

Ontario Regional Council – December 6-8, 2019

Report by ORC Delegates: Vito Beato, Jaspal Brar, Lisa Contini, Wendy Oliver, Danny Price, Jessica Ridgwell

Scott McIlmoyle, Chair of ORC opened with a reminder of this being Dec 6th, the 30th anniversary of the 14 engineering students and one worker that were murdered at L'Ecole Polytechnique de Montreal in 1989 just for being women. There was a planned march to Queen's Park to take action to make our workplaces and communities free from gender-based violence. Unfortunately, due to weather conditions, the march was cancelled.

Anna Grizans, from Local 229 did an Aboriginal smudging and there was an Aboriginal drumming and dance. Then we watched "A Year in Activism" video.

ORC Women's Committee did a presentation remembering the 14 women killed on Dec 6th. Not nearly enough has changed in the past 30 years in regards to violence against women. They asked for all delegates to participate on social media; Twitter, Instagram or Facebook:

Canada needs a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence. Prioritize this @JustinTrudeau @AndrewScheer @theJagmeetSingh @ElizabethMay #Dec6 #GBV #Unifor #ORC19

Survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence need support. Reinstate the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board now! @fordnation @douglasdowney @jilldunlop #Unifor #ORC19

I call on @JustinTrudeau and @fordnation to fully adopt the final report of the #MMIWG inquiry and implement the calls for justice immediately #EndViolence #Unifor #ORC19

Ontario Regional Director, Naureen Rizvi, spoke about taking action on the Ford government to ensure he only does one term as Premier. The Union has been on the forefront to push women's issues, bargaining women's advocate positions, violence against women and domestic violence language added to our contracts. Eighty-eight percent of Canadians want universal pharmacare and 36,000 seniors are waiting for long term care homes. \$15 and Fairness campaign has been successful in bringing up our minimum wage. This is a tough year in Auto – Oshawa GM announced the closure of the plant and we launched a campaign to save good paying jobs in Oshawa. Neumak workers lost their work to Mexico. Thirteen days the picket lines were up. We lost an arbitration ruling, but we are asking for a judicial review. The TTC needs the additional 60 streetcars. However, the government has not stepped up with funding. This affects our Bombardier workers in Thunder Bay.

There are 785 delegates at this year's ORC. Young workers are considered 35 years of age or younger. Tuitions are still too high and wages are still too low. But, Andrew Scheer is not Prime Minister. Young people are coming together all around the world in regards to climate change.

After lunch, there was a presentation from Natalie Spooner, Sarah Nurse and Danika Gravelle on Success Stories with Women in Sports. When the Canadian Women's Hockey League was set to fold, Natalie Spooner and Sarah Nurse were two women that helped form the PWHPA. The PWHPA created the Dream Group Tour that travels across North America looking for support for women's hockey and equality in the sport of hockey. "Unifor has stepped up right away to support our association," said Natalie Spooner. Unifor is helping secure ice for the group to play hockey. These two young women are acting as role models, showing other young women what can be accomplished if you do not give up on your dreams.

Natalie said that team work and hard work is what athletes strive for every day, which parallels with every one of us. The harder you work for something, the more rewarding it is when you achieve that goal. Two things

you can control is work ethic and attitude. Her dad taught her that and it was a great life lesson. Receiving gold for women's hockey was the best moment of her life. Sarah Nurse expressed shame as the only dream in women's hockey is every 4 years to make one of the 23 spots on the Women's Olympic Team. Women should have a professional league to play in just like her cousin Darnell Nurse who plays for the Edmonton Oilers. Before the women's hockey league folded, woman hockey players were only making \$7,000 a year to play hockey. Danika Gravelle is a grade 12 student who has a love for hockey. She is working for gender equality in women's hockey to have more ice time and the same opportunities as the boys do. "I am not here to be less respected or less discriminated, just to make a wrong right." She thanked Unifor and all the delegates for their support on gender equality. The ORC donated \$25,000 to their association.

