

JUNE
2021



THE MEMBERS' voice

THE NEWSLETTER OF CUPE LOCAL 15, VANCOUVER MUNICIPAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY WORKERS
We are on the unceded Coast Salish Territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh)

215

JUNE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The General Membership Meeting will be held on June 23, 2021 using the Zoom platform and you will be sent an invitation by email if the union office has a personal email address on file for you. Details will also be posted at cupe15.org. If you do not receive emails from the union office and would like to attend this meeting please call us at 604-879-4671 to update your information or email us at email@cupe15.org.

Under Discussion:

- Bylaw Amendment – 13.3: Preferential Ballot (Notice served page 3)
- Bylaw Amendment – 18: Shop Stewards (Notice served on page 3)
- Committee and Staff Reports

Return undeliverable
Canadian addresses to:
CUPE Local 15
545 W. 10th Ave.
Vancouver, BC
V5Z 1K9



215.



WARREN WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

by Warren Williams,
President

That's all I can think about. **215** sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and grandchildren.

Someone's babies with no reason or explanation or after thought until May 27, 2021.

CUPE Local 15 members, I know you are with me when I send my deepest condolences to Chief Rosanne Casimir of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation and our Indigenous communities.

My heart is heavy with grief and I don't know how to process this unthinkable truth that my Indigenous brothers and sisters have been telling the world for decades and decades. How can we ever feel a belonging when a simple thing called truth is ignored for centuries and our people keep dying because our voices are barely being heard.

I know I am not alone in my grief although I feel very alone today. I know that my Indigenous community is with me and thinking of me as I am thinking of them. I just can't understand. **215**. It tears at my soul and numbs my body.

I ask that we be there for one another. I know this is only the beginning. Be patient, be kind, allow yourself to grieve, and reach out. It's okay to cry for the **215** children and our Indigenous brothers and sisters, our friends and family, and ourselves.

INFO ON SECOND VACCINES

Second doses will follow a schedule similar to first doses:

- The first round of invitations will be sent to people who received their first dose in March or April.
- After that, invitations will be sent to people according to when they received their first dose. For example, if you had your first dose in early May, you'll get invited to book an appointment in late June. Like your first appointment, you'll select a location, date and time.
- You must have an appointment before you arrive at a clinic.



PLEASE GET YOUR VACCINATION!

Much has happened this past year

by Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer



DEBBIE MOHABIR
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Hello Everyone,

Happy June! It has been one year since I was elected as Secretary-Treasurer and I have to say that the time has flown by! It has been a very big learning curve, but I have gained my

bearings and have been diving into the role. I'm excited to continue the work and build upon the work that is being done.

Stewards

We have continued to work with sectors on recruiting new stewards and signing them up for Intro to Stewarding courses. It has been great to see the interest from members but

there is still a lot of work to be done and I am hoping that more members will step up to be stewards. If you are thinking about becoming a steward and want more information please contact me at dmohabir@cupe15.org. I would also like to welcome our new stewards Suzy Parker (Parks), Vanessa Mani (VSB), Shelley Hill (Langara), and Krista Kieswetter (Langara). We look forward to having you all on board as stewards!

Education

Earlier this year Local 15 put on the Dismantling White Supremacy course for Stewards, Executive, and Staff which was very informative. This course left a lot of us really thinking about what this topic means as well as what we can do within our worksites and local. We hope to put on another Local 15 specific course for Stewards, Executive, and Staff in the fall so please keep your eye out for this. As mentioned in past articles, we have been continuing to provide steward education opportunities to all stewards. We hope that stewards will continue to take courses and workshops to gain further knowledge and tools for their roles.

CUPE Metro

Congratulations to our Trustee Aaron Cook who was elected as a CUPE Metro Trustee on May 13, 2021. Thank you Aaron for putting your name forward and representing CUPE Local 15.

