



## TODAY'S CHILD WELFARE WORKERS

*Protecting children – Growing better futures*

Volume 1 – August 2014

### CUPE CAS “SCOOP”

As your CAS reps from the Social Service Workers Coordinating Committee (SSWCC), we are committed to keeping you as up to date as we can with items from our sector. If your Local is experiencing anything that you would like to have us share with the entire sector, please send anyone of us an email – we want to be able to share the struggles as well as our successes and provide support within the sector to grow our strength and solidarity.

We have had some CUPE staff changes within the sector and positions have now been filled so we would like to welcome the following:

Andrew Hunter has joined us as the Social Services Coordinator;  
Barbara Wilker-Frey as the Associate Coordinator for Community Agencies;  
Marjorie Savoie as our Communications Representative; and,  
Andy Mele as the Assistant Regional Director.

Bargaining as we all know is one of the items that we all have in common. Currently, the following CAS CUPE locals in Ontario are in bargaining for contracts that ended 2014:

#### 5 locals with 2014 expiry dates

CUPE 2190 – Toronto Catholic CAS  
CUPE 265 – Jewish Family and Child Services  
CUPE 1813 – Muskoka  
CUPE 2286 (2 units) – Windsor  
CUPE 4313 – Payukotayno  
&  
CUPE 2197 – Highland Shores CAS (bargaining a post-merger collective agreement)  
CUPE 2316.1 – Toronto CAS (after hours unit bargaining a 1<sup>st</sup> CA).

There have been scheduled bargaining calls and the coordinated meeting for this group and they have been given the coordinated proposals. The 12 locals that are set for 2015 bargaining will be meeting at the Ontario Regional Office in Markham on September 26<sup>th</sup>, as has been our practice.

In follow up to our conference regarding “insurance for inquests/legal actions” or fees, to date we have had no success in finding anything that would assist in that area. There is a great deal of liability insurance carriers but again, it requires as a profession belonging to an accredited professional association and for those members who already belong to the College (and not something that we endorse as a requirement for child welfare workers) they would be covered. We will continue to seek out information but wanted to update everyone on that area.

As most of you know, the sector has members who are having “forced agency shutdown” days with no pay. Brant FACS has been rallying around this issue and have not been successful in having the employer use alternate financial means to deal with their deficit. Brant FACS held a rally on their first scheduled shut down day as a show of solidarity and the Local has filed a policy grievance as well as over 100 individual grievances. They recently had their second forced shutdown day on August 1 with the next one planned for October.

There have been some changes around funding with the Ministry confirming with some employers that any surplus dollars that they have that are in the “balanced budget fund” can be accessed by that same society if they presents a business case for its use as part of our service and budget plan. There’s also a two-three year window of opportunity to access these funds. We are looking into this with OACAS as well as this is relatively new information.

The Worker Safety Project is still in full swing with a project deadline of July 31, 2014 (new date from the end of March) for the final report. There are many common and agreed to themes that will form this report and our sector is maintaining hope that it will set the basis for further groundwork so that we can move forward as a sector and ensure the best welfare for our members in the field of child welfare. Once this report is out the reps will be contacting each local to share some of the details or to clarify any queries and to discuss coordinated plans of action. Please make sure that we have your contact information!

Many Locals have asked for some ideas on how to garner solidarity within their own membership and many have suggested items that bring members together – and away from desks or phones even for a brief moment. Here are some most recent examples:

- A “colour of the day” week i.e. Black Wednesdays/Purple Fridays. An email is sent out weekly to each member urging them to wear black/purple with a message about how the funding cuts and proposed budget affect them personally as a worker, service to families and implications for the future (especially during these past months and the months leading up to bargaining)
- Black ribbons provided to each member
- Balloons tied to each members’ chair
- Chocolates on each members’ desk
- Host solidarity events each Wednesday at noon (i.e. Tim Bits and Coffee/Button making or BBQ and cake the week before a board meeting or leadership meeting)
- Have other CAS Local leaders attend membership meetings and speak to your members (this has been used successfully over the years with many locals).

Finally, there has been a notice of decision by the Pay Equity Commission for the Second Base agency in Toronto that you can request from your National rep as a recommended model for social services reviews as applicable.

Please enjoy the rest of your summer!

Sincerely,

**Aubrey Gonsalves, Fiona McNair, Heather Murray**  
CAS SSWCC Reps