

November  
2013  
Issue 7



# Picket-Line Press NEWSLETTER

Published Annually By **OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHEER**

Phone (613) 301-2988 - Email: [casandra@operationcheer.com](mailto:casandra@operationcheer.com)

Follow Us On Facebook - [www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer](http://www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer)



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 – Support Union!**



**Operation Christmas Cheer** traveled the province and delivered the CHEER to each local. Hot lunch and hot chocolate was enjoyed by everyone. Every member collecting strike pay received food hampers, grocery gift cards and toys for their children. I am proud to report that NO family walking an Ontario picket-line last Christmas was forgotten or went without on Christmas day!

Locals YOU supported Christmas 2012 include: **OPSEU 235** Owen Sound, **CEP 5011** Toronto, **USW 526L** Toronto, **USW 1-1000** Pembroke, and **CUPE 4616** Bonfield (this past Thanksgiving).

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!





## ONA PROUD TO HELP MAKE SURE NO FAMILY GOES WITHOUT

By Linda Haslam-Stroud, President Ontario Nurses' Union



On behalf of the 60,000 members of the Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA), Canada's largest nurses' union, thank you to everyone who is supporting the 10th Operation Christmas Cheer on the picket lines. ONA members provide care in every sector, including hospitals, long-term care, community, public health, clinics, and industry. Though most of our members are considered essential service workers who do not have the right to strike, we know how important it is for our communities that workers withdraw our labour, when necessary, to make sure there are still good jobs around for our children's generation.

Last year, through our union, registered nurses and allied health professionals contributed \$5,000 to Operation Christmas Cheer to help make sure that everyone walking a picket line in Ontario during the holiday season would not go without toys for their children and a traditional holiday dinner for their families.

We are so proud to have helped Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Local 334 members at Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society in Peterborough, United Steelworkers (USW) Local 13571 members at Alumicor in Toronto, USW Local



526 members at Infinity Rubber in Toronto, USW Local 9597 members at Inkas in Ottawa, USW Local 1-1000 members at Commonwealth in Pembroke, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union (CEP) Local 5011 members at DHT and INTEK contracted by Rogers in the Greater Toronto Area, York, Simcoe, and Durham. We will be making another financial contribution, along with providing gift cards donated by our local leaders and staff, for Christmas 2013.

## PC PARTY PRO WEALTHY AND ANTI-UNION

By Sam Hammond, President Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

ETFO's best wishes are for a new year in which the anti-union agenda of Ontario's Progressive Conservative (PC) party is defeated. Its call to freeze union wages, erode public services and defined benefit pension plans, and weaken unions is meant to help wealthy interests, not working people.

As the baby boom nears retirement, defined benefit pension plans will help many unionized workers retire with dignity and security. These plans are also making a significant contribution to the Canadian economy, according to recent research.

As other countries such as Britain have found, austerity measures such as freezing wages and cutting public services don't work. It is investment in communities, services, and infrastructure that creates jobs, and supports local economies and small businesses.

Countries that have strong union movements have much better rates of pay, and have experienced less of an increase in economic inequality since the early 1980s, according to World Bank. Contrast that to Tim Hudak's PC strategies, which would create a wage race to the bottom.

When it comes to the provincial deficit, the failure to reverse the ever-deepening tax cuts of the Harris PC era have cost Ontario \$16 billion each year in lost revenues. Rather than attack the deficit on the backs of working people, all political parties need to champion more equitable and fair tax policies.

Good wages and pension plans, strong unions and fair taxation – that's a winning agenda for working people in 2014!



## TOGETHER

By Sean McKenny, President Ottawa & District Labour Council

It is that time once again as we ready to gather with family and friends to give thanks and perhaps show appreciation for the relationships and bonds we have. A holiday season celebrated in different ways by many people but one where the centerpiece is indeed our relationship with others that have and will continue to help define us as individuals and as people. A season of giving, of caring and of reflection.

