



# COMMUNITY LIVING, WE MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Working to build better futures

Issue 1 | February 2014

## Welcome to the first newsletter of 2014 for CUPE's Developmental Service Sector Coordinating Committee!

CUPE has 53 bargaining units entering coordinated bargaining this year; if we include OPSEU locals, there are over 100 developmental service locals with collective agreements expiring this year.

This is our opportunity to increase stability in the sector, advocate for better services for the people we support, and improve wages and working conditions for our members so that we can provide better care for people with developmental disabilities.

## Select Committee to Review Developmental Services

Last year the Legislative Assembly of Ontario struck an all-party "Select Committee" to review developmental services. The committee held its first meeting in October and has been meeting weekly since then, with a public tour of six cities in January.



The committee has heard presentations from the different Ministries that provide services to people with developmental disabilities, also from various advocacy organizations, employers, family members and more, all providing countless examples to illustrate the crisis in the sector. The committee will make a series of recommendations for a developmental services strategy, with an interim report due in January and a final report due in May.

On January 13, Joanne Smithers, CUPE Local 4392 President and DSSCC rep, gave a vivid and personal presentation to the committee in London. A week later at Queen's Park, CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn presented a moving and eloquent brief on the current state of developmental services to the committee.

We are hopeful that the government will take seriously the recommendations put forward by the committee and address the challenges in the sector with real funding solutions.

You can follow the committee meetings online at <http://bit.ly/1hptlpl> and read the *Toronto Star's* editorial, "Ontario must create a strategy to help the developmentally delayed" at <http://bit.ly/1kHRJdt>.

*Fred Hahn, Monique Taylor MPP and Joanne Smithers at the Select Committee for Developmental Services, Legislative Assembly of Ontario*

## A bit of background: what is coordinated bargaining?

From *Gaining Ground: Strategic Directions Program for CUPE, 2005-2007*:



*One of the ways to increase the bargaining power of smaller groups is to coordinate their collective bargaining with other groups. Effective coordination of locals within a sector is not just helpful in moving forward our bargaining goals... Coordination can help us address the critical issue of inequality. Also, a strong and coordinated sector has political clout and can influence government decisions. Such a sector is better able to confront privatization drives by corporations trying to get hold of services within that sector.*

In coordinated bargaining, locals that share similar expiry dates of their collective agreements band together and present their different employers with the same broad list of coordinated bargaining proposals.

CUPE's DS locals have been working to coordinate collective bargaining since 2003, guided by the Developmental Service Sector Coordinating Committee. In that time we have negotiated significant gains. Today all but 5 locals have WSIB coverage. Over half of locals are in the Multi-Sector Pension Plan. Locals have negotiated gains to health and safety language, job security, wages and more.

What characterizes coordinated bargaining by a union? Here are some essentials and how they relate to CUPE:

- ✓ The locals involved often have common contract expiration dates
  - over 100 DS locals (including 53 CUPE bargaining units) have collective agreements that expire in 2014.
- ✓ The sector has agreed upon a framework for coordinated bargaining
  - throughout 2013, the DSSCC met, consulted, surveyed and shared proposals for strategies and timelines for coordinating the negotiations of CUPE DS locals;

- regular conference calls keep locals in sync with the strategy and support the necessary sharing of information that influences our timing.
- ✓ Bargaining surveys and consultation to establish common bargaining priorities
  - for CUPE DS locals, these include no-layoff provisions to protect jobs and services; participation in the Multi-sector Services Pension Plan; wage increases, improving benefits, rights for part-time members and more.
- ✓ Local bargaining on local issues
  - coordinated bargaining is not the same as central bargaining: each local will conduct its own set of negotiations with its own bargaining committee and can address local issues of concern, in addition to coordinated priorities.
- ✓ Individual locals hold off on signing their agreements until locals have had an opportunity to discuss the terms of settlement and ensure that “lead settlements” on the coordinated issues set the pattern
  - DSSCC will keep track of the various stages of negotiations among the DS locals and coordinate the timing and pace of settlements to avoid locals “leapfrogging” each other to signing off on agreements.

## MSPP: a priority in coordinated bargaining

### Why does the Multi-Sector Pension Plan provide far greater retirement security than a RRSP?

Our sector has made great strides in negotiating the MSPP over the years. CUPE has a goal that every member should have a pension plan by 2018. Bargaining the MSPP is a top priority in coordinated bargaining in 2014.

