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Operation Christmas Cheer



Website: www.operationcheer.com - phone (613) 301-2988 - email: casandra@operationcheer.com

CHRISTMAS SOLIDARITY DELIVERED TO EVERY LOCKED OUT & STRIKING WORKER

By Casandra Robinson - CEP 247



ERIN ON - Vanessa, Joe, and Brian deliver food and toys to USW District 6 Director, Wayne Fraser & Mike Gilliam president of USW 271G who have been on strike since the summer.

TIMMINS, THUNDER BAY, ERIN, ONTARIO - Since 2004, Operation Christmas Cheer volunteers have mobilized in November and campaigned until late December on behalf of Ontario union locals on strike or lock-out. The mission is always the same... help as many union members as possible during the Holidays. The goal is that each family walking a picket-line receives food, toys, and a grocery gift card so they can purchase their own Christmas dinner.

This Holiday Season something magical happened on a grass roots level. Within 5 short weeks, over 50 volunteers and 121 unions, committees and labour councils had joined together to rally around all 279 Brothers and Sisters who were facing financial, physical, and emotional hardship during Christmas because of a prolonged labour dispute. Unions across the province challenged their members to donate food, toys and spare change in solidarity. Local labour councils and CEP Ontario donated space so people could drop off donations.

One union held a "Dinner for Two" raffle and entered a members name when they brought in a donation.



TIMMINS, ON - Members of CEP 37x and their children line up to pick up bags of food, toys and grocery gift cards donated in kind by organized labour

Another local matched all spare change collected while a provincial executive board collected toys for the strikers in lieu of their annual gift exchange. A dozen gift baskets that were made with care and kindness were also collected along with many notes of encouragement to keep strong.

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In total 281 bags of food, 91+ toys and \$37,092.25 was donated in kind by organized labour for our Brothers and Sisters who were forced to walk a picket-line over the holidays. Volunteers from Ottawa packed a big truck to the ceiling with food and toys. They drove 12 hours through a blizzard to deliver the Cheer on time to CEP 37x in Timmins. Two days later volunteers in London and Kenora loaded up their cars and trucks with donations from their communities and they headed to USW 271-G in Erin and to USW 1-2693 in Thunder Bay who has three picket-lines in Geraldton, Longlac and Terrace Bay. Their mission was to deliver labours Christmas Cheer.

GERALDTON, ON - Members of USW 1-2693 who have been on strike for almost two years, gather at the Legion Hall to meet Operation Christmas Cheer.



Cheer was delivered in force to the picket-lines across the province and positive TV, newspaper, and radio media was generated in each community. There is no doubt that OCC supporters and volunteers made Christmas a lot brighter for many people and that spirits were uplifted. The strikers were remembered, encouraged, directly supported, and thanked for their steadfast courage against their immoral employers.

No union family was forgotten this year and each received bags of food, toys and or toy gift cards for their children, and grocery gift cards so they could purchase their own traditional Christmas dinner for their loved ones.

A LETTER FROM JOE HANLON - PRESIDENT USW 1-2693 – THUNDER BAY



UNITED STEELWORKERS, LOCAL 1-2693
RM. 6, 929 FORT WILLIAM RD.
LAKEHEAD LABOUR CENTRE
THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO P7B 3A6
TEL: (807) 345-9041 FAX: (807) 345-5169
EMAIL: steelworkers@tbaytel.net



20 December 2007



Operation Christmas Cheer

On behalf of our striking USW Local 1-2693 members, we would like to express our heart felt appreciation for the Christmas food vouchers and lunch that they received. Your gift will go a long way to assist our members who have been on strike for 23 months against an employer who 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 Cassandra Robinson through AIL, 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. We would also like to thank Glen Morrison for attending our meeting on behalf of Operation Christmas Cheer and presenting the food vouchers to our members. 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-tum in the Forest Industry. Again, thank you to everyone who 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 holiday season.

Fraternally yours,

Joe Hanlon, President
United Steelworkers, Local 1-2693



A NOTE FROM RICK RACINE - PRESIDENT CEP37X - TIMMINS

Dear Operation Christmas Cheer Participants,

On Behalf of the Families and members of CEP Local 37x, we would like to extend a sincere thank-you to all locals, committees and labour councils that contributed to Operation Christmas Cheer. Special thanks to Casandra and her husband for delivering the Cheer while braving the Northern elements (winter storm and treacherous driving conditions). The letters of encouragement, food, grocery gift cards, and monetary donations were greatly appreciated by all.

