

CUPE Ontario ***Bargaining Conference***

Mobilizing our Members and our Allies:

Campaign Report and

Sample Bargaining Handouts

Part 1

Our central campaign theme remains fighting privatization in all its forms. While our approach is primarily along sectoral lines, all our campaigns overlap and compliment each other in some way; and of course they all share the goal of improving the quality of services we access in our communities and ensuring public services remain in public hands. The following is a summary of activities between September and December, 2008.

Health Care

Hospitals:

The health care system in Ontario is under attack. The Liberals are cutting hospital budgets, forcing hospitals to close services and lay off staff. Services like lab work and physiotherapy are being contracted out to the lowest bidder. The Liberals have continually refused to introduce a minimum standard of care in long-term care and they seem wedded to the notion of competitive bidding within home care. They have broken their promise around P3 hospitals despite extraordinary costs. As the economy continues to weaken we can expect the Liberals to pursue their agenda of cuts, closures, privatization and contracting out even more aggressively. But CUPE Ontario and its allies have been pushing back.



A mass protest day in support of public health care was held on September 27th. Rallies took place in 5 locations throughout the province. CUPE Ontario worked closely with OCHU, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) to mobilize our members to come out in support of public health care. From Windsor to Toronto, Kingston, Sudbury and Thunder Bay, CUPE members participated in large numbers filling fourteen buses and almost a dozen vans/car pools. 'Support Public Services' bandanas were distributed to all members on the buses and were visible at the rallies along with CUPE flags. CUPE members spoke at rallies in their respective communities.

In concert with the Niagara Health Coalition and the Ontario Health Coalition, CUPE Ontario and locals in the Niagara region have been mobilizing to stop massive cuts planned for Niagara's hospitals.

Several town hall meetings have been held – an action plan has been developed that includes mass leafleting, petition signing, a lobby of Liberal MPP offices, an advertising campaign to target provincial Liberals and an escalating protest plan that would take people to Queen's Park if the LHINs decide to move forward with planned cuts.

Fight back campaigns against service cuts in hospitals have been happening all across Ontario - in Huronia Midland, Uxbridge, Ajax-Pickering, and throughout Eastern Ontario – OCHU is taking the lead in this regard. We are also working closely with the Ontario Health Coalition and other unions in the development of a provincial fight back campaign.

Long-Term Care:

CUPE Ontario has been running an extensive campaign to pressure the government to introduce minimum staffing standards – 3.5 hours of care – in long-term care facilities. At the most recent HCWCC conference, members gave the committee and CUPE Ontario a strong mandate to move the campaign to its next phase. On November 26th, we held a broadcast call with our LTC locals to update them on the campaign. The campaign is now targeting the pre-budget hearings (Toronto Dec. 4; Ottawa Dec. 19; other dates and locations TBA) with presentations and rallies.

New material has been created and is being shipped to locals – members are being asked to organize workplace and MPP pickets and a lobby. A member book off is in place to help coordinate efforts in this regard and continue with other elements of the campaign.



Our participation on the Sharkey Committee continues to be assessed on an on-going basis. Candace Rennick, our representative, has been working closely with the new long-term care researcher, Shalom Schachter around this process. CUPE Ontario has made it exceedingly clear to this committee and the government that our participation in no way hinders our efforts to mobilize our members and lobby for a regulated care standard.

CUPE Ontario has requested a meeting with the Ontario Ombudsperson's office around the investigation into the government's monitoring and tracking of care quality in LTC homes. We are still awaiting a response. CUPE is encouraging the Ombudsperson's office to look at important issues, especially accountability for funding that for-profit operators receive. Information has been sent to our members about the investigation, the process to follow should they be interviewed and to whom they should direct questions and concerns at CUPE.

Home Care:

Earlier this year CUPE Ontario, through a series of media conferences, launched a home care hotline number where we encouraged workers, families and recipients of home care to call and tell their story about care levels under the competitive bidding system. Dozens of individuals called our hotline. Callers were contacted with a view to their possible inclusion in a video to be produced by CUPE Ontario and OCHU and selected participants were subsequently interviewed. A meeting is scheduled for early January to discuss the roll-out plan for the video that will feature community-based media events around the province following a launch at Queen's Park. This launch will include a media and MPP package containing a copy of the video, a press release and a background flyer. Advance work with Queen's Park journalists will involve previewing the video for select reporters.



