



## Toyota campaign builds Unifor's organizing capacity

The organizing drive that is ongoing at three Toyota plants in Cambridge and Woodstock is the largest organizing drive happening right now in Canada. The drive started with workers at Toyota who were interested in joining Unifor. Many months later with 3,000 cards signed, the inside committee and the Unifor organizing department continue to work full speed on this important drive.

The drive hit a significant milestone on March 30th when Unifor applied to be the certified bargaining agent for Toyota workers. National President Jerry Dias and many Toyota workers were present to make this announcement in Kitchener. On April 2nd, the employer filed a 54 page objection to Unifor's application and revealed its list of employees as required by the Ontario Labour Relations Board. With over 1,000 more people on it than the company had ever before publicly disclosed, Toyota made it clear that it would also be objecting to Unifor's proposal as to who should be included in the unit.

At this point Toyota workers and Unifor faced a tough choice: proceed to a vote, which would likely have to be settled through lengthy legal battles, or delay



the application and continue building support.

It's the second option that was chosen and since then, Toyota team members have continued to mobilize their co-workers and increase the support for a union in the plant. Though the drive is not over, the organizing department has been able to build its inside organizing capacity through the entire process.

Following through on our commitment from our New Union Convention organizing policy, the campaign has included a broad range of proven union-building strategies, methods and tactics including strategic research, a strong, active inside organizing committee, supported by a Unifor

team that includes member organizers, and a strong emphasis on personal communications, supplemented by modern communication technology and other tools.

Here are some examples of innovative and positive projects that contribute to building Unifor's organizing capacity.

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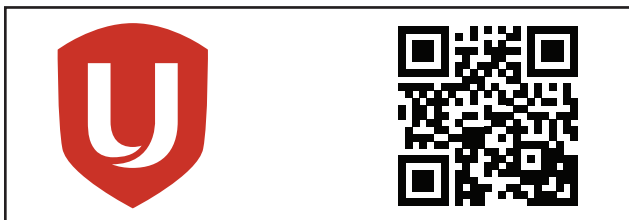
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- **Trained and active member organizers:** The drive has benefited from the help of more than 20 member organizers who were booked off to assist at Toyota. Each member received organizing training and is able to contribute in different capacities, from making phone calls, to helping with campaign events, to taking pictures, to flyering, to answering questions from workers and much more. The training and involvement of member organizers is part of Unifor's founding commitments.
- **Building the inside committee:** In any workplace, the workers themselves should be the ones leading the process to join a union. In the case of the Toyota drive, the members of the inside committee have had an essential role in the campaign. They have contributed to the planning, actively and publicly supported the union in their workplace and in the community, and have been building worker support throughout the campaign. Supporting the inside committee and their strategic direction for the campaign has been at the core of this drive.
- **Dedicated campaign website:** This was an important tool that allows for more centralized location for all information pertaining to the campaign. Just as important as the website, of course, is having the ability to drive Toyota workers to visit it. A screen cleaner was created with the Unifor shield on one side and the QR code on the other side. Just simply scan the QR code with your smart phone and it brings you right to the website.
- **Weekly information newsletter:** For about three months now, the campaign team has produced a weekly newsletter called The Voting Times. This newsletter features informative articles to educate the workers on the benefits of the union and to address common myths about the unionization process. One popular feature has been the profiles of inside committee members and why they support Unifor. Over 6,000 copies of The Voting Times have been distributed every week by members of the inside committee and it has received a very positive response. Copies of The Voting Times can be found on the Unifor Toyota web site.
- **Broad use of media strategies:** Radio ads, op eds and letters to the editor in local newspapers, billboards, social media, employee interviews and telephone town halls make up some of the many communication strategies that have been used in the Toyota campaign. (@UniforToyota [www.facebook.com/unifor4toyota](http://www.facebook.com/unifor4toyota))
- **The Unifor Charter for Toyota workers:** The campaign team put together a major document outlining key concerns identified by Toyota team members and how Unifor would work with them, as official bargaining agent, to address them. This document, based on an on-line survey of Toyota workers, includes proposals around work/life balance, ergonomics, industry standards, working conditions for contract workers and much more. The document has contributed to shape the tone of the campaign and to gear it towards the clear benefits of becoming members of Unifor. (<http://unifortoyota.ca/?p=5587>)



## New benefits program offered to members in community chapters

As part of Unifor's founding commitments, members in community chapters will have the ability to opt-in to one of six Green Shield benefits plan offering basic health, dental and drug coverage.

