

NEWS FROM CUPE ONTARIO

Spring/Summer 2019



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Fred Hahn
President



Candace Rennick
Secretary-Treasurer

POLITICAL PULSE

News from CUPE Ontario

With more than 270,000 members, CUPE Ontario is a strong voice for rights and fairness for our members and our communities.

We work at the provincial level for legislative, policy and political change on issues affecting public services, equality, healthy communities and a better Ontario for everyone.

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Greetings from Fred and Candace

Friends,

We've seen an unprecedented mobilizing of people in opposition to the Ford Conservatives' cuts to public services. From the historic walkouts of high school students to seniors' book clubs having sit-ins to protect library services. From thousands rallying against cuts to public healthcare and public education to frustrated parents campaigning tirelessly for the social services their children need.

The resistance to the Ford Conservatives is growing and CUPE Ontario is ready with an ambitious action plan adopted by over 1000 delegates at CUPE Ontario's 56th annual convention. Mobilizing and coalition building will mean a collective force working on behalf of all Ontarians to maintain the services people rely on, build more inclusive, caring communities, and fight to protect our member's rights and the rights of all workers from legislative attacks like Bill 124.

The plan features escalating actions to defend public services and workers' rights and mobilize against the rising tide of hate and white supremacy.

The next year will be an important one for working people in Ontario. There is a lot at stake for us. Recent events have shown that we can win this fight. The Ford Conservatives are facing plummeting poll numbers despite a number of policy reversals and a major cabinet shuffle. The people of Ontario have proven that they increasingly oppose the direction of the Ford Tories. Working with our allies in communities, now is the time to turn up the heat on this government and stop their attacks on public services and worker's rights.

Fred Hahn and *Candace Rennick*

Fred Hahn
President

Candace Rennick
Secretary-Treasurer

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Jim Johnston, Local 7800

A long-time tradesperson recognized for quietly maintaining the systems that keep hospital patients safe



Jim Johnston is a long-time plumber and steam fitter at the General Hospital campus of Hamilton Health Sciences, helping to keep mostly hidden piping and equipment systems in top-notch form.

On June 11th, Johnston won the 2019 Trades Person of the Year award, an annual recognition given by the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU).

Hospital operating systems—including water, steam, and gas— are large, complex, and run 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. There are thousands of skilled trades people who work at more than 250 hospital sites. They are responsible for safe patient care in emergency and operating rooms as well as patient rooms. “It’s an immense challenge to keep our hospital infrastructure—much of which is aging—in safe working order. We are proud to say thank you to trades people like Jim Johnston with this recognition award,” said OCHU president Michael Hurley, who was on hand for the award presentation.

Communities Not Cuts Meetings

Throughout 2019, CUPE Ontario will carry a message of resistance and mobilization to local leaders in every region of Ontario

CUPE members are under unprecedented attack by the Ford Conservatives and members are already beginning to receive layoff notices. Wage restraint legislation has been introduced that that will interfere in collective bargaining. Local leadership meetings across Ontario are being organized to defeat the Doug Ford agenda and defend an Ontario with quality public services and good jobs for all.

July 3 – North Bay: Best Western – 700 Lakeshore Dr, North Bay, 1:00-4:30pm, OSBCU: 4:30-6:00pm

Sudbury: *To be re-scheduled*

July 5 – Sault St. Marie: Delta- 208 St Mary’s River Dr, Sault Ste. Marie, 1:00-4:30pm, OSBCU: 4:30-6:00pm

July 8 – London: Doubletree- 300 King St, London, 1:00-4:30pm, OSBCU: 4:30-6:00pm

July 9 – Windsor: Howard Johnson- 2530 Ouellette Ave, Windsor, 1:00-4:30pm, OSBCU: 4:30-6:00pm

July 10 – Belleville: Fairfield Inn- 407 N Front St, Belleville, Churchill Room, 1:00-4:30pm, OSBCU: 4:30-6:00pm

July 11 – Cornwall: NAV Centre- 1950 Montreal Rd, Cornwall, D101 Room, 1:00-4:30pm, OSBCU: 4:30-6:00pm

July 15 – Kenora: Clarion Lakeside Inn and Confrence Centre- 470 1st Ave S, Kenora, 1:00-4:30pm, OSBCU: 4:30-6:00pm

Timmins: *To be re-scheduled*

July 16 – Kitchener/Guelph: Location and times TBA

July 17 – Barrie - Leadership Meeting: 10–2:30pm, OSBCU: 2:30-4:00pm, Lunch Provided, Location TBA

To register, or for more information, visit www.cupe.on.ca/fightback or email campaigns2@cupe.on.ca.

Award Winning Members

Celebrating powerful CUPE Ontario members on the front lines of the resistance

Health and Safety Award

Nancy Simone, President of CUPE 2190, knows firsthand the health and safety risks facing child protection workers (CPWs) because she's been one for almost 30 years. CPWs are often the first responders when a child is in danger. Seeing children in pain can bring on many mental health issues and Simone has been fighting to see that employers address that. She was inspired by her father, a construction worker who once told her he was frequently fired for standing up for workplace safety. She uses her role as the full-time president of CUPE 2190 to bargain tirelessly for health and safety issues. "Our obligation must always be to protect the health and safety of workers and we must re-commit to making our workplaces safer for workers," she said on accepting the award.



Sisters in Solidarity Award

Recently re-elected Equity Officer for CUPE 3902, Sujata Thapa also helped organize her local's International Workers' Caucus and spearheaded the campaign 'Healthcare Without Borders'. "This is the best day of my life," she told Convention delegates. After thanking her local for believing in her and for nominating her, she said, "This award is for all of us." Thapa closed her acceptance speech with an explanation for her optimistic views on life: "We all go through good days and bad days, but I have a strong conviction that one day we will have equality and peace in the world."