Happy Retirement

On behalf of the Executive, members, and staff we would like to wish our amazing Office Assistant Barbara Simpson a happy retirement. We want to thank you for your amazing dedication in supporting our local for almost 30 years. While we know it is time for you to start your next chapter, we will miss your wonderful presence at the CUPE Local 15 Office. We wish you all the best and hope that you will come back to visit when you aren't too busy living the retiree life. Barbara's last day at work will be July 30, 2021.

As this is the last Members Voice until September, I would like to wish you all a happy and safe summer.

Clothing Donations

The Gathering Place is a community centre in the downtown south area that services the needs of street kids, seniors, and the homeless.



Thanks to past donations from our members they have been able to give out over 900 items of clothing to people in need and are very appreciative of this support.

Once again, they are in desperate need of men's clothing donations, including all sizes of pants, jeans, sweatpants, t-shirts, shirts, jackets, sweaters, shoes, boots, runners, belts, and good condition underwear and socks. Women's items are not needed at this time. They are also in dire need of sleeping bags and backpacks.

Please drop off your donations at 609 Helmcken Street in Vancouver (at the corner of Helmcken and Seymour). For more information or to arrange a drop off, please call Jackie at 604-257-3853. Please consider purging your closets and drawers this weekend as all donations are gratefully appreciated by the citizens we serve.

Thank you for your continued generosity.



Election of Delegates to the 2021 CUPE National Convention

The 2021 CUPE National Convention is scheduled from November 22 through November 26, 2021. At the time of print a decision has not been made whether the convention will take place virtually using an online platform or in person at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

As per the Local 15 bylaws, the Table Officers have automatic delegate status as follows:

- Warren Williams – President
- Santino Scardillo – 1st Vice President
- Ravina Lal – 2nd Vice President
- Debbie Mohabir – Secretary-Treasurer

In addition, delegate elections were held at the virtual Annual General Membership meeting on May 26, 2021 as follows:

- Kamal Gautam – City Sector
- Michele Alexander – City Sector
- Tahmi Yazdanyar – K-12 Sector
- Donna Petersen – K-12 Sector
- Henry Lee – Parks Sector
- Mona Mirzayan – Health Sector
- Rose Palozzi – College/University Sector
- Bo Gembarsky – Cultural Sector
- Aaron Cook – Delegate at Large
- Cynthia Schadt – Delegate at Large
- Lilianna Gut – Delegate at Large

Notices of Motion

1. Bylaw Amendment – 13.3 Preferential Ballot

The Executive recommends amending Bylaw 13.3 as follows:

13.3.1 The election of officers will be held during the month of May in each year. The election will be conducted electronically using a preferential ballot **where members will have the option of ranking one or more of the candidates in order of preference** on an online system approved by the membership. To be elected a candidate must receive the majority of the votes cast.

13.3.3 **An instant runoff system of counting votes will be used when ballots are initially counted for each voter's top choice. If a candidate has more than half of the vote based on first choices, that candidate is elected. If no candidate has more than half of the vote, then the second choice votes are added to candidate's totals. If this results in a candidate receiving more than half of the vote, that candidate is elected. This process continues until a candidate has more than half of the votes.**

Explanation - The **bolded** text above is newly added language which are the only changes to the previous amendments that were unanimously approved by the Membership. These further amendments are at CUPE National's direction so the language around the ranking of candidates is clear.

2. Bylaw Amendment – 18.3 Shop Stewards

The Executive recommends amending Bylaw 18.3 as follows:

18.3 Shop Stewards not in compliance with one or more of the subjects above, may be removed by the President or designate. Shop Stewards so removed may ~~appeal the decision to the Executive Board~~ **seek redress in accordance with the provisions of Section 22 of these bylaws.**

Explanation – The Membership previously approved the removal of the **bolded** text above and replacement with the ~~strike-out~~ text but the National President's office has asked that the reference to the redress language be re-added to ensure compliance with the National Constitution.

