

Newsletter

Summer 2024



CUPE Ontario
Pink Triangle
Committee

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du SCFP Ontario

Meet the PTC



It's our pleasure to present the Pink Triangle Committee members who were elected at CUPE Ontario's Human Rights conference in 2023. Thank you to Dave Butler and Sawat Sprague, former PTC members, and to Susan Gapka, former PTC chair. We are grateful for your years of service, your hard work and dedication to CUPE members and to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities across the province.

Left to right: Rhonda Grigsby, Susan Gapka, Gabi Millsap, Joseph Di Flaviano, Ali Fraser, Vee Gandhi. Front, left to right: Mallory Imrie, Nancy Hanschmann. Since this photo was taken, Vee Gandhi was elected chair of the Pink Triangle Committee. Not pictured: Coline Babin, who was elected to the committee at CUPE Ontario's convention in May. Meet Coline and other committee members on page 2.

Martine Stonehouse: winner of CUPE Ontario's inaugural Pink Triangle Advocacy award



Martine Stonehouse of CUPE 4400 was honoured at CUPE Ontario's 60th convention with the first Pink Triangle Advocacy award. It honours her relentless dedication to 2SLGBTQIA+ advocacy, both in her workplace and on a national level.

Stonehouse has been a tireless advocate for change: in 2006, she launched a federal challenge to include 'gender identity/expression' added as a protected right under Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and to have sex reassignment surgery defined and covered under the Canada Health Act.

Upon receiving the award, Stonehouse expressed her gratitude, stating, "This award is not just about me. It's about all of you at CUPE Ontario and it's about CUPE's unwavering support of all its members."

Get to know us

Rhonda Grigsby (she/her)



Rhonda is a child and youth worker at Peel Children's Aid Society. She is the president of her local, CUPE 4914, where her work primarily revolves around supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and staff.

Rhonda co-facilitates the Families in Transition program and the BRIDGE Beyond Rainbow Committee (an employee resource group). In addition, she provides training and lunch-and-learn sessions with respect to the 2SLGBTQI+ community. Rhonda also organizes the internal agency events such as Pride and the Trans Day of Remembrance.

As a proud queer, she is committed to adding her voice to those of CUPE Ontario's Pink Triangle Committee.

Gabi Millsap (she/her)

Gabi is a steward in her local, CUPE 4207, and co-chairs the Young Workers Equity Subcommittee. She is a teaching assistant and graduate student in the Social Justice and Equity Studies Program at Brock University in St. Catharines.



In her local, Gabi focuses on fostering genuine membership engagement and social activism among her fellow CUPE members. One main method she employs to achieve this is via facilitating, engaging and welcoming meetings and through implementing various embodiment and mindfulness practices.

Gabi is very excited to be a part of the CUPE Ontario Pink Triangle team, and to build connections and learn from other committee members who work in different

sectors and geographic areas. Over the next two years, Gabi hopes to be a strong representative of CUPE Ontario's pink triangle members by focusing her committee work on communications and outreach.

Ali Fraser

Ali is an executive member of CUPE 3908, which represents graduate student workers and contract faculty at Trent University.

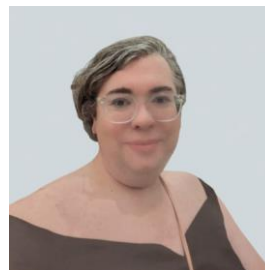
Ali is proud to share that, in the local's last round of bargaining, "we established a Gender Affirming Fund with the employer that will cover costs for anything



our trans members need: medical care, travel costs, clothing, and personal care."

You'll find Ali teaching courses across sociology, gender and social justice, anthropology, and criminology.

Coline Babin (she/her)



Coline joins the PTC with a sense of joy and enthusiasm, hoping to add to the amazing work done to highlight and promote the work of 2SLGBTQIA+ workers, and to fight for queer rights in both our workplaces and society.

She is a tireless advocate for queer and trans rights. As recording secretary for CUPE 79, she is the first openly transgender person to hold executive office in her local, which is the largest in Canada with approximately 30,000 members.

Coline also brings the intersectionality of being a neurodivergent worker and represents workers with disabilities on both provincial and national CUPE Workers with Disabilities committees.

Chair's corner

A message from Vee Gandhi (they/she), Chair, CUPE Ontario Pink Triangle Committee

It's my honour to introduce myself as the newly elected chair of the Pink Triangle Committee. I am proud to represent 2SLGBTQIA+ members of CUPE in Ontario and look forward to meeting you and learning about your priorities and expectations for the committee.

Let me share a little about myself: I am a social worker by profession and an artist by passion. Most of my work intersects with housing advocacy, community enrichment and mental health and wellness.

