

All eyes are on Toronto

On January 16, hundreds of CUPE Ontario members gathered at the Sheraton Centre in downtown Toronto and unanimously adopted an action plan to support four Locals bargaining with hostile City of Toronto negotiators.

CUPE Locals 79, 416, 2998 and 4948, together representing about 30,000 municipal workers, face one of the most difficult bargaining environments in our union's history. The same week as the meeting at the Sheraton, city council adopted a budget that slashes millions of dollars from public services and will lay off hundreds of workers. This comes on the heels of hundreds of solid waste workers and more than a hundred cleaners losing their jobs to contracting out.

Swift organizing by CUPE Ontario, Locals and community partners prevented more than \$20 million in cuts and saved many jobs and services for the people of Toronto. Now all eyes are on bargaining, as the Toronto locals face a management committee that wants to rip up their contracts and get rid of as many unionized workers as possible. The action plan outlines how CUPE Locals in the Greater Toronto Area will reach out to their 100,000 members and inform them about the issues and how to talk directly to city councillors about the sort of city they want to live in.

"It's a person-to-person campaign," said CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn. "CUPE members will talk to friends, family and co-workers and dispel myths about Toronto contracts and public services."

Working with community coalition partners, CUPE Ontario members will embark on an awareness campaign to galvanize public support behind Toronto's public service workers. "What's happening in Toronto is of concern to every Local," said Hahn. "What the Toronto Locals face today, others will face tomorrow."

For more information on Toronto and how you can get involved visit www.cupe.on.ca-toronto or email ymcclean@cupe.on.ca.



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McGuinty, Drummond pushing dangerous austerity plan

Last year, Premier Dalton McGuinty hired a bank economist named Don Drummond to write a report on ways to cut public spending. For months, Drummond has let hints trickle out about what is in his report. It's all an elaborate PR game intended to convince people that service cuts and an austerity budget are the right medicine for Ontario's economy. And so that people will be happy with anything less than a decimation of the public service.

CUPE Ontario strongly opposes this corporate agenda. We met with Drummond in December and presented an extensive report that advocated fixing Ontario's revenue problem instead of cutting. We hired pollsters Angus Reid to ask Ontarians about our plans, and Ontarians overwhelmingly supported our ideas.



Now we turn our eyes to the provincial budget process, which is problematic because the Liberals have refused to negotiate with the other parties in this minority government. At press time, there is no finance committee, which means no public consultation and no democratic budget process.

When thousands of jobs are on the line, this is unacceptable. As CUPE Ontario members, we encourage you to contact your MPP and tell them you want a finance committee struck. Tell them you want an open, democratic budget process. Tell them you want a budget that builds the economy and creates jobs, not one that will increase unemployment and kill growth.

Welcome new affiliates!

One of the great strengths of CUPE Ontario is that Locals choose to help out in our campaigns to build a better Ontario. Welcome to the three newest CUPE Ontario affiliates.

- Local 4605, Halton Catholic District School Board, representing 30 members
- Local 2198, Arnprior Memorial Hospital, representing 98 members
- Local 4914, Peel Children's Aid Society, representing 400 members

Upcoming Events

Spring School

Feb. 14-19, Toronto Sheraton Centre

OJWCC Conference

Feb. 23-26, London Hilton

SSWCC Conference

Mar. 22-25, Crowne Plaza Niagara Falls

Library Workers Conference

Mar. 26-27, London Hilton

OMECC Conference

Mar. 27-30, London Hilton

David Saunders Memorial Week Long School

April 22-27, 2012, White Oaks Resort,
Niagara-on-the-lake

CUPE Ontario Convention

May 23-26, Caesars Windsor

Rallying around child care

Public child care in Ontario is in grave danger, and CUPE Ontario members have been busy trying to defend and strengthen the system. Already facing the triple threat of a fragmented delivery system, inadequate funding and pressure from Ontario's bungled full-day kindergarten implementation, centres now face two more threats: budget-slashing councils and privatization.

In December parents and CUPE members took their "12 Days of Child Care" to Queen's Park. The verses and video of the song are posted at cupe.on.ca.



OMERS

This month, CUPE Ontario Locals will receive a package outlining an unfair pension contribution change at OMERS. The change means that CUPE members in the pension plan will be subsidizing the pension contributions of police officers and fire fighters, who make substantially more money and retire earlier.