MEMBER & EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Executive Decided

At the Executive and Society Board meetings on April 20, 2021 the following decisions were made:

- To amend Policy 7.8.2(4) to increase the credit limit of the Office Manager credit card to \$2,000.
- To donate \$1,000 to the United Way Period Promise campaign.
- To temporarily appoint Stephen Anderson as the Primary OH&S Site Representative for the Park Rangers.
- To appoint Stephen Anderson as the alternate Parks Sector Representative on the CUPE Local 15 OH&S Committee.
- To appoint Nataly Kaufman as the OH&S Site Representative at Mount Pleasant Community Centre.
- To appoint Ken Cen as the OH&S Site Representative at City Hall Campus.
- To approve the final settlement payout for the former Secretary-Treasurer as per the Settlement Agreement.

- To recommend amending Bylaws 13.3 and 18.3 (see Notices of Motion page 3).



The Members Decided

At the Virtual Annual General Membership and Annual General Society Meetings on May 26, 2021 the members in attendance made the following decisions:

- To receive the 2020 Audited Financial Statements for the Union and Society.
- To appoint Fairhall Zhang and Associates to conduct the 2021 Union and Society audits.
- To elect delegates to the 2021 CUPE BC National Convention (See details above).
- To amend Bylaw 14.1 as presented (Bylaws posted on the Bylaw tab at cupe15.org).

Meet our member for June!



Sydney Sullivan
Executive Director, Students' Union of VCC

Q. What do you love about your job?

A. I love how diverse my work is. Each day brings something new and working with students brings new challenges. We are also constantly adjusting and pivoting to new things and supports that our members at the Students' Union need.

Q. What makes you roll your eyes when you hear it?

A. Conspiracy Theories

Q. What's your nickname?

Syd the Kid

Q. If you could create a fortune cookie fortune to give to yourself when you were 16, what would it say?

A. Nothing good happens after 12:00 a.m.

Q. Cake or Pie? Why?

Pie! You can warm it up and have it with ice cream or whipped cream, so versatile!

Q. Name a food that you didn't like to eat growing up?

A. Cooked vegetables.



Thank you, Paul Faoro!

Paul Faoro stopped by our office the other day on his last few days at work.

We are wishing Paul, CUPE BC former President and former Local 15 President all the best in his not-so-retirement! We know you have many great years ahead.

Best Wishes!





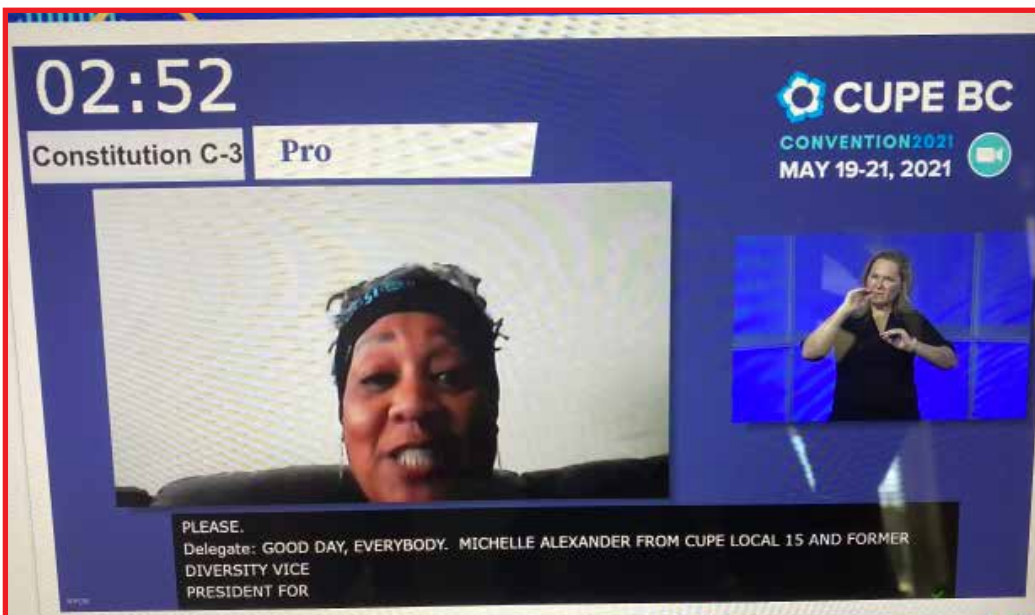
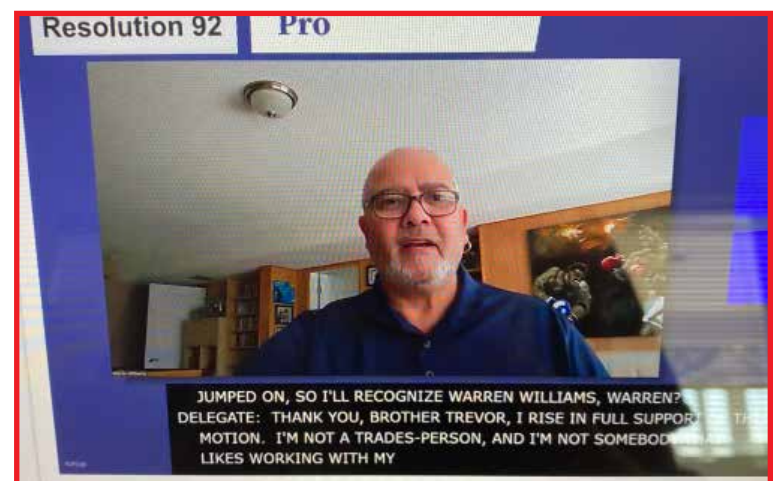
Highlights from our 2021 CUPE BC Convention