The goal of this campaign is to keep up political pressure on the government to move off of the competitive bidding system. This will be done by exposing its corrosive impact, including the drive to cut costs and quality of care in order to maintain profit margins for providers.

Municipalities

Ontario municipalities are in a financial crunch. Federal and Provincial infrastructure underfunding, combined with downloading of provincially mandated programs and forced amalgamations, have placed Ontario municipalities in a permanent fiscal crisis. Whether it's public-private partnerships (P3s), contracting out, competitive bidding or commercialization, privatization has a negative impact on jobs, services and communities.

Efforts are now underway through a series of regional meetings to raise member awareness about the impact of P3s and privatization. These efforts include: day-long anti-privatization training as a way to empower members to lobby councilors and MPPs; distribution of an anti-privatization lobby kit to be used by members to educate local councilors and MPPs about the negative impact of P3s and; distribution of an early warning tool kit and a local fight-back campaign model for local unions to use.

To date educational sessions have been held in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Kingston, Lindsay, Brampton, Thorold and Cambridge. Ottawa, Kenora and Windsor are still to be scheduled. There has been good attendance and the feedback has been positive.

The committee is now in the process of developing the next phase of the campaign, part of which includes identifying instances of privatization, and imminent threats, and forming a response team both locally and provincially. Currently we have a local fight back campaign underway in the City of Brockville – many more local campaigns are anticipated for 2009.

School Boards

Enormous effort leads to school board workers' historic agreement

School board workers have reached an historic agreement with representatives from all Ontario school boards, thanks to an enormous effort by bargaining units, staff reps, Provincial Discussion Table (PDT) specialists and union leadership.

Through a coordinated bargaining effort, over 50,000 CUPE school board workers will see a wage increase of 3.0 per cent every year for the next four years. Gains have also been made with regards to benefit plans, working hours and staffing levels. Only one collective agreement remains outstanding and that is a newly organized bargaining unit who is employed by a school authority. The employer in that case asked for and was granted a short extension by the provincial government to conclude a first collective agreement.



“The fact that one hundred and six bargaining units were able to ratify a new collective agreement by the November 30th deadline is a testament to the hard work that so many people put into completing this bargaining process,” said Terri Preston, Chair of the CUPE Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee (OSBCC). “It’s a proud occasion and an important achievement, particularly given the state of the current economy.”

Preston paid tribute to all the leaders of the locals, their servicing staff and area reps on the OSBCC, as well as with the special "flying squad" of PDT specialists who pulled out all stops to complete the bargaining process. “There will be time to evaluate the process and make recommendations for the future, for now let’s celebrate our first effort at bargaining together and the results we have been able to achieve.”

CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan said that the win is a result of years of political action directed at the Minister of Education and school boards by CUPE Ontario locals and members.

“For years, school board workers have consistently made the point that support workers are a key contributor to the quality of education and safe clean schools for our kids,” said Ryan. All of those efforts led to the creation of the Provincial Discussion Table.

“This is a prime example of what we can achieve when an entire sector, and the leaders and staff who serve them, come together with coordinated action,” added Ryan. “This is a model that we hope to emulate to make similar gains in other sectors.”

“There are so many people to thank for all their contributions in making this happen. This victory goes back to the days when Charlotte Monardo was OSBCC chair and Karen McNama was coordinator. Those roles got carried on by Frank Ventresca and Betty Sommers respectively, and up through to today, with Terri Preston and Brian Blakeley,” added Ryan. “Overall, it’s an amazing achievement for the school board sector and our union.”

Universities

Privatization is an ever increasing threat to universities. We are seeing an increase in corporate presence on campuses everywhere.

These increases come in many forms including fast-food suppliers, sponsorship of university activities such as Welcome Week, exclusive arrangements from soft drink companies, externally sponsored research and more.

With these increases in privatization, our members' jobs are threatened. Food and cleaning businesses service some campuses – businesses that provide diminished service for higher prices, while workers at those businesses are non-unionized and paid significantly less in wages and benefits. Privatization also includes tuition and student fees.