It is heartwarming to see that support continues to surround us after 15 months, especially during the Holiday Season. Your thoughtfulness and generosity has touched us deeply. We are blessed and very grateful for being part of the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union. Wishing you all a healthy and prosperous New Year.

In Solidarity,
Rick Racine
President CEP Local 37x



LOCKED OUT WORKERS RECEIVE HOLIDAY CHEER



Charlie Angus MP, Cas Robinson, and Gilles Bisson MPP



TIMMINS ON - Locked out workers on the picket line outside Grant Forest Products received bags of groceries, toys, pizza and grocery gift cards on Monday thanks to Operation Christmas Cheer. The group delivers good will to workers on picket-lines all across the province during the holidays.

“The donations come from organized labour on a grass roots level throughout Ontario and even as far away as Nunavut and the USA ,” said Casandra Robinson, Public Relations rep with ALL Canada and a secretary-treasurer for Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union.

“As a labour activist, I am blessed to work for the only 100% wall to wall union label insurance company in Canada. Unlike the companies these workers are picketing against, ALL supports labour not only in word but in deed.” Robinson said while standing in front of two trucks loaded with donations. “My employer actually allows me time off work to participate in union activities and education. For the past 4 years, ALL has encouraged me and supported my efforts to coordinate this worthwhile cause.”

“It’s very much appreciated,” said Claire Tremblay, a locked out maintenance person. “It’s a bad time of year for us. We all have to cut corners.”

Timmins-James Bay MPP Gilles Bisson and MP Charlie Angus lead the group in Christmas Carols, Angus on acoustic guitar, to help raise the spirits of more than 100 workers who have been locked out for a year and a half.

“This has been a very long one,” Bisson said of the lock-out. “The employer started this knowing how bad the forestry industry has been. If they meet in January this will only be the second time they’ve come back to the table,” he said.



Joe Chang - CEP Labour Activist

“We’ve lobbied the government about this problem in the forest industry,” Angus said to the group. “It’s like they don’t give a shit about it. It’s time the government starts supporting the forest industry. The liberals have turned their backs on it and we can’t stand for it any longer”. “Peter Grants needs to come back to the negotiating table and bargain fairly,” he said. Normally he’d think government pressure would help, but Angus emphasized that the McGuinty government has ignored the situation.

TWO VOLUNTEERS SHARE THEIR OCC EXPERIENCE

By Glen Morrison - CEP 247 & AIL Canada

KENORA & GERALDTON ON - IT was with extreme pleasure that I made the trip from Kenora to Geraldton to take an active roll in Operation Christmas Cheer. I traveled with Joe Hanlon President, Natalie Belair 1st Vice president for IWA USW 1-2693 and staff Rep Herb Daniher. Because of the area being covered by the Striking local, a central meeting place was set at the local Legion where all the striking members were served lunch which they enjoyed. After brief introductions from Joe, Herb made a presentation on behalf of District 6. I then had a chance to make a small presentation. I read off greetings from Cas and Operation Christmas Cheer. Then talked about the support from the labour sector in



Glen Morrison and Joe Hanlon

Ontario and how they were not forgotten in the north. Everyone in the labour movement was watching and wishing them a chance to get back to work and this was a small way to support those fighting for all our rights. We then proceeded to hand out the grocery gift cards to all

the members for them and their families. All in all it was a great experience and I truly left the town and those members thinking we helped brighten a few peoples Christmas. After being in the labour movement for over 25 years I know that there are very few pleasures that can be expected and that really take place. I know the feeling of the fight for one of your members through Arbitration and winning or negotiating a good and fair Contract or just getting your members through a tough time in life. This experience ranks right up there with all of them. So Cas, I want to thank you for the opportunity to take part in your OCC program and look forward to working with you and OCC next year



By Joe Larson - CEP 247 & AIL Canada

LONDON & ERIN ON - This past December myself and two associates, Brian Traboulay and Vanessa Jordan had the pleasure to be involved in Operation Christmas Cheer. Our London office had been used as a drop-off location for food and toys, and many of our agents helped by collecting food from union members. It was our job to deliver the donations from SW Ontario to USW 271G's picket-line. This was our first year volunteering and we weren't sure exactly what to expect when we arrived, but what we found there was amazing.

Despite being on strike for over 6 months, these people were upbeat and steadfast. Some members also had their spouses and children with them. The spirit of union solidarity was definitely evident in this tight knit group. You could tell that despite the tough circumstances of being off work for so long that it was their unity keeping them strong. They were delighted to see the donations that we had delivered and it was a very humbling experience for all of us.