by **Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer**

The 2021 CUPE BC Convention was held virtually for the first time and while it wasn't the same experience as being face to face, it was well planned and organized allowing lots of time to vote on resolutions which is what Locals are generally interested in. We were all missing the buzz of the convention floor in the mornings, running into friends from

other locals that we don't often get to see, as well as debates on important resolutions. For those of you who may not know, the CUPE BC Convention is where delegates from locals all over BC come together to vote on resolutions that will guide some of the work that CUPE BC does. It is also a place where amazing activists who are passionate about certain topics share their ideas and thoughts as well as advocate for action. CUPE 15

delegates Rose Palozzi, Michele Alexander, and President Warren Williams all spoke to resolutions on behalf of our local. I am very grateful to have been elected as one of the CUPE BC Trustees and I look forward to doing this work at the provincial level. I believe that with a local of our size, it is important that we are represented at various tables. Thank you to all who supported me in the election!



VSB MEMBER EDUCATION UPDATE

Attention VSB Members:

Important Update to Funding for Professional Development and Education Opportunities

The Service Improvement Allocation (SIA) was one time funding provided by the Province during the last round of bargaining in 2019 with the intention of enhancing services to students and the general public.

At the bargaining table, the VSB and CUPE Local 15 agreed to use the bulk of these funds to go toward training for our members. In doing that, our members could utilize those funds to assist in offsetting the cost of continuing education and professional development which then leads to improving the services our members provide.

The available funds will be distributed through the SIA Committee from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 using an application process.

The SIA Fund is in addition to, and can be combined with, The Joint Career Development Committee as outlined in our current collective agreement. To use both the Joint Career Development Committee funds and the SIA funds you must fill out both application forms separately.

It is important to note that neither of these funds cover substitute costs, transportation, meals, lodging, or professional membership fees. Professional membership fees are only paid should the employer require the member to have the membership.

Employees can apply to both the SIA for two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250) and Joint Career Development (Clause 11.U.1 VSB/ CUPE15 Collective Agreement), two hundred (\$200) by completing both application forms separately. The application forms also provide further information on what the funds cover.

In addition the union Professional Development Committee is working jointly with the employer to provide additional in-house training opportunities for members. We encourage all members to take advantage of these funding opportunities to enhance education and career development goals.

