise spirits with events for the workers at Thanksgiving and Christmas. "Every time people came up to walk the picket line with us, they gave us another week to keep our morale up. It would last well after their departure," said 4616 member Gail Ashby. "It made a big, big difference in our ability to stay strong, to stay the course."

CUPE Ontario is proud to support Operation Christmas Cheer and grateful for the 10 years of support the group has given workers who have taken brave stands for fairness in communities across the province.





## A Big **Thank-You** to the Following Unions, Committees, Councils, Individuals and Companies Who Make Operation Christmas Cheer Possible

**Amalgamated Transit Union** locals 1587 Newmarket – **Canadian Media Guild Ottawa** – **Canadian Union of Postal Workers** Ottawa Women's Committee – **Canadian Union of Public Employees National Executive Board and Ontario Division** and locals 4000 Ottawa, 4600 Ottawa, 4186 London, CSU Solidarity Fund, Power Workers Union local 1000 Toronto, 7575 London, 4400 Toronto, 1979 Ottawa, 1287 Niagara, 503 Ottawa, 1974 Kingston – **Canadian Office & Professional Employees Union** local 225 Ottawa, 343 Toronto, – **CUASA Ottawa** – **Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario** – **EFTO Executive Board and FO Staff** and Hamilton, Bluewater Owen Sound, York Region Occasional Teachers', York Region, Ottawa Carleton Occasional Teachers', Rainbow Sudbury, Algoma SSMarie, Toronto Occasional Teachers', Upper Grand Cambridge, Hamilton-Wentworth – **Int Brotherhood of Electrical Workers** Ontario and Construction Council of ON Organizing – **Int Union Of Elevator Constructors** local 96 Ottawa – **Int Brotherhood of Boilermakers** local 128 Toronto/Hamilton – **Labourers Int Union of North America** and locals 527 Ottawa – **National Union of Public and General Employees** – **Ontario Nurses Association** – **ONA Executive Board** and locals 51 Cobourg – **Ontario Public Service Employees Union** and locals 160 London, 464 Ottawa – 235 Clarksburg – 464 Ottawa, 479 Ottawa, – 454 Ottawa – OPS Staff Union – **Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association** and **OECTA Executive Board** and locals Simcoe Muskoka, Toronto Secondary Unit, Dufferin & Peel, PNVC Unit Peterborough, Bruce Grey Elementary, Algonquin-Lakeshore Kingston – **Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation** – **OSSTF Executive Board and Provincial** and District 25 Ottawa-Carleton, District 17 Barrie, District 16 Newmarket, District 28 Renfrew, District 19 Peel, District 13 Durham, Ottawa Carleton District School Board, Tom Bickford, District 12 Toronto – **Public Service Alliance of Canada** Ontario Region – **Teamsters** locals Canada Rail Conference – **Sheetmetal Workers Int Assoc** locals 285 Etobicoke – **United Food & Commercial Workers** 175/633 Toronto/Ottawa – **UNIFOR** – **National Executive Board and Ontario Executive Board** and locals 52 Newmarket, 914 Sarnia, 2002 Mississauga, 8833 Brantford, 27 Toronto/London, 32 Smooth Rock Falls, 16-0 Goderich, 36 Corbeil, 1106 Waterloo, 41-0 Streetsville, 44 London, 46 London, 79M Ajax, 252 Mississauga, 105 Dryden, 247 Eastern Canada, 691G Fergus, 1999 London/SW Ontario, 232 Ottawa, 2003 Toronto, 685 Peterborough, 593 Oakville, 88 Ingersoll, Independent Parts Suppliers Council Kitchener, 1106 Kitchener, 673 Toronto, 599-0 Peterborough, 1894 Scarborough, 2488 Toronto, 6006 Toronto, 1524 Kitchener, 483 United Food Processors' Union Cardinal, 2163 Ingersoll, 1941 Tilbury, 567 Ottawa, 15 Komoka, 28-0 Brockville, 672 Sarnia, 87M Toronto, 222 Retirees Oshawa, 1075 Thunder Bay, 36, 65 Sarnia, 2025 Ottawa, 222 Oshawa, 1643 Toronto – **United Steelworkers District 6** and **USW Executive Board** and locals 1-500 Hanover and provincial, 650 Thunder Bay, 665 Terrace Bay, 5055 Thunder Bay, 9246 Wawa, 1-2010 Kapuskasing, 4120 Guelph, 5481 Thunder Bay, 9165 Marathon, 862 Cambridge, 2020 Sudbury, 8300 Toronto, 4610 Cambridge, 9740 Strathroy, local 2000, 1998 Toronto, 4464 Marathon, 9422 Thunder Bay, 9350 Timmins, 838 Kitchener