Having access to health and dental coverage is an important part of increasing the working and living conditions for Canadian workers. Unfortunately, many workers do not have access to benefits with their employment arrangement. By working together in a community chapter, groups of workers can gain access to a selection of benefits plan for themselves and their families.

The details of the benefits plan offered to members in community chapters are now available.

There are six different plans that vary in benefits and cost. They are available to members of a Unifor community chapter who have committed to membership for at least one full year. The plans are called the "Health Assist ZONE", which provides individuals and their dependents not covered under a group benefit plan with exactly what they need - protection against risk by providing coverage for day-to-day medical and dental expenses, as well as other unforeseen health expenses.

These benefits are a clear advantage of being a member of Unifor. They are flexible and affordable, and offer benefits to workers who have no other options for coverage for you and your families.

There are six plans to choose from: three that offer guaranteed acceptance. The complete breakdown of each plan is available at [www.unifor.ca/communitychapters](http://www.unifor.ca/communitychapters).

Local unions should include information about these benefits in any discussion about forming possible community chapters.

## 10 things that make everyone a union organizer:

Unifor is committed to building a culture of organizing at all levels: in the national office, within local unions and in the rank and file membership. We encourage you to adopt some of these strategies to contribute to making organizing a true priority for our union:

1. Share your story about being a unionized worker to other workers and family members.
2. Bring one new person to your union's event or meeting.
3. When people around you make erroneous statements about union members, correct them and share your experience!
4. Read up on the CLC's Union Advantage campaign and learn the facts about how union members in your area benefit <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/about-clc/union-advantage-2013>
5. Engage your local union or your executive on potential groups in your sector or area that could benefit from being members of Unifor.
6. Identify local groups of workers in non-traditional fields who could benefit from working together as a community chapter.
7. Ask a non-union worker if they have ever considered unionizing.
8. Send letters to newspapers when they offer biased reporting against workers and unions.
9. Participate in solidarity events for workers in your community who are on strike, locked out or who are organizing a union.
10. Highlight the positive actions that your union and local union are doing every day!





My union makes  
**my job better...**

And that helps  
**my family too.**



*A union for everyone.*

[unifor.org](http://unifor.org)

## Building a strong team is the key

The initial call from Oneida workers came in December. They were fed up with management's lack of respect and needed the union's help to make things better and fairer for them. It wasn't about the money. (It never is.) After only two years in operation, they clearly had no trust in the company to take care of their best interests.

Eight employees gathered together with representatives from Unifor and started discussing the process of organizing and joining the union, as well as the benefits and most importantly, their rights. This was an energetic and dynamic group, some of whom had previously been or still were Unifor members in other facilities and were convinced we were the union to join. They also understood that they would be more effective if they had even more help from their colleagues, and worked hard to instill confidence in them to come to the next meeting. The core group quickly grew to 15 employees actively engaged in talking to their co-workers about the benefits of joining Unifor.

On February 10th, a vote was held among the 74 workers at Oneida Nation of the Thames Long Term Care Home and an overwhelming majority of RNs, RPNs, PSWs, Dietary Aides, Maintenance and Housekeeping staff voted to join

Unifor. They were certified by the Ontario Labour Relations Board on March 5th and have since met with their Local president and Unifor staff representative, held bargaining committee elections, and compiled their bargaining proposals. Issues such as respect, seniority, job security, vacation and much more will be on the table when they meet with the company on April 29th to open bargaining.

Unifor locals in Ontario currently represent over 26,000 Healthcare workers across Canada in long term care facilities, hospitals and retirement homes.



**Who do you know  
that needs a union?**



**1-877-495-6551**  
or [join@unifor.org](mailto:join@unifor.org)

Contact the Organizing Department: 1-877-495-6551 or [join@unifor.org](mailto:join@unifor.org)