The Labour movement, over the last year, has unquestionably been the focus by some determined to take away what has been gained for all Canadians. In addition those same governments, organizations and individuals are attempting with all of their might to initiate policies and legislation to prevent the possibility of any and all future gains.

Labour Councils across the country have joined with the Canadian Labour Congress and its affiliates in trying to ensure that all Canadians are not fooled. That despite attempts by some to paint organized labour as not having the best interests of their membership or of all Canadians at heart unions will not succumb to the bullying, to the rhetoric and to the outright lies.

Our history cannot be changed nor can the role of organized labour in helping to ensure fairness, equality, dignity and respect for not only its members but for all Canadians. Sadly, some are attempting to alter and rewrite that history.

We can no longer take for granted that our role as a union member and as unions is respected by all and our struggles for the gains we now have are remembered by all.

The Together For Fairness initiative is an opportunity for all of us to ensure our history is not forgotten. To ensure the general public and those without the benefit of a union recognize our importance. That unions are needed now more than ever and that all union members no matter the union and no matter the rank of that member are working hard on behalf of all.

This holiday season perhaps you might find the time to reflect upon how you as a member of a union might help in ensuring that our history is not re-written, our contributions and accomplishments past, present and future not diminished by others. Above all else, it is you as a member of a union that is the union. Happy holidays to all!



## STAND UP FOR FAIRNESS

By CUPE Ontario

Operation Christmas Cheer joined CUPE Ontario members and allies from across the province for a rally in Bonfield, Ontario in October. The group brought support for the 16 municipal workers, members of CUPE Local 4616, who were forced into a defensive strike on August 1.

As we write this, the brave members are passing the 100-day mark in their stand for fairness in the face of an employer demanding deep concessions. Their stand is an important one as employers make ever wilder demands for concessions.

Last spring, CUPE Ontario began a new initiative called Standing Up for Fairness: [standupforfairness.ca](http://standupforfairness.ca). Members across the province have begun having conversations with one another about the benefits of unions and collective bargaining – an ambitious goal of starting face-to-face conversations between more than 240,000 members.

The gains made through collective bargaining benefit all Canadians. Gains made through collective bargaining have a ripple effect on the rights of other workers. The 40-hour work week, parental leave, vacations, health and safety laws and same-sex spousal benefits are now commonplace thanks to union members.



**1<sup>st</sup> EVER OCC BBQ FUNDRAISER****By Chas Robinson, ODLC Young Workers Committee**

Having grown up within the labour movement and Operation Christmas Cheer, I jumped at the opportunity to help the ODLC organize an OCC toy and food drop-off. With an amazing venue given to us by CUPE 4000's President, Bruce Waller and with the Labour Councils ability to reach out to so many Union activists, I knew it would be a success.

The BBQ fundraiser was a huge success and raised just over \$4,000 along with lots of toys and non-perishable food items. Members from CUPE, CURC, OPSEU, friends & family of trade unionists and even the Executive Vice-President of the CLC, Barbara Byers came out! This year I plan to again help raise funds for OCC - keep an eye on out on OCC's facebook page for details as they emerge.

**USE 'EM OR LOSE 'EM! IT IS TIME TO FIGHT FOR WORKERS RIGHTS****By: Sid Ryan, President of the Ontario Federation of Labour**

This Christmas, many workers in Ontario are struggling to put a holiday meal on the table because of employers – public and private – who would rather keep us on the picket line instead of offering a fair settlement with wages and benefits that allow us to live, work and retire in dignity. However, these threats on our most basic rights are about to get much, much worse. What Conservative Leader Tim Hudak is promising to do if elected Premier is an unprecedented

attack on workers' rights. It would divide our workplaces, weaken worker protections, and drive down wages and living standards for every worker in the province. Modeled after so-called "Right to Work" laws in the United States, Hudak wants to make mandatory union dues illegal, ban any clause in collective agreements requiring workers to join a union, allow employers to ignore dues check-off requirements and increase government interference in arbitration.

