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uniforum



Unifor activists rallied in several Ontario cities to support healthcare workers. More photos on Page 2.

Health workers rally for respect

Hundreds of Unifor activists and supporters rallied in cities across Ontario earlier this month to call on the provincial government to support health care workers.

Unifor is in bargaining with the Ontario government this fall for approximately 17,000

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Women's Advocates help

The new collective agreement signed by Bell Aliant members in the Atlantic Provinces on October 30 included an important addition to each of the four workplaces: Women's Advocates.

Unifor is very proud of the program and has seen it grow quickly in the last few

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years. There are now 311 women trained to intervene with the employer in cases of workplace harassment and to offer support to women experiencing intimate or domestic violence.

After L'Ecole Polytechnique on Dec 6, 1989 - in which 14 female engineering students were murdered - feminists, progressive activists and front line workers across Canada demanded that governments, employers and society address gender-

Child care and the election

Less than a year out from a federal election, more than 700 child care advocates met for a three-day conference in Winnipeg - with the goal of putting child care on the agenda for the 2015 election and having a system in place by 2020.

Childcare2020 - From Vision to Action - brought >>Continued on page3

#unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@Unifor2002

Women's advocates can play a number of roles in the workplace, says Lana Payne, the Atlantic director for #unifor.cbc.ca/1.2832123

@rankandfileca London, ON rally to defend public #healthcare and funding draws.500ourwindsor.ca/news-story/496... #canlab #cdnpoli #onpoli #yxu #Unifor

In brief

Local 222 activists win

Several Local 222 activists were elected in recent municipal elections in the Oshawa area last month.

Doug Sanders, a past Service Representative and District Committeeperson at General Motors, was elected to his second term as an Oshawa City Councillor.

GM retiree and former Financial Secretary **Terry Spence** was re-elected as a Councillor in the Township of Carlow/Mayo.

GM retiree **Nester Pidwerbecki** was re-elected as Regional and City Councillor in Oshawa.

GM retiree and past Insurance Representative **Mike Leveque** was re-elected as Councillor in Hastings Highlands. 

Local 4275, Hotel Vancouver

The 425 members of Unifor Local 4275 at Fairmont Hotel Vancouver ratified a new three-year contract with strong economic gains and benefits for retirees. There are no concessions, raises of 2.5, 2.75 and 3 per cent, increased retirement contributions, retiree benefits funding, doubled severance, and more early retirement chances. 

Photo spotlight: Health care rallies

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PHOTO BY GINO DONATO

Activists and family came out to support healthcare workers in Sudbury.



PHOTO BY PATRICK CHONDON

Thunder Bay healthcare workers and supporter rallied as bargaining gets underway.

Deal positions Kamloops mill for future

An agreement between Unifor Local 10B and Domtar sets the stage for an expanded commitment to apprenticeship training that will help to keep good jobs in Kamloops, B.C.

"Unifor believes in partnerships that can have long-lasting positive effects not just for the worksite, but for the communities we live

in," said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President.

"This is a deal where we can put the past behind us and concentrate on the future of the mill and our union" said Bob Stephens, First Vice-President of Unifor Local 10B.

The agreement resolves outstanding issues related to the closure of the

A-Line in 2013, secures retirement packages for a number of senior workers, retains all laid off employees on a recall list, and sets the framework for apprenticeship training at the mill.

It also establishes scholarships and bursaries at local trades training schools in Kamloops. 

Featured campaign: Retirement Security

Two-thirds of the workforce have no workplace pension, and up to half of Canadians 45 to 65 years old face a big decline in living standards in retirement. For the next generation, it's even worse.

The Harper government is turning its back on these challenges. It refuses to expand the Canada Pension Plan, and is preparing legislation to let employers convert secure and well-funded Defined Benefit plans to less-stable Target Benefit plans.

To find out more, and



Secure pensions are important for all workers.

how you can help, go to <http://www.unifor.org/en/take-action/campaigns/standing-pensions> 

TO PROMOTE A CAMPAIGN IN YOUR LOCAL OR REGION, CONTACT COMMUNICATIONS@UNIFOR.ORG

UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS: SARAH BLACKSTOCK, SHANNON DEVINE, KATIE ARNUP, STUART LAIDLAW, IAN BOYKO, SHELLEY BURGOYNE, MARIE-ANDREE L'HEUREUX AND ANNE MARIE VINCENT

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based violence.

In response, women, labour leaders and activists in our union gathered to discuss and strategize about the role the union could play to assist our members facing violence at home or in the workplace.

“We decided that we needed to use our collective strength at the bargaining table as a vehicle to create change - and thus, the concept of the Women’s Advocate program was born,” said Unifor Women’s Department Director Julie White.

The Women’s Advocate program is just one step in stopping violence against women, White said, but are an important part of the effort. 

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“Child care and the election” on page 1

together early childhood education and child care workers, researchers, aboriginal leaders, trade union leaders and activists, politicians, and child care advocates.

“Child care is a vital issue for our union - not just for the women of the union, but for everyone,” said Unifor Women’s Department Director Julie White. “Only politics is standing in the way of creating a national child care system.”