My academic background is in clinical psychology and addictions; both help me to work in the field with an arc of care. Most of my post-graduate research was based on mental health recovery from different Identity-based lenses to capture better healing practices that are tailored to communities' needs, like recovery and healing for trans folks, indigenous communities, etc. I have also had research published in an international journal on LGBTQ+ mental health.

Additionally, I'm active in my local, CUPE 2998, which represents workers at the 519, the historic community centre in downtown Toronto. For nearly 50 years, the 519 has welcomed, represented and advocated for members from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and I am proud to be able to contribute to its work.

As a proud South Asian trans person, I am committed to representing all members represented by CUPE Ontario's Pink Triangle Committee.



Show your Pride this summer

PTC works with the Ontario Federation of Labour Solidarity and Pride Committee to compile a list of Pride events across the province; you can see the list [here](#). If you know of an event in your community, or if you're organizing one, please share the details. Check your local community for Pride events too - they're happening everywhere!

If you'd like to take part in one of the biggest Pride events in the world, join the Pink Triangle Committee and CUPE Ontario in Toronto over the weekend of June 28 to 30 for the Trans March on Friday, the Dyke March on Saturday, and Pride Parade on Sunday.

Help carry a banner, decorate CUPE Ontario's parade float, or just be part of the excitement!

National Pink Triangle will be in Ottawa for Capital Pride and on August 25 for the 2024 Pride parade.



The right to trans health care, counter-protests with OFL and Rainbow Week of Action: a report by Susan Gapka (she/her), former Chair, CUPE Ontario Pink Triangle Committee

On February 29, the Pink Triangle Committee collaborated with the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and Ontario New Democrats to promote Trans Health Care Day of Action at Queen's Park. The day was held in support of the second reading of Bill 42, The Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee Act, a private member's bill sponsored by NDP MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam.

The day began in the media studio where I spoke on behalf of CUPE Ontario. I was supported by staff and CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn and we were joined by other OFL affiliates.

Pink Triangle Committee members attended a reception prior to moving to the public gallery to watch debate on this important legislation. Unfortunately, the vote occurred the following Monday and the bill was defeated by a solid Conservative vote even though all other MPPs from the other parties voted in favour of it.



This action helps fulfil a previous resolution to create a campaign to support access to gender-affirming care. The struggle continues and Pink Triangle Committee will continue to engage politically in congruence with CUPE Ontario's action plan priorities.

On the emerging rise of 2SLGBTQIA+ hate, we also worked closely with OFL to organize counter-protests to Hands Off Our Kids/One Million March for Children on September 20. We will be reviewing our approach moving forward to examine our strengths and weaknesses on that day to improve our future responses and become more proactive, rather than reactive. We also joined with Queer Momentum for Rainbow Week of Action, May 11 to 17, with Pink Triangle members joining rallies in Ottawa, Toronto, and Hamilton. More about these events in a later report.

This is an exciting time, as Pink Triangle members join CUPE Ontario and OFL in resistance to oppression against our members. We must remember that our elders - and I am one of them - have fought the tough political battles to overcome the AIDS epidemic; gain legal rights, including the right to marry each other regardless of sex and gender; access gender affirming care and trans rights; and win many other victories. Let us continue to fight the good fight, to resist corporate rainbow pride, and achieve our queer and trans liberation for all. It takes a village to change the world, and we will do it!



With thanks to the phenomenal Susan Gapka

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Susan Gapka, former chair of CUPE Ontario's Pink Triangle Committee.

Under Susan's leadership, the committee has grown in strength, worked in collaboration with allies, and advanced 2SLGBTQIA+ issues in our union. Her commitment and tireless engagement are legendary and have made her a familiar face wherever people are taking a stand on behalf of justice, peace and equity. Susan, we know we'll be seeing you.

Day of Pink gala

On April 10, cities and towns worldwide united to mark the International Day Against Bullying, Discrimination, Homophobia, Transphobia, and Trans Misogyny. In Toronto, the vibrant and empowering Day of Pink Gala was held at the Toronto Reference Library. CUPE Ontario and PTC were well represented at the event.

The gala not only commemorates the strides made in the 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, but also serves as a platform to celebrate diversity and inclusivity. Featuring headliners like trans flag creator [Monica Helms](#), the [Brunswick Four](#), and entertainer Aja, the event celebrated 2SLGBTQIA+ diversity and raised funds for education and outreach programs in schools and communities. Speakers shared stories of overcoming challenges, emphasizing the importance of standing together against discrimination in all its forms. It exemplified the transformative impact that can be achieved when communities come together to champion inclusivity and acceptance.

Save the date for next year's Day of Pink on April 9, 2025.

Three of the Brunswick Four, left to right: Sue Wells, Adrienne Rosen, Adrienne's daughter (name unknown), Lamar Van Dyke.