These are changes that would undo policies that have been in place since the Rand arbitration decision in 1946. They would be a particular blow to young people already struggling to find good jobs and racialized communities confronted by systemic barriers and the absence of decent employment. But the passage of such policies would only be the first step. Next would come employer campaigns to encourage, or bully, workers to cut off union dues, followed by employer-funded anti-union factions in our workplaces.

Workers struggling on a picket line this season must ask themselves how their local would cope with fewer members and half the budget? Where would they find funds to service members? What power would they have at the bargaining table? What would happen to their wages, benefits and other rights? The message we have received from the labour movement south of the border is this: fight with everything you've got to stop right-to-work from happening or life will become a heck of a lot harder. This is a reality check that we must not ignore.

As unionized workers, we understand that most of the gains made in our society – from maternity leave to the 40-hour week, from the minimum wage to universal health care – are the legacy of the labour movement. Conservatives know that unions are the single biggest obstacle to their low-wage agenda and that the gains of organized labour elevate the standards for everyone. It is time to reject the politics of division and take our message directly to our members and the community. We are in a battle for the hearts and minds of our fellow workers and we cannot fight it alone. We must build support with our workplaces, forge bonds within our communities and put forward a collective vision for a better Ontario. This vision is not only a vehicle for protecting our past achievements from the anti-worker agenda, it will also rejuvenate the labour movement and generate broad-based consensus for a *socially just* Ontario – one that pundits and policy-makers cannot ignore.



*"Alone we can do so little; Together we can do so much."*

*Helen Keller*

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHEER – TRUE COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY

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

The United Steelworkers has a long and proud history of standing up and fighting back when employers and governments attack the working and living standards of our members. The USW is equally proud to support Operation Christmas Cheer and the tremendous solidarity this organization has provided to struggling families across Ontario for many years.

The holiday season is a particularly difficult time for the families of workers who are on a picket line because they have chosen to fight for decent jobs and working conditions in their communities. But it also is a time for remarkable acts of generosity and kindness that demonstrate to these families that they are not alone in their struggles.

Operation Christmas Cheer epitomizes this spirit of community solidarity. Every year, this volunteer-based organization helps hundreds, even thousands, of families embroiled in labour disputes across Ontario. This year, Operation Christmas Cheer will help more than 200 Steelworkers families in need, as well as hundreds of other families in similar circumstances in our province. The United Steelworkers is not only grateful for these efforts, our union is a proud and longtime supporter and contributor to this annual campaign.

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.



### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

#### A FEW NOTES FROM THE FAMILIES' YOU SUPPORTED LAST CHRISTMAS

- ♥ Just wanted to say thank you for the gift card. After being on strike for two months, my husband is off for 2 1/2 weeks without pay. In years past he was given a bonus which would cover this time. This year he didn't receive that. It was a pleasant surprise to receive the gift card. We can certainly use this in the coming weeks.
- ♥ I hope that one day I can help someone the way you have helped me today. When I came home with turkey, ham food and toys my wife cried. She could not believe what your group had done for us. Merry Christmas and thank you.
- ♥ it was truly a blessing to receive the assistance you offered. Having that extra money to buy groceries, diapers, or any number of other necessities was such an unexpected gift. Please be assured that we are all truly grateful, and thank you for all the work you do on behalf of those who find themselves in a strike position at such an important, but also costly, time of year.
- ♥ Thank you! It was a long 7 weeks and those gift cards were a miracle! please pass on to those responsible, I am very grateful. Cassandra you are an amazing woman and my family will be forever grateful for what you have done for us this Xmas. You showed us that people do care and you gave me back some dignity. I am forever in your debt.
- ♥ Just a note to say thank you so much for the grocery gift card. I can't tell you how much it means to have that thoughtful bonus after being out for so long. Hopefully we will all be able to pay it forward someday. Thanks so much for your generosity, it meant so much,
- ♥ Thank you for all the work you do it is truly amazing what a group of people can accomplish. Thank your husband too, he is a wonderful man! Another Christmas walking the line and the only good thing is that I get to see your smiling face and your crew that work so hard to make our Christmas a little merrier – God bless you!
- ♥ There was a lot of talk on the picket line when we heard that we might be getting some sort of food basket or some gift cards, a lot of positive talk at a time when there was little positive to talk about. Some people had already went to their local food bank, or were talking about it. Those of us with children were talking about the effect of the strike on them, and with Christmas looming spending/not spending. Expenditure of money on anything was scrutinized, each according to their own values and financial standing. When we got the gift cards, that was the brightest spot and best treatment that I had in a month. It meant a lot. I think that I am still suffering not only the residue of what happened financially, but how we were treated, and some lingering anxiety. I ended up in the emergency with chest pains....and that was after the strike was over, but dealing with some things about how we were treated afterwards. Thanks for helping counterbalance some of that.
- ♥ I believe in Santa Claus! Thank you for all the goodies we received today. Your generous gifts came at the right time.