As governments continue to underfund universities and colleges we can anticipate an even greater corporate presence on our campuses. Within the university sector, instances of privatization are being responded to head-on by our members on the different campuses in partnership with campus and community allies.

On November 5th CUPE members from Brock, York, Ryerson, Trent, McMaster and U of T's Scarborough, Mississauga and St. George campuses journeyed to a Queen's Park rally organized by the Canadian Federation of Students to demand the government drop fees and end its reliance on corporate sponsorship of universities. Other rallies with a significant CUPE presence took place on campus at Lakehead and Windsor, while in Ottawa universities rallied on Parliament Hill.

CUPE Ontario and the OUWCC supported member locals' by providing bus transportation to and from regional rallies, informational materials and university sector scarves. Outreach was ongoing through a member book off.

In Peterborough, Trent University has asked the City to give a private developer a 99 year lease on university lands to build a private residence. This move is being fueled by chronic underfunding. CUPE members at Trent are working with a campus/community coalition in a bid to stop this move by the university.

An aggressive advertising campaign aimed at university and city councilors has garnered considerable media attention. Other initiatives include a student/community town hall meeting, deputation to city council demonstrating the problems associated with private university residences in general and this endeavour in particular, additional advertising, a letter writing campaign, campus flyer drop and a lobby of city councilors.

Many universities across Ontario have entered into exclusivity contracts with beverage companies in order to raise much needed funding. At the same time there has been a noticeable decline in access to tap water (less water fountains are being installed, some have been removed and broken fountains are not being repaired).

Bottled Water Campaign—CUPE and the Council of Canadians

The OUWCC is working to establish a presence on campuses as a leader in the fight against bottled water. A campaign strategy has been developed applicable to any CUPE local/campus coalition willing to take on the fight.

The initiative is premised on the fact that public water is safe, affordable and an environmentally sound choice. Outreach efforts are underway amongst students, faculty and workers.

Already numerous municipalities and school boards have passed bottled water bans.

At CUPE Ontario's most recent strategic planning session (August 2008) there was agreement we should develop a multi-sector water campaign for 2009.

As a first step, CUPE Ontario is joining with the Council of Canadians to host a 15 city tour across the Province from January 12 – January 30, 2009 with a view to generating public support (including member support) for a bottled water ban in all public institutions.

The tour stop will include a morning press conference and an evening town hall meeting featuring Maude Barlow and Sid Ryan. Tour stops include: Windsor, London, Guelph, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Kitchener, Owen Sound, Brockville, Cobourg, Oshawa, Barrie and Peterborough. Northern communities will be scheduled in the spring.



Outreach, advertising, materials production and media relations are being handled jointly. At the local level planning groups comprised of Council chapter members and CUPE members have been/are being formed. Working on the ground they are the key organizers for all aspects of the tour in their respective locales. In addition to putting in place a central campaign coordinator, CUPE Ontario will also be booking off an activist in each community two weeks prior to their own tour stop. Discussions are on-going with the Council with respect to what the campaign will look like post-speaking tour. We did agree that World Water Day (March 22) is the next natural event to organize for.

Social Services

Achieving affordable, accessible not-for-profit childcare remains the main goal for CUPE childcare members in Ontario. The immediate focus of work is on building political pressure and capacity to shame the government into providing this level of service.

Intensive lobbying and campaigning will happen in a variety of ways.

The CUPE Ontario Childcare Committee is working closely with the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare (OCBCC) on the campaign 'It's Time for Public Childcare'. This campaign is about awareness raising and

mobilization of members and parents across the province in the fight for a fully funded public childcare system. The short term goal is to build pressure and momentum in the lead up to the 2009 provincial budget.

As a first step CUPE and the OCBCC held a celebratory event on Childcare Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. Pauline Marois, at the time the Quebec Minister who brought in Quebec's \$7 a day childcare system was honoured at a special evening ceremony where she spoke about the benefits associated with a universal, affordable non-profit childcare system.