If you have questions please contact human resources or the union office.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY REPORT

*submitted by Tahmi Yazdanyar
VSB Shop Steward and Member of Free Them Now (Campaign to Free Jailed Workers in Iran)*

Help us Save Iranian Political Prisoners Vahid and Habib Afkari

Habib, Vahid, and Navid Afkari, are three workers and brothers who have faced a brutal consequence for just exercising their basic rights which was participating in the peaceful demonstrations against the Islamic regime in Shiraz, Iran in 2018.

Navid was 27 years old, a wrestling champion, who confessed to crimes allegedly under torture. The Islamic regime, after torturing him, executed him in September 2020. Navid's

execution raised international outrage by the Global Athlete and World Players' Association.

The Islamic regime in Iran sentenced Vahid to 25 years and Habib to 27 years and three months in prison as well as 74 lashes each. Reports from Iran confirm that they have been tortured, denied medical care, and even threatened with execution. They continue to be kept in solitary confinement. The Islamic regime of Iran wants to make "an example" of the Afkari brothers, because they are fearing further mass protest by the people of Iran.

Vahid's and Habib's lives are now in grave danger, and they need our help. The Campaign in Support of Afkari Brothers has been formed to gather international support for the Afkari brothers and to secure their immediate and unconditional release. Protesting is not a crime. The criminals are those at the head of this regime. Vahid and Habib must be released now, along with all the political prisoners in Iran.

You can help by sending a message via email or Tweet. It will only take a few minutes of your time to send a message and demand the immediate and unconditional release of Vahid Afkari and Habib Afkari. In your Tweet please use hashtag: #SaveAfkariBrothers.

Send your email or Tweet to:
Hassan Rouhani Email: media@rouhani.ir
Twitter: @HassanRouhani
Ali Khamenei Email: info_leader@leader.ir
Twitter: @khamenei_ir
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Regime to the UN - Email: iran@un.int

You can also write to your government urging them to pressure the regime in Iran to release Vahid and Navid Afkari immediately.

There was the day of action in support of Afkari brothers on Friday, May 21st in Vancouver and many other cities around the world.

OH&S CORNER

Sun Safety for the Summer!

by Chad Cammer, OH&S Committee

The summer is nearly upon us folks! Let's revisit some safety tips and guidelines in and outside of the workplace on how to protect one's self from the sun.

Protecting workers from heat stress involves taking precautionary measures to avoid risk factors for heat illness. Illnesses associated with heat stress are heat cramps, heat rash, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Too much unprotected exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can cause skin damage, eye damage, immune system suppression, and skin cancer. The sun's UV rays can damage your skin in as little as fifteen minutes.

Establishing a Heat Illness Prevention Program in the workplace and providing training about the hazards leading to heat stress is significantly beneficial to the workers. Factors associated with physical labor, and the amount of time exposed to the sun, protecting one's body (skin and head) are significantly important.

Preventing a sunburn would be, to limit and/or avoid sun exposure. If possible, find shade under an umbrella, tree, or other shelter before you need relief from the sun. Wear protective clothing, such as a hat that covers your neck, ears, eyes and scalp. Wear sunglasses with UV ray protection to prevent eye damage. Wear loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing that covers your arms and legs.



As an alternative measure, use sunscreen protection with a "sun protection factor" (SPF) of 30 or higher.

Most importantly, keep hydrated! Drink plenty of fluids including cool water and electrolyte hydration drinks that contain little or no sugar. Drink often... and before you feel thirsty.

Considering and adhering to these guidelines will assist in keeping one's mental and physical health, safety, and wellness intact!

Enjoy the summer and be safe!



“Goodbye and Best Wishes!”

A warm, welcoming first Union meeting

I bragged about it all the next day. My co-workers, my boyfriend, my father and even a few unsuspecting neighbours all got an earful about my first Union meeting.

Rarely have I met such a warm, welcoming group of people as I did that night with the VMREU. Our membership seems diverse and the opinions voiced over the issues reflected that. That's partly what made the discussion about our daily strike pay such an exciting one.

Because it was my first meeting I said the VMREU oath, received a membership pin and a Steward's pin. (Coincidentally I also won the prize!) Talk about positive reinforcement! A few small beer after the meeting capped everything off nicely . . .