# ONTARIO PICKET-LINES



## **A BIG THANK-YOU** to the Following Unions, Committees, Councils, Individuals and Companies Who Make Operation Christmas Cheer Possible

**Amalgamated Transit Union** locals 279 Ottawa - **Canadian Auto Workers** locals 88 Ingersoll, Independent Parts Suppliers Council Kitchener, 1106 Kitchener, 1524 Kitchener, 483 United Food Processors' Union Cardinal, 1120 Sault Ste. Marie, 567 Ottawa - **Canadian Media Guild** locals Ottawa, Toronto - **Canadian Union of Postal Workers** Ottawa Women's Committee - **Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario Division** and locals 4000 Ottawa, 151 Thorold, 4600 Ottawa, 4186 London, CSU Solidarity Fund, Power Workers Union local 1000 Toronto, 905 Newmarket, 1979 Ottawa, 2424 Ottawa, 503 Ottawa - **Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada - CEP Ontario Executive Board** and locals 914 Sarnia, 8833 Brantford, 27 Toronto/London, 32 Smooth Rock Falls, 16-0 Goderich, 36 Corbeil, 39 Thunder Bay, 41-0 Streetsville, 44 London, 46 London, 79M Ajax, 87M Toronto, 105 Dryden, 156 Espanola, 256 Kapuskasing, 247 Eastern Canada, 593 Oakville, 691G Fergus, 1999 London/SW Ontario, 2003 Toronto, 685 Peterborough, 425 Ridgeweay, 672 Sarnia, 6006 Toronto, 593 Oakville - **Canadian Office & Professional Employees Union** local 225 Ottawa, 343 Toronto, - **CUASA Ottawa - Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario - EFTO Executive Board** and Kawartha Pine Ridge, York Region Occasional Teachers', York Region, Ottawa Carleton Occasional Teachers', Peel Local Mississauga, Simcoe County, Toronto Occasional Teachers', Ottawa Elementary - **Int Union Of Elevator Constructors** local 96 Ottawa - **Labourers Int Union of North America** and locals 527 Ottawa - **National Union of Public and General Employees** and TSU - **Ontario Nurses Association - ONA Executive Board** and locals 51 Cobourg - **Ontario Public Service Employees Union** and locals 464 Ottawa - 235 Clarksburg - 464 Ottawa, 479 Ottawa, 310 Newmarket, 250 Wairton - 454 Ottawa - 415 - Staff Union - **Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association** and **OECTA Executive Board** and locals Simcoe Muskoka, Kenora, Eastern Ontario OECTA, Toronto Secondary Unit, PNVC Unit Peterborough, Bruce Grey Elementary, Kenora Unit, Simcoe-Muskoka Secondary, Algonquin-Lakeshore Kingston - **Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation - OSSTF Executive Board** and District 25 Ottawa-Carleton, District 16 Newmarket, District 19 Peel, District 13 Durham, Ottawa Carleton District School Board, Tom Bickford, **Public Service Alliance of Canada** and locals Toronto - **Teamsters** locals 230 Markham - **United Food & Commercial Workers** 175/633 Toronto/Ottawa - **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, 1976 Thunder Bay, 4120 Guelph, 4464 Marathon, 5481 Thunder Bay, 9597 Ontario, 9165 Marathon

