

Continuing the tradition...

The first edition of the Unifor Young Workers Echo is finally here! This paper intends to highlight the work of young members in the union (from all regions of the country) and inspire others to become active in their workplaces, local unions and communities.

Thank you for taking the time to read our paper. We hope it will serve Unifor and its young workers program well, for years to come.

In solidarity,

Unifor Young Workers Network

2013 Young Workers Conference

On May 3-5, and prior to the formation of Unifor, young CAW and CEP members from across Canada participated in a national young workers conference. The conference brought together 80 delegates and special guests to the Unifor Family Education Centre in Port Elgin, Ontario.

Weekend discussions focused on the new union and the opportunities it presents for young members. Participants shared personal stories of union and community engagement and learned about a variety of current campaigns touching on issues impacting young Canadians (like child care and environmental justice).

Participants also offered suggestions on how to make Unifor more relevant to young workers, including young worker-led organizing and decision-making. A keynote speech was delivered by former Quebec student federation leader Martine Desjardins.



Innovative Unifor Apprenticeship Board Game Takes Off

An innovative board game originally developed by Unifor activists to encourage young people to consider a career in the skilled trades will become a prominent fixture in schools across Ontario.

The board game "Skills Work! Skills Play!", developed by Skills Canada-Ontario and unveiled on March 22, was inspired by a module developed for the union's week long Women in Skilled Trades and Technology Awareness program. The game is intended to draw young people (particularly young women) into the trades in an effort to help fill current and future gaps in an ageing Canadian labour market.

Unifor National Coordinator Teresa Weymouth said that part of the union's skilled trades awareness program helps participants identify what is involved in obtaining a skilled trades designation. The board game module is a logical extension of that objective.

"We wanted to develop something based on that program which we could adapt for students and show them that the trades could be a first-choice career option," Weymouth said in an interview with the Windsor Star.

The goal of the game is for players to move game pieces through a cartoon drain pipe, answering questions in order to move forward. Players can build up their tool box by answering questions correctly, with the goal of earning a Red Seal certification award. Questions help educate players on types of trade classifications and workplace safety standards, among other topics.

Skills Canada-Ontario Executive Director Gail Smyth said she was intrigued by the union's idea and thought it useful for the provincial agency to partner with like-minded women.

"The mandate at Skills Canada-Ontario is to promote the skilled trades as viable, first-choice options for Ontario youth. What better way to engage youth than through a board game?"

Skills Canada-Ontario plans to use the game within a broad-based student outreach initiative that will be brought to over 2000 schools across the province.



Cliff Pilkey Changemaker Bursary

Unifor, in partnership with the Otesha Project, has launched a new \$25,000 bursary program in honour of late CAW union leader Cliff Pilkey at the union's national young workers conference on May 4.



The bursary will provide financial assistance to young Canadians participating in the Otesha Project's innovative cycling and performing tours. Otesha tours travel to different communities in Canada to put on theatre presentations and facilitate interactive workshops on a range of social justice topics, including community sustainability and equality. The tours inspire greater engagement in civic life among the volunteer tour members, and audience members alike.

Clifford George (Cliff) Pilkey is a renowned figure in Canada's labour movement. As past president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, Cliff tirelessly championed the rights of workers, including women's rights, social equity and human rights both inside the union movement and in society more broadly.

"Cliff's long list of accomplishments exemplifies the term 'Changemaker'," said Kayla Siefried, The Otesha Project's Programs Coordinator. "Otesha's bicycle tour program cultivates the development of young 'Changemakers.' It's exciting that Cliff Pilkey's story will be shared through this bursary, and that Otesha's programs will be more accessible to youth who may otherwise have difficulties fundraising to participate in one of Otesha's cycling tours."

The Otesha Project is a national youth-led charitable organization that has connected with over 163,000 Canadians through creative and energizing performances, workshops, and keynote presentations, and trained over 500 sustainability advocates through its cycling tour program.

More information on how to apply for the Cliff Pilkey Changemaker Bursary as well as upcoming Otesha Project tours is available at: www.otesha.ca.

Unifor Young Workers Win Top Spot in Dragon Boat Fundraiser

A team of young Unifor members in Quebec finished in first place during a dragon boat race fundraiser for Le Grand Chemin Foundation on May 24. The Foundation provides support to young people (between 12 and 17 years old) struggling with addiction.



The race was held at Montreal's Olympic Basin. Qualifying teams had to raise at least \$4000 for the Foundation, which granted a team of 20 rowers entry into the dragon boat race.

"This was our first time participating in the race," said Unifor Young Worker Francois Arsenault, who participated in the

race. "Despite our lack of experience, we took home the title, which was a great thrill for us."

"Most importantly, we raised nearly \$6,500 for this important Foundation, providing critical services to young people in need. That's the least we could do to show our union's support in the community."

Arsenault thanked all of the local unions that contributed to the effort, vowing to retain Unifor's title in 2014.

Young Ontarians Take Aim at Chronic Unemployment and Underemployment

Ontario's youth jobless rate is among the highest in Canada, prompting more than 100 young workers, students and community organizers gathered in Toronto on September 27 to outline practical policy solutions for youth un- and underemployment.

The day-long *Enough with Un(der)employment* forum included presentations by young workers sharing their personal job market experiences; discussions on the need to better regulate and monitor unpaid internships; ensuring that youth employment strategies pay special attention to vulnerable communities; how unions can play a more direct role in the lives of young workers; and the need for governments to establish practical job creation policies, beyond wage subsidies and seed money for small business.

CJ Hanlon, a 27-year-old shop steward for Unifor Local 1075 working at the Bombardier rail car facility in Thunder Bay, said the province's Buy-Canadian transit policy is one example of a practical solution to the jobs crisis in his community.

"More than 500 young people are working today in highly-skilled, good-paying jobs in Thunder Bay because there's a made-in-Canada criteria on cities who buy public transit vehicles," said Hanlon. "I'm proof that this sort of industrial job creation strategy works."



The forum also included special presentations by Generation Jobless documentary filmmakers Sharon Bartlett and Maria LeRose, and coincided with the release of a new study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, entitled *The Young and the Jobless*. The report revealed that the jobless rate for young workers in communities like Windsor, Oshawa, Brantford and London tops 20 percent, which is similar to extraordinary youth unemployment rates seen in crisis-stricken European nations.

The summit was hosted by Unifor, the Ontario Federation of Labour, Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Ontario Office, Canadian Labour Congress, Workers United and the United Food and Commercial Workers.

A copy of *The Young and Jobless* can be found on the CCPA Ontario website: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/offices/ontario>

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