Well, I know I'll be back for more – to participate in Union business and to have my say, and, just as importantly, to get better acquainted with our VMREU membership.

Barbara Simpson M.P.A.

I have been here for many years and have learned a terrific amount about unions, workers, and life. When I was first involved in the union at the Mental Patients' Association I could hardly believe that workers came together to fight for rights for the group and I was so heartened by this I even wrote a tiny piece for the Members' Voice (1989). I had never learned about unions at school or growing up – my parents had their own small business and school boards don't always like teaching about workers' rights and history.

I am leaving what feels a lot like family here at CUPE Local 15 and I will always be grateful for the experiences and support I've had from my

coworkers and employer. What a great place to work. I was so lucky to end up here and I think it was fate that I was hired by the likes of Rick Gates, President, Ray Haynes, Business Manager, and Roberta McCann, Office Manager. And fate that Staff Representative, Wendy Bice talked me down off the ledge in her office before my interview, since I could hardly speak I was so nervous. That was quite a while ago and now it's time for me to make way for someone with fresh ideas.

Best wishes to my replacement and good-bye everyone!

Barbara xo

We will miss you, Barbara, every single day!

I first met Barbara in 1990 when I started as an Office Assistant at the VMREU (predecessor to CUPE Local 15). Barbara was working at the Mental Patients' Association and was involved in the union as a shop steward, member of the Bargaining Committee, and as an Executive Board member.

The first time I ever saw Barbara was when she was in a meeting in the union boardroom with the MPA bargaining committee and she came upstairs to the reception counter wearing what looked like a pajama top. When we asked her if it was indeed a pajama top she replied “yes, I'm making a statement that I'd rather be sleeping”. I liked her immediately and when she was hired to fill a vacancy in the office we were all very happy to have her join our tight little upstairs group.

Now more than 25 years have passed and I have appreciated her ever since, especially her wicked sense of humour. We have been

through many work and life experiences during this time, some really great and some very difficult, and I am still adjusting to the idea that she won't be here to make me laugh every Monday morning. Chatting and laughing with her was the best way to start the week (and neither of us are morning people).

When I was promoted to Office Manager it was Barbara who made the workload manageable by continually offering her support in those first weeks and months of navigating a new job. We will notice her absence in many ways, one of the most notable for me, her proofreading skills. She has proofread the Members' Voice these many years as well as much of what has come out of my office.

In 2010 she submitted a self-performance evaluation and she nailed it. It was so funny I kept it in her file to this day. Her proofreading skills are legendary and she is very clever but her penmanship is an epic fail! I want to share

that evaluation with you to give you an idea of the person we are losing to retirement.

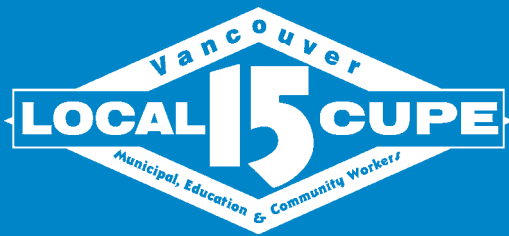
Barbara Simpson – August 3, 2010

- Attitude: 3/5 (see “gets along with others”)
- Punctuality: 4.5/5
- Appetite: 5/5 (several lunches daily)
- Ability to learn new skills: 3/5 (comes & goes)
- Gets along with others: 3/5 (depends if drinking)
- Appearance: 3/5 (see above)
- Accuracy 3/5 (see above)
- Penmanship 2/5 (better with drinking)

Thanks Barbara for all the years we worked together. I've known you longer than my husband and most of my kids and I will miss you every single day. We all will.

Wishing you, Christopher, and Pip all the best always.

Rosemary



The Members' Voice is published nine times a year for members of CUPE Local 15 - Vancouver Municipal, Education and Community Workers. The deadline for submissions is 9:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. All submissions may be edited for brevity and clarity. Signed articles and letters do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of CUPE Local 15.