**Individuals:** Chris Macdonald - CLC Toronto - Nelson Ross Laguna Ottawa, Pat Kerwin Kim McIntyre Toronto, Barbara & Phillip Kosow, Toronto - Robert Bailik, Ottawa - Derek Blackladder, Cobourg - Nancy Faraday, Nepean - Ed Weidinger, Waterloo - Mr & Mrs Hill, Ottawa - Dan Maxwell-Kemptville - 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, Dan & Eva Hill Ottawa - Kim & Tom Donnelly Kinburn, Paul Heuthorst Ottawa - Barbara Byers Ottawa - Gerry Jones Ottawa - Joel & Stephanie Lafluer Gatineau - Jennifer Moore Ottawa - Rose Proux Ottawa - Rob McCualgy Ottawa - Jimmy & Santana Coyle Vaier - Peter Lezama Brampton - Chris Wojcik Ottawa - Mr & Mrs Bennett - Mavis McIntyre Puslinch - Sylvia Paulin Brantford - Primrose Short

**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 - Guelph & District Labour Council - Renfrew & District Labour Council - Kenora District Labour Council - Waterloo Regional Labour Council - Hamilton and District Labour Council - Toronto & York District Labour Council

**Committees and Councils:** PSAC Greater Toronto Area Council - CEP Ontario Primary Forest Council - CEP ON Communications Council - CUPW Women's Committee, United Steelworkers Northwestern Area Council

**Companies:** American Income Life Insurance Company in Canada - Ross's Independent: Loblaw's - [OutGROWOutPLAY.com](http://OutGROWOutPLAY.com)

## **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 "Spread the Cheer" this year? It's SUPER easy...

**"LIKE" and please "SHARE" our fanpage!**

**[Facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer](https://www.facebook.com/OperationChristmasCheer)**





**SPECIAL THANKS...** to these OCC Angels listed 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.

- **CUPE 4000, Bruce Waller** president, **Sean McKenny ODLIC** president and **Chase Robinson ODLIC Young Workers** Chair for organizing an Ottawa OCC BBQ for a food and toy donations drop off. Everyone who dropped by enjoyed Holiday Cheer, good food and company. President of the Ontario Federation of Labour. The OFL's support helped spread the cheer far and wide – no Ontario Family went without this Christmas thanks to your support!
- **Alan Wall, Joanie Deferrari & Gabriela Berloni** for lugging, sorting/packing all the hampers and driving all over town buck two helping to get the hamper out – YOU guys are the BESTEST!
- **Marty Warren – USW District 6** president and **Myles Sullivan** Staff rep for helping providing their offices to sort and bag all the food
- **Ontario Federation of Labour** for spreading the word far and wide to all Ontario locals.
- **Kim Ginter** CEP Regional VP Ontario, **Barb Dolan** and **Dave Moffat** CEP Regional Admin VP's for all their support and for spreading the cheer to all CEP locals. **Cherie Hunter** for bringing her crew out to help sort/bag hampers
- **Kenneth Coran**, President OSSTF & **Executive Board**, **Sam Hammond** President of ETFO and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and all their locals. Teachers have HUGE HEARTS!
- **Linda Haslam-Stroud** President Ontario Nurses' Union and **Anne Clarke** VP for their generous donation, time, and for delivering a whole whack of gift cards to the picket-lines. **OSSTF Executive Board**, **CEP ON Communications Council** and **NUPGE** for their extremely generous donations that helped so many families.
- **AIL in Canada** for donating the truck, my time (giving me time off work) and a very generous cheque.
- All the people who dropped by the picket-lines, wrote notes of encouragement, donated items and or their time
- 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.