The majority of us take our good fortune (jobs, income, food, shelter) for granted, so it was an eye-opener to see that these working families probably wouldn't have their usual Christmas (lot's of presents for kids, giant feasts, etc). Knowing that we played a small part in improving a families' holiday season was a great feeling. A major part of working for any company is the knowledge that the organization has a social conscience and gives back to the community. AIL and its people have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to help families through no-cost benefit programs and union support. I am so proud to be part of a company and a union that truly cares. It was our honour to be a small part in this year's campaign. Many thanks to Cas and all the other labour leaders who make Operation Christmas Cheer possible.





Sean McKenny president of the ODLC and VP of the OFL



John McCrae High School Students



Joe and Brian delivering toys



Chase, Ben, and Kelly earning community work credit

VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



Richard buying more food



CEP 247 Volunteers



Donated Food



CEP 37x Volunteers



USW 1-2693 Volunteers



Donated Food



CEP 37x Volunteers



CEP 37x Volunteers

Dear Operation Christmas Cheer, Our Family is a recipient of your generous donations of food, toys, and grocery cards. It warms our hearts and we are very grateful for your labour of love in these difficult times. God bless you and your families.
In Solidarity - Gauthier Family - CEP 37x Timmins



Driving conditions Ottawa to New Liskard



Volunteer from grocery store



150 bags of food



Donated Food



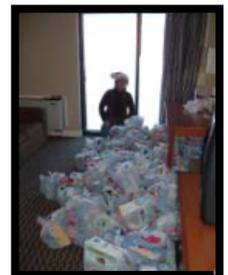
CEP 37x Volunteer



OPSEU 479 Volunteer Fay & her Husband



CEP 37x Volunteer



150 bags of food

ERIN WORKERS ON STRIKE FOR 6 MONTHS WELCOME CHRISTMAS BOOST

By Vik Kirsch - The Guelph Mercury

ERIN ON - Yanon Begg gathered with fellow strikers around burning wood in a barrel to ward off the cold yesterday, listening to a bit of good news. Though not the end of a labour dispute that's kept 85 Guardian Fibreglass Inc. employees on a picket line for six months, it was still welcomed. United Steelworkers Ontario and Atlantic director Wayne Fraser arrived from Toronto yesterday with Christmas turkeys and extra cash from the union and its voluntary 'adopt a-family' strike support program to bring some holiday cheer.

For Begg, 58, a company quality-control inspector who's put in 20 years with the firm, it's as welcome as the people from Erin who have come by the picket line with refreshments, donations and a kind word or two over the months. "We've had great community support," Begg said. "It boggles the mind." "Your fight is a courageous one," Fraser told the largely upbeat crowd of several dozen resolute members who were bundled against the cold in extra layers of clothing. They went on strike in June to reject concessions sought by the maker of fibreglass insulation after a three-year contract expired.

"You had no choice but to be here," Fraser reminded them, noting such demands from a profitable company is "a slap in the face." In addition to the turkeys and \$17,000 extra from the union and various donors, he extended the emotional support of the labour movement in general. "We bring with us our solidarity," Fraser said. That camaraderie was evident yesterday as a troop of well-wishers from other unions, in what they dubbed 'Operation Christmas Cheer,' delivered pizza, food vouchers, canned food and children's toys for the families of picketing strikers.

It's much appreciated, Begg said, stressing how much the labour movement and community support boosts morale on these dour winter days. Plant manager Dan Pyke, the company's spokesperson, was out of the office yesterday and unavailable for comment. As with the others, Begg is trying to cope with the protracted strike as best he can. He's grateful his four children are grown. Still, he and wife Sharron, who isn't working outside the home, have had to refinance a mortgage and tighten their belts. But he added he'd prefer to be inside the sprawling building on Erin's north side to putting in regular four-hour shifts trudging the picket line outside. "I'd rather be working," he said. The plant, a division of Michigan-based conglomerate Guardian Industries, makes home insulation, primarily for U.S. markets. Begg conceded the Erin facility is suffering a double whammy: a high Canadian dollar and a troubled U.S. housing sector. If the dollar alone were to drop back to 60 cents U.S. or so "this plant would be open in a week." But he's not anticipating an early resolution to the dispute with local management.

Fraser was more optimistic, hoping management would soon reopen contract negotiations. "We'll give them a call in the new year," Fraser said. The union has 280,000 members in Canada, including 94,000 in Fraser's region, Ontario and the Maritimes. In addition to the 85 USW members of Local 271, the Erin plant has about 20 non-unionized staff, Fraser said. Though the last three-year contract expired in June, contract talks stalled in February. A mediation effort a month ago was unsuccessful, Fraser added. Meanwhile, local union president Mike Gilliam said the mood of the strikers remains good, despite the first labour dispute in 22 years at the plant. "The morale is high," Gilliam said.