Unifor regional council women’s committee chairs - Brenda Mason (B.C.), Sue McKinnon (Ontario), Lisa Martin (Atlantic), Cathy St-Amand (Quebec) - also attended with a number of Unifor members, who plan to restart Unifor’s child care



Here at ChildCare2020 is Kim Driedger, Suzanne King, Julie White, Brenda Mason, Lisa Martin, Sue McKinnon, Jody Dallaire and Cathy St-Amand.

campaign - Rethink Child Care.

Unifor Economist Jim Stanford spoke about

the economic benefits of universal child care in Canada.

Visit: childcare2020.ca 

Did you know?

The federal NDP is proposing a national child care program, providing childcare at \$15 a day, per child. The program, in conjunction with the provinces, would provide 370,000 child care spaces by 2018-19, at a federal cost of \$1.87 billion.

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health care workers across the province, and is fighting to end the austerity agenda and its impact on workers.

At the largest rally in London on November 6, members of Unifor, along with supporters from CUPE Ontario, the Council of Canadians, the Ontario Federation of Labour and others, heard from Jerry Dias and Katha Fortier from Unifor, Fred Hahn of CUPE Ontario, Sid Ryan of the OFL and Natalie Mehra of the Ontario Health Coalition.

Speakers addressed the growing indifference of the Ontario government toward health care workers in light of year after year of wage freezes and no sign of

change on the horizon.

“Our health care workers can’t be the last on the list of our government’s priorities,” said Dias, National President of Unifor. “We can’t have the people who care for us being left behind - making the same wages that they were making nearly a decade earlier. Some day politicians will learn that we can’t achieve prosperity through austerity.”

Rallies were also held in Sault Ste. Marie on November 6, and in Thunder Bay on November 7.

In London, Ryan emphasized the need to get people out on the streets and prepared to fight for the system we hold so dear.

Mehra spoke of the



Healthcare workers and supporters marched through the streets in London.

urgent need to educate Canadians about the damage currently being done to the health care system by the federal and provincial levels of government.

“Health care is a system that is a huge contributor to equality and provides a humanitarian service that is so crucial to everybody,”

said Mehra. “In Ontario, we have been under an austerity budget that rivaled Britain’s, and patients and workers are suffering as a result.”

To follow the discussions, use the hashtag #UniforHealth on Twitter and follow @VermeyCorey and @KathaforUnifor. 

Reflecting on 25 years

This year marks 25 years since the massacre at Montreal's l'Ecole Polytechnique, which abruptly ended the lives of 14 female engineering students.

The event became a catalyst for the growing movement to end violence against women as well identified the need to strengthen gun control for all Canadians. This year, the union is commemorating the 25th anniversary of

the Montreal Massacre by renewing its commitment to take on the issue of gender-based violence – in the workplace and the community

"Violence is connected to sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and so many other forms of bigotry," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.

He said the oath that hundreds of men took at the Unifor's Canadian Council

was an important symbolic act, but men need to name sexism when it comes up.

Unifor helped promote the first-ever Canadian survey measuring domestic violence in the workplace. Conducted by researchers at the University of Western Ontario with the Canadian Labour Congress, the survey measured the impact of domestic violence in the workplace.

A report will be released November 27, with Unifor

Women's Director Julie White participating.

"The survey results will help us understand for the first time the impact domestic violence has on Canadian workers in the workplace," White said. "Employers, governments and unions all have a collective responsibility to work together to end domestic violence."

To order posters or buttons, please visit: http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2014_december_6_order_form.pdf

Skilled trades council meets

On Nov 7-9 skilled trades delegates from coast to coast attended the Skilled Trades Council in Niagara Falls.

About 150 were in attendance as the council held its tri-annual elections.

National president Jerry Dias, along with Director of Political Action and Member Mobilization Rolly Kiehne, Niagara MPP Wayne Gates and Welland

MP Malcolm Allen were in attendance and addressed the crowd.

National Chairperson Dave Cassidy said "this was a wonderful council with great speakers," adding that he was honoured to be acclaimed as chair. Cassidy has held this position since 2008.

"More and more skilled trades of Unifor are joining our council and since our



The newly elected Unifor National Skilled Trades Council.

forming of Unifor trades from across the country are reaching out to us to put on our presentation," Cassidy said.

The skilled trades council sets policies and procedures

relative to skilled trades of Unifor and has many delegates that sit on various trade boards and jurisdictions across the country.

McCurdy retires from FFAW

After 21 years as president of the Fish, Food and Allied Workers' union (FFAW), through some of the toughest years to face the fisheries, Earle McCurdy is retiring.

"With a steady hand and a quick mind, Earle McCurdy has provided the fisheries workers of Newfoundland and Labrador with respected and thoughtful leadership over many years of tough times

and difficult challenges," Unifor National President Jerry Dias and Atlantic Regional Director Lana Payne wrote in a joint reflection on McCurdy's contribution.

McCurdy took over from founding FFAW president Richard Cashin just one year after the 1992 fisheries moratoria was called, representing the biggest single layoff in Canadian history when more than



Earle McCurdy

20,000 people lost their jobs overnight.

"We've built a strong union over the years, which I believe is a vital part of the social and economic life of our province, and will continue to do so for

a long time in the future," McCurdy said.

The moratoria lasted many years, much longer than the two-year compensation program would indicate.

Under McCurdy, the FFAW led the fight for a renewed compensation program.

McCurdy was also the longest-serving member of the National Executive Board, having been on the CAW's NEB since 1993, and on the Unifor NEB until his retirement November 17.