CUPE Ontario is currently co-hosting a series of media conferences across the province, in concert with the OCBCC, targeting parents, childcare workers, agencies and the broader public, with a view to encouraging them to lobby the McGuinty Government and their local MPP to enact legislation to protect public, not-for-profit childcare, make substantial and sustained public investments to address

Having trouble finding child care?
Having trouble paying for child care?
take action!
Politicians, responsible for funding child care, need to hear from you.
With just your postal code, you can send a message to your Provincial and Federal representatives.
Go to the website:
**waitingfor
childcare.ca**

The chronic under-funding in the current childcare system, build a truly comprehensive public, not-for-profit, accessible childcare system and improve the wages and benefits of those working in the sector. Messages can be sent and materials (postcards, petitions and letters) can be downloaded by accessing the 'Waiting for Childcare' website.

The idea of 'Kids Concerts' (similar to the 'Rock for Public Services' concerts) is also being considered as a way to promote the campaign and continue efforts to educate and mobilize parents, workers, employers and the broader public to pressure government for a renewed commitment to publicly funded childcare.

While the committee will continue to work with the OCBC and other unions to position the campaign 'It's Time for Public Childcare' as a key priority in the 2011 provincial election we will also be developing a much harder hitting message aimed at the provincial government that frames childcare in relation to the economy.

Rock for Public Services



More than 4,000 people attended our seventh and final Rock for Public Services free concert at the Ottawa Civic Centre on Saturday, November 2nd, an event co-sponsored by and in support of CUPE 503 Municipal workers and CUPE 4000 Ottawa Hospital workers.

An evaluation meeting to determine the pros and cons of these rock concerts was held on November 6th. Key organizers from each community where we hosted the rock concerts participated along with CUPE Ontario staff and officers (see attached for a summary of outcomes).

Rock for Public Services – **OUTCOMES**


EVALUATION- LOCAL COORDINATORS

- Every concert got CUPE noticed in a positive way. There were no opponents countering our messages.
- People received a real definitive message about the CUPE members that live and work in their communities.
- The succinct messaging at the concerts was very well received. Many people came away with a greater awareness and appreciation for public services.
- In every community, the combined advertising, media exposure and concert itself raised CUPE's profile considerably.
- In almost every location, progressive city councillors came to the concerts.
- Member mobilization/involvement varied – too much loaded on one person.
- Seemed to work better in small communities.
- More lead time needed to organize concerts.
- Time of year an important factor.

Sturgeon Falls

- Having contracted out housekeeping jobs, West Nipissing Hospital reverses and posts 4 part-time positions, after CUPE Ontario raises the issue in its pre-concert media conference.
- Three locals join the local labour council following the concert.
- Locals from CUPE and other unions volunteer/attend concert.

Kenora

- Locals from every sector came together for the first time to work on the concert.
 - Locals are now far more committed to advocating on community issues.
 - Locals have an improved awareness around taking a stand against the local LHINS.
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Ajax

- Participation came from locals including 4365, 1356, 1999, 218 and local one.

Kingston

- Awareness for CUPE is high and favourable, just as CUPE gets into representation votes.

Lindsay

- Following a 7-week strike, a huge amount of goodwill is generated by giving back to the community.

Ottawa

- The rock concert and media conference become a huge platform for raising public concern around Ottawa council's proposed budget which would slash jobs.

ATTENDANCE

Sturgeon Falls	4,000
Kenora	1,000
Ajax	6,000 - 7,000
Thorold	3,000
Kingston	2,500
Lindsay	1,200
Ottawa	<u>4,000</u>
	23,000

MEDIA COVERAGE

In almost every instance:

- Media response was totally positive and on message.
- Newspapers ran at least one article detailing locals issues that CUPE raised.
- There was "buzz" on the radio for every event among disc jockeys.

THE HEADLINES

Trooper, CUPE raise a little hell- North Bay

Trooper playing Sturgeon Falls

Union locals draw attention to health care issues prior to Trooper concert - Kenora

Union delivers free concert and appeal for public services support- Kenora

CUPE brings music and message- Ajax

April Wine says hello to public service- Thorold

Public services an asset, CUPE Thorold

April Wine, SAB to play union event- Kingston

Union hosts concert; CUPE SOUNDS OFF - Lindsay

Thousands attend concert to support CUPE workers- Ottawa

Union raises alarm about mayor's job cut plan- Ottawa