CUPE Local 15

545 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1K9
Phone: 604-879-4671
Fax: 604-879-7582
Email: email@cupe15.org
Web: www.cupe15.org

Local 15 is a chartered affiliate of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and is also affiliated with the CUPE British Columbia Division, CUPE Metro District Council, the Vancouver & District Labour Council, and the BC Federation of Labour. CUPE 15 is a member of the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM).

CUPE Local 15 Executive Board Table Officers:

President: Warren Williams
Secretary-Treasurer: Debbie Mohabir
1st Vice President: Santino Scardillo
2nd Vice President: Ravina Lal

Sector Representatives:

City: Kamal Gautam, Michele Alexander
College/University: Alex Fowler, Rose Palozzi
Cultural: Nicola Clur
Health/HSSCBA: Mona Mirzayan
Health/HSPBA: Mia Nickel
Parks: Starla Bayley, Henry Lee
K-12: Carley Romas, Cynthia Schadt

Trustees:

Donna Petersen, Lilianna Gut, Aaron Cook

Staff Representatives:

Kathie Currie, John Geppert, Steve Salsman, Gail Johnson, Joy Tullos

Office & Administrative Staff:

Mark Gloumeau, Accounting Coordinator
Rosemary Matheson, Office Manager
Barbara Simpson, Office Assistant
Nadia Thibault, Office Assistant
Nancy Strider, Accounting Assistant
Tia Tang, Office Assistant

Building Service Worker:

Elaine Duan

CUPE National Representatives:

Lee Mossman, Tanya Paterson



Kamloops Indian Residential School in 1930

CUPE BC Statement on Kamloops Residential School discovery

The following is a list of resources and hotlines dedicated to supporting Indigenous people.

(from the Vancouver School Board)

24/7 Support

KUU-US Crisis Line Society
1-800-588-8717

Indian Residential School Survivors Society 1-800-721-0066

Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society
1-888-403-3123

Aboriginal Wellness Program
604-675-2551 or 1-866-884-0888

Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division 1-800-555-8222

heretohelp
310-6789 or 1-800-784-2433

First Nations Health Authority
1-844-935-1044

Métis Nation BC – Mental Health Services 1-833-638-4722

National Crisis Hotlines

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

Crisis Services Canada
1-833-456-4566 or text 45645

First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line 1-855-242-3310



The discovery in May of a mass burial site containing the bodies of 215 children at the former Kamloops Residential School is a terrible but important reminder that Canada's racist and genocidal approach to First Nations peoples is not a relic of a distant past. The residential school system, which was designed to strip Indigenous children from their families, and then eliminate their language, culture and history, continued to operate until 1996.

Our hearts go out to all survivors of the residential school system, and particularly to members of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, on whose unceded territory the school operated until 1978.

We join with those urging donations to the Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society at irsss.ca/donate.

CUPE BC is urging all local governments across the province to lower flags to half-mast as an act of mourning and solidarity. We also join the BCTF in urging school boards to lower flags to half-mast at all schools in B.C., and we're calling on all educators, support staff and students to wear orange as a form of reconciliation with Indigenous people. We encourage all members, regardless of sector, to wear orange as well. We also urge all employers, regardless of whether in the public

or private sectors to demonstrate their solidarity with survivors—if your workplace or business displays a flag, please lower it to half-mast.

To Indigenous CUPE members: we can only imagine the pain and trauma this news has caused, or reawakened. If you need help, the National Indian Residential School Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day at 1-866-925-4419.

CUPE BC is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous people, and we encourage everyone to learn more about the horrific residential school system in Canada. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at nctr.ca has excellent resources here. Specific information about the Missing Children and Burial Information can be found in the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation section 71-76.

Finally, non-Indigenous members in particular are encouraged to begin—or to continue—taking steps toward reconciliation. Indigenous people whose children were stolen want proper burials for their children; bring the children home.

About the cover:
We encourage our members to display the cover in your home or worksite, and we thank the Indigenous members who helped guide us to this cover design.