The WSIB Committee is working hard to ensure all of our members have representation. A resolution was passed last year that every local elect or support a WSIB rep. Moving forward, they are looking at creating a framework for the whole province for our members to access. We are trying to build from the ground up. Have Basic Level 1 and 2 training and hoping to create mentors. The committee is working on a proposal for next year for further commitment to ensure all our members have representation.

The EI/ CPP committee reported on the committee activities in support of bringing awareness to EI and CPP in the 2019 elections. Committee members attended 2019 Federal Election Action Roundtable to look at EI reform and good jobs in the upcoming federal elections. The 2019 EI/ CPP conference also worked on dispelling myths, identifying shortcomings and creating awareness as most of the services for EI and CPP are put on the back burner until they are in need. The message was to talk to all candidates and current MPs about their party's stance on EI and CPP reform. Now with a new Liberal minority government, we have a once in a generation chance to affect a progressive agenda to improve EI and CPP to the changes we need. These include higher benefits rates and bringing back the Board of Referees. The average worker struggles at a rate of 55% income. It must return to the former benefit level of 75%. We need to push for a return to the principle of weeks worked instead of hours worked and lower the qualifying period so part time and seasonal workers have availability to benefits. Stats Canada announced on Dec 6 that the Canadian economy lost 71,200 jobs in the month of November, increasing the unemployment rate to 5.9%. This is the biggest job loss since the financial crisis of 2008.

At the adjournment of the day's events, the unity team meeting took place. Please see attached for the Unity Team recommendations for ORC members and standing committees.

Saturday morning the credentials committee confirmed the total number of attendees at this year's ORC was 861.

We then had a presentation from Yolanda Cameron, Founder of WES for Youth Online. Yolanda and Jamie Cameron own the funeral home in Walkerton, Ontario. Their son Wesley died by suicide at the age of 16 in 2011. They wanted to do something to help youth with the money that was donated when their son passed. They worked with World Wide Therapy online for over a year to create an online program.

Rural Ontario young people do not like to visit centres where everyone knows them. Also, the financial cost, travel etc. make it difficult for young people to seek help. WES (Stands for Wellness & Emotional Support) for Youth Online is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in youth. The program had 1000 registrants in 2018 and 2000 in 2019 with some outside of the province. They survive with no government funding. The program is paid for completely with donations. WES for Youth Online can be accessed at www.wesforyouthonline.ca. Delegates collected close to \$10,000.

The EFAP Committee then gave their report. Suicide happens every day. The Ontario Regional Council hosted a Compassionate Fatigue Workshop prior to Council. The workshop was attended by many delegates and Union presidents. There were 56 people who attended the EFAP Committee Open House held Friday evening. The Union, the committee and rank and file members are coming along with recognizing mental health. “Mental Health Matters” is a success story from the Union as it brings awareness to mental health and the stigma behind it.

Kelly Scanlon, Director of Organizing, then gave the Organizing Report. The Organizing department has a new, robust plan, have added diverse staff and brought in new campaigns. Canada has developed a strong industrial base – manufacturing, health care, hospitality, professional services and agriculture. We have seen the greatest change in the past 40 years. There are 10 million non-unionized workers in Canada. Manufacturing is still growing. Many employers are looking to stop workers from organizing. It took a year, but we finally organized Kuran-Nagel. Unifor is looking at how to tap into online shopping by organizing companies like Amazon. The Union wants to build a culture of organizing, connecting with workers and building a team. There are many opportunities in gaming, transportation, cannabis retail, health care and hospitality.

Lana Payne, National Secretary-Treasurer, then took to the stage to address delegates. She thanked all members for their continued fight for decent jobs and secured pensions. “We are fighting political parties and picket lines,” Payne said. “This moment demands we must organize even more.”

Jason Kenny slashed minimum wage for young workers, fired thousands of health care workers, attacked union democracy and changed Health & Safety practices. We must fight for National Pharmacare and Child care, pay equity, an auto strategy and a green economic plan. She went on to say that workers as portrayed as barriers and we must use our power of solidarity to win.