This is clearly unfair, and Locals are asked to read the package and send a letter to the OMERS Sponsors Corporation. Contact Craig Saunders (csaunders@cupe.ca) at CUPE Ontario if you need a copy of this package.

Photo of the month



CUPE Ontario executive and members take fight to save Peel Manor to council in December. Send in your best photo of CUPE Ontario members and see your photography featured in the next Political Pulse!

Out of the Cold with Peterborough municipal workers

Municipal workers in Peterborough and CUPE Ontario Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick kicked off the holiday season in December by delivering thousands of dollars to the Country 105 Christmas Toy Drive. After dropping off a veritable mountain of toys, they headed across town to cook and serve an Out of the Cold dinner for people in need of a hot meal.

"I think it's great the way that our members come together to help out those in need. I live in Peterborough. I know how hard our members work every day to keep this community running, and it warms my heart every time that we get together outside work to make our community better for everyone," Rennick said.

The toys were collected by members of CUPE Local 126 (inside workers), Local 504 (outside workers), Local 1883 (library workers) and other CUPE locals in the area. The dinner saw Rennick doing dishes alongside Local 126 President Lynda Bolton and Local 504 President Pat Crough, who prepared food.

In March, the Locals will come together again to sponsor the last Out of the Cold dinner of the season.



A 12-city long-term care tour

For years, CUPE Ontario's Health Care Workers Coordinating Committee (HCWCC), the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions and community and health care allies have pushed the provincial government to enact a minimum standard of care of 3.5 hours a day for residents in LTC facilities. Despite widespread support for a legislated increase in care standards Liberal government has consistently refused to bring forward a minimum care standard law.

OCHU and CUPE Ontario/HCWCC are holding a series of press conferences and video screenings starting January 30, with stops in Peterborough, Ottawa, Cornwall, Sudbury, Kingston, Windsor, Guelph, London, Niagara Falls, Minden, Toronto and Hamilton.



A copy of the OCHU LTC-DVD can be found at cupe.on.ca.

For more information, contact Denise Hammond at 416-299-973 or email dhammond@cupe.on.ca

Solidarity with Electro-Motive workers

Busloads of CUPE Ontario members from across the province converged in London on January 21 to show solidarity with locked-out workers at Electro-Motive Diesel.

CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn and National President Paul Moist stood together with thousands of union supporters. Workers at Electro-Motive were locked out after refusing to take the 50 percent pay cuts demanded by the employer. The company is owned by multinational Caterpillar, which received millions of dollars in federal funding when it bought the local manufacturer last year.



*Choose the next
federal opposition
leader!*



On March 24, thousands of Canadians will vote for a new federal NDP leader, someone who will also be leader of the Official Opposition. CUPE Ontario members can be part of this historic leadership vote, but only if they join the NDP before February 18, 2012.

Joining is easy! You can do it right now - visit: cupe.on.ca/ndp

CUPE is a founding partner of the NDP and by working closely with the party, CUPE members help build a strong, progressive voice in Canadian politics. This is more important than ever, as Stephen Harper, Tim Hudak and Dalton McGuinty's handpicked Chair of the Commission on Public Services Don Drummond, are all attacking basic union rights to free collective bargaining and independent third party arbitration, and pushing economy-killing austerity budgets that will put thousands of Ontarians out of work.

PSW registry

In May, the government announced it would establish a Personal Support Worker Registry. Since then, CUPE Ontario and the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) have been working together to address the serious issues the registry will create for our members.

The PSW Registry will be a mandatory list of all PSWs with publicly funded employers. We have been told it will be implemented starting with the Homecare sector in August, followed by Long-Term Care in 2013 and Hospitals in 2014.

CUPE Ontario and OCHU have taken steps to provide information and identify concerns from our members in this sector through meetings, presentations, facts sheets and conference calls, and a telephone to the town hall in December that included hundreds of CUPE members. We also established a CUPE PSW Registry Working Group with representation from PSWs/HCAs and all health care sectors to work on this issue.

The registry is being set by a PSW Registry Steering Committee. After initially being shut out, CUPE Ontario successfully lobbied for a seat to ensure we can bring forward the issues and concerns of our members. For more information or to have a representative from CUPE Ontario attend a union meeting to speak about the PSW Registry, please contact us at info@cupe.on.ca

CUPE Ontario on the move!

On April 23, CUPE Ontario will move into a new office in Markham, Ontario. From that date, the phone number and address for the Ontario Division will be:

**80 Commerce Valley Drive East
Markham, Ontario
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Phone: 905-759-7939
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