A NOTE FROM MIKE GILLIAM - PRESIDENT USW 271G

To all those who participated in making our Christmas a happier time, Your time, efforts, and donations were greatly appreciated. It is nice to know that there are those out there willing to do for others in a time of need. We should all try to do what you have done for us. In keeping with the season, we are sending you this note to show our thanks. From all of us at USW 271 G.

In Solidarity,
Mike Gilliam
President
USW 271 G





NORTHERN ONTARIO COMMUNITIES ARE BLEEDING TO DEATH

By Cec Makowski - VP CEP Ontario



DRYDEN, ON -- “How much longer can we stand by and let Northern Ontario communities bleed to death?” That statement from Cec Makowski, Ontario Vice-President for Canada’s largest forestry union, following the announcement of more cutbacks at the Domtar mill in Dryden. Makowski says the closure again sounds the alarm on the need for federal government intervention. “We need a national summit of all stakeholders to address the forest industry crisis -- something the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union has repeatedly called for. We need to get to work immediately on an economic strategy to ensure that resource-dependent communities survive and thrive.

“We definitely don’t need more hearings and submissions on what’s happening in forest communities,” Makowski says, in response to the recently adopted federal Private Member’s Bill calling for a national committee to conduct such hearings. “We already know what’s happening: Workers are facing financial ruin. Families are being torn apart. Communities are dying. Let’s move on to solutions - it’s time for action. “It’s not as if the Liberals don’t know this,” he adds. “Just as the Tories are doing nothing now, when the Liberals were in power they too did nothing when the crisis was staring them in the face. What they are doing now is pre-election posturing, which is fooling nobody.”

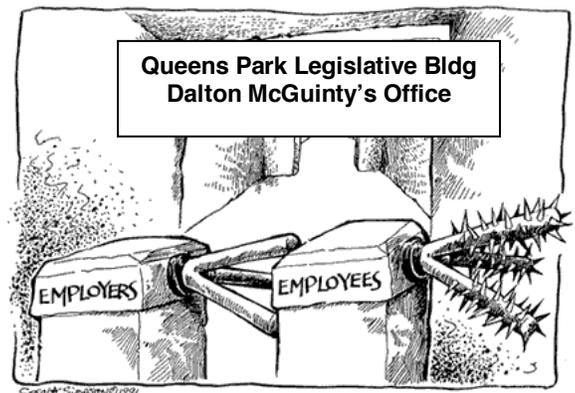
The cuts announced Dec. 13 by Domtar are the latest in a long list of closures that have hit the Ontario communities of Red Rock, Smooth Rock Falls, Thunder Bay, and now Dryden again, Makowski says, noting that this is the second hit the hard-pressed community has taken in less than a year. “The community is reeling, as is all of Northern Ontario. CEP will continue to push for action until we get some.”

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHEER BREAKS ALL RECORDS - 2007 AN ASTOUNDING SUCCESS

OTTAWA ON - Mission Accomplished! OCC was an astounding success in 2007! On behalf of the union families you’ve helped, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your involvement and steadfast solidarity during their time of need. You made a difference this Holiday Season and your kindness, support, and volunteer time spent will never be forgotten.

Operation Christmas Cheer is only possible because of the compassion and generosity of many different unions and individual efforts from all across the province. It is an annual, worthwhile cause that brings a lot of happiness to union families facing adversity during the Holidays. On November 5th 2008, we will start 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
 AIL Canada - Public Relations
 CEP 247 - Secretary Treasurer
 Founder, Operation Christmas Cheer



Donna, Casandra, and Joe - CEP Union Volunteers

A BIG THANK-YOU TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE, UNIONS, COMMITTEES, AND COUNCILS WHO MADE OCC POSSIBLE THIS YEAR