She also pointed out that Unifor has more than 350 women’s advocates across the country.

The Political Action Standing Committee gave their report. They reminded us that we are effected every day by politics. “Politics do matter and our vote matters.”

Delegates voted to support a Ford Fightback Campaign to oppose any austerity measures that slash and burn labour regulations, social services, health care and education. We will continue to fight back and try to win back the provisions that the government removed from employment standards as the union negotiates new contracts with employers.

Another guest speaker was Sara Mojtehdzadeh, Work and Wealth Reporter for the Toronto Star. Sara went undercover to expose the deplorable working conditions at Fiera Foods.

Fiera Foods is one of the continent’s largest industrial bakeries. Temporary workers make up around 70 per cent of its workforce and with temporary workers there is an increase in injury rates. Four temp agency workers have died at Fiera and its three affiliated factories in North York since 1999 — including 23-year-old refugee Amina Diaby, who was strangled by her head scarf after it became entangled in an improperly guarded machine in 2016. Documents obtained by the Star found that neither Diaby nor her co-worker had “received training in the location and use of the emergency safety buttons.” There are over 200 Health & Safety violations by this company.

Sara went undercover at Fiera for a month in 2017. She was hired through a temp agency and received about five minutes of safety training, no hands-on instruction and was paid in cash at a payday lender without any documentation or deductions. Most of the workers were minorities who were shouted at all day to work

faster. Temp agencies are not available for temp workers to reach out to. The Ministry of Labour launched a series of proactive inspections at Fiera in early 2018, focused on the company's main facility but not its three affiliated factories. The main facility was inspected 11 times resulting in 24 orders for health and safety violations. The orders were for issues ranging from improper machine guarding to failing to take reasonable precautions to protect a worker. The inspections did not include any visits to Upper Crust, one of Fiera's affiliate factories, where a 52-year-old temp worker died in October 2018 — four months after the ministry's probe finished. The minimum-wage temp was found fatally injured on the ground between a loading dock and a tractor trailer, 17 minutes before his shift was due to end. Fiera Foods was fined \$300,000 after the 3rd death. Ontario's previous Liberal government initiated a measure that would have ensured all companies who use temps are liable for their injuries at the workers' compensation board, which workers' advocates have long argued is a key financial incentive to protecting these vulnerable workers. But the Liberals did not create the regulations necessary to enforce the new law before being booted from power last year. The Ford government has not moved to implement the measure.

In an emotional speech Unifor National President Jerry Dias shared his mother's experience in long-term care as he called for action from Premier Doug Ford. "This time Doug I'm asking you respectfully as a man for the people. I want you to join me for just one shift in the long-term care facilities so we can fix once and for all the inherent disrespect of our seniors," said Dias.

Caretakestime.ca is a long term care campaign. Recommendation #1 – care takes time. A campaign for better care and safe work in long term care. Nursing homes should be a safe place to live. However, in Ontario today, the ratio of shift support to residents is simply too high to provide safe care with dignity.

The hundreds of representatives from Locals across the province also united in a show of public support for education workers as National President Jerry Dias was joined on stage by Harvey Bischof, OSSTF President, Sam Hammond, ETFO President, Liz Stuart, OECTA President and Smokey Thomas, OPSEU President.

Amid chants of "solidarity", the five union leaders raised arms before Council delegates. "This is personal. It's personal when they attack our kids," said Dias.

Hammond called for workers and unions to stand together and join forces. "We are being attacked in the education sector and we need you with us ... to protect children and public education in this province," Hammond said.

Bischof told delegates that workers will not stand by as the Ford government attacks the future of the province. "We will not allow this government to create a bargain basement education system," said Bischof. While Thomas sounded the alarm of looming threats to the broader labour movement. "I feel it in my bones, I feel it in my heart that once Doug is done with the teachers he's coming for the rest of us," said Thomas.

Please see attached Audited Financial Statements, Resolutions and Recommendations.

Note: Recommendation #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 and #6 - passed

Resolution #1 and #2 - passed

Resolution #3 – non-concurrence