**Individuals:** H&A Greenland, Marcia Freele – Patrick & Anna Kerwin Kim McIntyre Toronto, Barbara & Phillip Kosow, Toronto – Nancy Faraday, Nepean – Alan Wall, Toronto – Gabriela Berloni, Toronto – Roger Smith, Texas – Daryl Barnett, Victoria BC – Scott and Peggy Smith, Texas – Diana Crosby, Texas – Debbie Gamble, Texas – Debbie Enstedt, Winnipeg – Marlene Rivier, Ottawa – Herb Danheir – Thunder Bay, Chuck Hill California, – Peter Lezama Brampton – Mavis McIntyre Puslinch – Allan Good Kingston, Sue Slean North Bay, Daniel Mallett & Deborah, Mr & Mrs Randall, Kevin Hayes & Cathy Matthews – Susan & David Sandercott – Donner Honer – Herb Danier Thunder Bay

**Labour Councils:** CLC Ontario Region – Ontario Federation of Labour – Ottawa District Labour Council – Durham Region Labour Council – Orangeville & District Labour Council – Brantford District Labour Council – Waterloo Regional Labour Council – Hamilton and District Labour Council – Toronto & York District Labour Council, North Bay District Labour Council, Peel Regional Labour Council

**Committees and Councils:** UNIFOR ON Communications Council – CUPW Women's Committee, United Steelworkers Northwestern Area Council, Workers United Canada Council, Congress of Union Retirees of Canada Ottawa, USW EOAC, USW GBAC

**Companies:** American Income Life Insurance Company in Canada – Ross's Independent: Loblaws – **OutGROWOutPLAY.com**

### SPREAD THE CHEER THIS YEAR!

Follow **OPERATION CHRiSTMAS CHEER** on Facebook!

This year we will be posting all our volunteer schedules, picket-line locations, delivery dates, pictures and up-dates on Facebook. **Want to help...It's SUPER easy...**

**“LIKE” and “SHARE” our fanpage! [Facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer](https://www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer)**



**SPECIAL THANKS...** to everyone who has supported OCC over the years!. 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.

- **CUPE 4000, Sean McKenny ODLC** president and **Chase Robinson ODLC Young Workers** for organizing the Ottawa and District Labour Council OCC BBQ for a food and toy donations drop off. Everyone who dropped by enjoyed Holiday Cheer, good food and company.
- **Alan Wall UNIFOR 247** president – If you donated toys and food...he was the guy who all over tim buck two picking up all your generous donations – YOU the BESTEST!
- **CUPE 966:** Pink Bus picked up over 10,000 pounds of food! BIG (((HUGS))) to **Mary Jo Falle** and **Bridget Osborne**
- **UNIFOR National: Jerry Dias** – President, **Peter Kennedy** – Secretary-Treasurer and **Katha Fortier** – Ontario Director for all their support and for spreading the cheer to all UNIFOR Ontario locals.
- **Paul Elliott**, President **OSSTF & OSSTF Executive Board**. Teachers have HUGE HEARTS!
- **Sam Hammond** President of **ETFO** and the **ETFO FO STAFF** for the amazing food and toy drive that helped so many
- **Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association** and all their locals.
- **Linda Haslam-Stroud** President **Ontario Nurses' Union**, Marie Kelly and Andy Summers or their generous donations, time, and for delivering a whole whack of gift cards to the picket-lines.
- **UNIFOR** and **NUPGE** for their extremely generous donations that helped so many families.
- **Nancy Hutchinson and the Ontario Federation of Labour** for spreading the word far and wide to all Ontario locals.
- All the people who dropped by the picket-lines, wrote notes of encouragement, donated items and or their time
- **My core crew...my family**, Richard, Chase and Dylan...need I say more? They sort/pack groceries, load and unload the truck more times than anyone should ever have to...all without hesitation.



**MORE AMAZING  
VOLUNTEERS**