Canadian Auto Workers locals 598 Sudbury, 229 Thunder Bay - **Canadian Union of Postal Workers** 580 Ottawa, GUELPH Local - **Canadian Union of Public Employees** 4000 Ottawa, 4186 London, 888 Cochrane - **Communications, Energy and Paperworkers** locals 1999 London, 156 Espanola, 30-0 Kingston & Belleville, 34-0 Ottawa, 39 Thunder Bay, 1323 Dryden, 51 Ottawa, 27 Don Mills, 333 Rexdale, 975 Scarborough, 517-G London, 341-0, 46 London, 37 Hammer, 12 Plattsville, CEP Media Union of MB 191, 593 Oakville, 914 Sarnia, 571-0 Ottawa, 714-M Barrie, 48 Mooretown, 725 M Sudbury, 544 CLC Milton, 44 Kitchener, 65 ECWU Wyoming, 672 Sarnia, SONG 87M Toronto, 2003 Burlington, 758 Harrow, 219-0 Bathy, 42 Hamilton, 599-0 Peterborough, 320 Brampton, 938 London, 1999 London, 8833 Brantford, 49 Thunder Bay, 26 Mississauga, 900 Simcoe, 247 Eastern Canada - **CEP ONTARIO - COPE** Local 343 Toronto - **EFTO Rainbow Teachers** Sudbury, Kingston - **Ottawa Carleton Elementary Occasional Teachers Association - OECTA** Kenora - **Int Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers** District Lodge 78 Toronto, lodge 1550 Stratford, 1863 Goderich - **Ontario Nurses Association** Executive Board, 51 Coburg, L 125 Scarborough, 95 Brampton - **Ontario Public Service Employees Union** locals 107 London, 479 Ottawa, 656 Sudbury, 702 Kenora - **Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association** Sudbury - **Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation** Executive Board, District 25, District 24 - **PACE** 7-0548 Marathon - **Public Service Alliance of Canada**, 00050 Parks Long Sault, CEIU 00647 Chatham, UTE 00042 Sudbury, 30186, 16 London, CEIU 623 Thunder Bay, AEU Ottawa, Element National Component Ottawa, National x0119 Fort Smith NWT, 373 Thunder Bay, 00268 London - **United Auto Workers** local 251 Wallaceburg - **United Food & Commercial Workers** 175/633 Toronto, 1993 Rexdale - **United Steelworkers** locals 5481 Thunder Bay, 9422 Thunder Bay, 665 Terrace Bay, 11-470 Billings Montana USA, 9740 L'Original, 1-2693 Thunder Bay, 4820 Renfrew, 9597 Ottawa, 650 Thunder Bay, 838 Kitchener/Waterloo, 8794 Hawkesbury

Councils & Committees; CLC Ontario Regional Office - Ottawa District Labour Council - Kingston District Labour Council - Kenora & District Labour Council - Timmins & District Labour Council - Tri-Town District Labour Council - PSAC NCR Regional Women's Committee - United Steelworkers Eastern Ontario Area Council - CUPW Ottawa Women's Committee - CEP Ontario Primary Forest Council - CEP Communications Council - PSAC London Area Council - PSAC Cornwall Area Council - PSAC Kitchener/Waterloo Area Council - PSAC Toronto Regional Women's Committee, PSAC Greater Toronto Area Council - RSAC Racially Visible Committee - PSAC Hamilton Area Council - Ontario Federation of Labour.

Unionized Company Sponsors; AIL Canada, AIL Ottawa Office, AIL London Office, AIL Toronto Office - Altig International, American Income Life Insurance Company, the Comfort Inn, Food Basics in Barrhaven/Ottawa, Toppers Pizza Timmins, Mamma Mia Pizza Guelph and Daneff's Food Market in Guelph.

Special Thanks, to these amazing shining stars below. Your involvement brought some much needed cheer to many in hardship.



Marlene Rivier, Fay and the many members of OPSEU 479 Ottawa, Cecil Makowski CEP Regional VP Ontario, Sean McKinney and the delegates of the Ottawa and District Labour Council, Louise LaPorte & all AEU members, Joe Chang asst to Charlie Angus MP Timmins- James Bay and Kirkland Lake, Nancy Richter & the PSAC London Area Council affiliates, Gerry Halabecki Regional VP Ontario PSAC, Ed Weidinger & the Waterloo Regional Labour Council delegates, Denise Norman CEP Staff Rep and Steve Wanless CEP Rank & File member, Linda Haslam-Stroud - Andy Summers and the members of the Ontario Nurses Association, Richard Leblanc & the USW EO Area Council affiliates, David Wildman Ottawa Carleton Elementary Teachers Association and all the members. Marty Warren, Dave Lipton, Mary Simms, Herb Danheir USW District 6 Staff Reps, Allan and Dave USW 9597, Joe Hanlon, Nathalie Blair and Tracey of USW 1-2693, Rick and the volunteers members of CEP 37x who bagged/sorted/handed out the food. Glen Morrison, Brian Traboulay, Louie, Vanessa, and Joe Larsen of CEP 247 who helped deliver OCC to the picket-lines. Denise Bowyer, Debbie Gamble & Debbie Enstedt from AIL HO. Richard Robinson who never complained once, while he loaded and unloaded the trucks several times and fearlessly drove through a major blizzard to reach Timmins in time for Christmas.