Throughout January and February, locals that do not yet have the MSPP have organized presentations to negotiating committees, memberships and employers, with a MSPP trustee. If your local has not yet scheduled a presentation, **please contact your National Representative and the Coordinator to schedule a date.**

### The MSPP is far superior to a RRSP for several reasons:

- 1) It is a defined benefit plan – a pension for life, as opposed to when an individual member’s money runs out.
- 2) The Plan member has little or no risk compared to with a RRSP. Members can better plan for their retirement because of the greater predictability of a defined benefit plan design. If the market drops when they want to retire, they can still retire as contributions in respect of the remaining members fund the deficit; this is a collective approach to retirement rather than “everyone for themselves”.
- 3) Professionally managed fund which means superior investment returns, which means higher pensions.
- 4) Lower costs due to spreading over a larger membership base which ultimately means higher pensions than otherwise possible.
- 5) Built in mechanism to fund deficits, which restores potentially lost benefits in turbulent market conditions.

## DSW Appreciation Day: it’s not too late!

In honour of Developmental Service Worker Appreciation Day (DSW Day), some locals hosted their MPPs at their workplaces and gave their elected representatives the opportunity to learn more about what our members in developmental services do a day-to-day.

On January 22, CUPE 181 members Heather Rutter, Carolyn Jarvis, and Jim Hladish welcomed Brant MPP Dave Levac to Dunn Building Vocational Services, Community Living Brant. A week later, CUPE 4370 president Brian Biggers met local MPP Bob Bailey at Community Living Sarnia-Lambton and Connie Hurtubise organized visits for two area MPPs, Grant Crack and Jim McDonnell, at Community Living Glengarry. MPP Liz Sandals joined Joanne Smithers of Local 4392 in Guelph on February 7; and Taras Natyshak was hosted in Windsor by Srila Perine of CUPE 3137 on February 13. More than half the visits received coverage in their local media.



*Danielle Duranceau, Executive Director, Community Living Glengarry; Grant Crack MPP; and Connie Hurtubise, President, CUPE 3390*

There is still time to “take your MPP to work”! If you’d like more information, contact Social Services Coordinator Sarah Declerck at [sdeclerck@cupe.ca](mailto:sdeclerck@cupe.ca) or telephone 905-739-3999, ext. 221.

# Coordinated bargaining: how you can support the process

In January, CUPE locals from Developmental Services served their employers with notice to bargain. Along with other DS locals represented by OPSEU, this will mark the first step in the strategy for this year's coordinated bargaining.

As bargaining ramps up across the province, CUPE wants you to feel engaged and part of the process. This is a reminder that, as a DSW, you are CUPE's eyes, ears and *voice* in the community. Over the coming months, whenever you get the opportunity to talk about your work in Developmental Services, mention CUPE's current contract negotiations and make sure your friends and family know:

- ✓ Ontario's DS sector is critically underfunded and the undeniable evidence lies in the province's waiting lists: 24,000 people with developmental disabilities are waiting for supports and services and the numbers are growing every year.
- ✓ As a frontline worker and CUPE member, you see firsthand the problems that underfunding create: understaffing, fewer outings for supported individuals, high staff turnover, workers compromising.

- ✓ CUPE's bargaining proposals are designed to **protect** vulnerable people by improving the working conditions of the people who support them. Examples include:
  - people with developmental disabilities need good continuity of care; better terms and conditions for DSWs ensure less staff turnover and less disruption to the lives of the people they support;
  - supported individuals often have compromised immune systems; DSWs need adequate sick leave so that they can stay off work when they are ill and don't put medically fragile individuals at risk.
- ✓ Ask questions of your own: who is standing up for people with disabilities and the services they rely on? Not the government – they have left tens of thousands to languish on waiting lists and refuse to provide adequate funding for the sector.

Tell us how you plan to stand up for the services that support people with developmental disabilities – and stand up for DSWs across Ontario; contact Sarah Declerck at [sdeclerck@cupe.ca](mailto:sdeclerck@cupe.ca).

## Your Developmental Service Sector Coordinating Committee

- **Chair:** Jim Beattie (CUPE 3943)
- **Reps:** Tammy Vaughan, Sandy Whittaker (Reg. A); Joanne Smithers, Sandra Forsythe (Reg. B); Amy Jamieson, Connie Hurtubise (Reg. C); Karen Smith (Reg. D); SSWCC DS Rep: Srila Perine
- **Social Services Coordinator:** Sarah Declerck
- **Research:** Joe Courtney / Janet Dassinger
- **Communications:** Mary Unan

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