Racialized Worker Award

In recognition of her activism breaking down barriers for racialized people in the workplace and the community, Sonia Yung, the president of CUPE local 4914, is this year's recipient of the Racialized Worker Award. Yung challenged delegates to take action to include, promote and support racialized union leaders. Recognizing her family for their support and inspiration, Yung also thanked her local. "Thank you, Local 4914, for your racial justice and equity work and for teaching me to stand up," she said. "It is not possible to fight oppression without allies."





Injured Worker's Award

Michelle Thompson lives in Oshawa and has spent the last 20 years as a leader and a strong voice advocating for the members of CUPE local 6364. Since receiving her health and safety facilitator training in 2016, Michelle used these skills to mentor a new generation of union activists on how to identify barriers for injured workers. “There is no better feeling than being able to reverse an unjust decision or return an injured worker back to their own occupation,” she said in her acceptance speech. Thompson also explained her motivation for being such a tireless advocate: “I thought, could this be my own face or that of someone I love? Could that be you or someone you love?”

Standing Together

Anti-Racism Organizational Action Plan (AROAP) passes unanimously



Cheering, convention delegates made history, unanimously passing CUPE Ontario's Anti-Racism Organizational Action Plan. “AROAP is just one step on the way to making sure members feel included in our union and making our union stronger,” said Veriline Howe, chair of the Racial Justice Committee. AROAP sub-committee chair Yolanda McClean thanked the committee members and outside facilitators: “We laughed, we cried, and then we learned”. She concluded on a personal note: “This is a historic moment. We have many stairs to climb, but today made me feel like we're going to do it and we're going to do it together”.

Racial Justice Committee Presents First Stage of Anti-White Supremacy Campaign

Following up on a resolution that was passed at last year's Convention, the Racial Justice Committee presented the first stage of its work on a campaign to fight white supremacy in our communities and in our union.

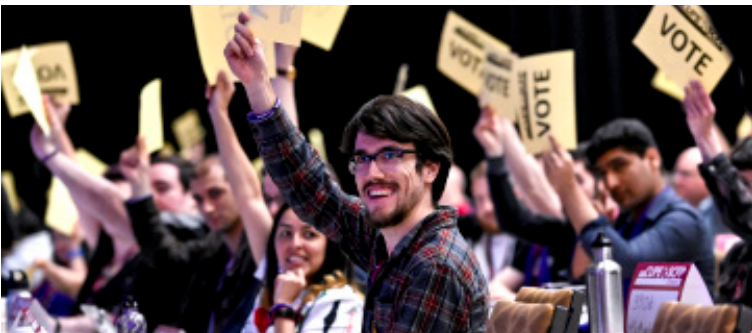
The campaign seeks to fight white supremacy by helping people to identify it, call it by name, and organize within our union and our communities. Campaign materials and tool kits will be rolled out across the province in a series of upcoming town halls.



CUPE Ontario Adopts a Roadmap for a Bold, Brave Resistance



The over 1000 CUPE Ontario delegates who arrived in Toronto for the 56th annual convention were energetic and ready to work. They approved a dynamic action plan to take on the Ford agenda, the Anti-Racism Organizational Action Plan, and several amendments to the constitution. Delegates also celebrated the achievements of a number of award winning members as well as the hard work and solidarity of striking locals. The keynote speaker, Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the federal NDP, revealed the party's climate change plan. The theme for this year's convention, Be Bold. Be Brave. Build the Resistance, encouraged members to get go back to their communities and build a movement of mobilization unlike any this province has ever seen.





CUPE Ontario Members Hit the Streets and Join NDP Caucus Members to Resist Ford Conservatives' Attack on Workers



CUPE Ontario Prepares to Celebrate Diversity

PRIDE



Pride Month this year also marks the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, a series of demonstrations in the US against police raids targeting the LGBTQI2S+ community. This event inspired Canadians to rise and join a worldwide resistance through Pride events and activism.

On this important anniversary, strong resistance is once again needed to push back against the Ford Conservatives' attempts to return to a time when LGBTQI2S+ Ontarians lived as second class citizens.

Through political action and collective bargaining, our union has made important strides for LGBTQI2S+ rights for workers, our communities and for everyone in Canada. It is a tradition that we are continuing, and this year especially, we encourage all members to fight the Ford Conservative assault on the LGBTQI2S+ community and show solidarity by participating in your local Pride events and make 2019 a summer of CUPE Ontario Resistance and Pride.

CARNIVAL

*Celebrate Toronto Carnival 2019 with the CUPE Ontario
Racial Justice Committee*

Around the world, Carnival celebrations began as part of the struggle for emancipation. They were a way for enslaved Africans to assert their dignity and humanity in a society where they were prohibited from other forms of expression. CUPE Ontario is asking each Local to encourage member participation in Carnival and for larger Locals to sponsor members to attend this important cultural event. We are proud to be working with Epic Carnival this year.



CUPE Ontario will cover the cost of up to 40 registrants' costumes. Please note that this year's Carnival organizers have indicated that unfortunately only individuals 18 and over will be allowed to participate.

Questions? Contact Veriline Howe at verilinehowe@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

August 11

School Boards (OSBCU) meeting Holiday Inn Airport

September 16

CACO Conference 2019

Ceasars Windsor

September 17

HCWCC Conference 2019

Ceasars Windsor

October 22

Fall School

Sheraton Centre Toronto