

NOVEMBER
2024

THE MEMBERS' VOICE



THE NEWSLETTER OF LOCAL 15, VANCOUVER MUNICIPAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY WORKERS

Delegates to the BC Federation of Labour Convention

The following members were elected to represent CUPE Local 15 as delegates to BC Federation of Labour's 61st Constitutional Convention being held in Vancouver from Nov. 25-29, 2024.

- Paul Chohan
- Valerie Coombes
- Subrata Dasgupta
- Bernie Dionne
- Edith Hole
- Ravina Lal
- Henry Lee
- Vanessa Mani
- Debbie Mohabir
- Santino Scardillo
- Lucia Rincon
- Cynthia Schadt
- Sarah Walker
- Warren Williams
- Seagrin Worster



Since the Members' Voice isn't published in December, we are reaching out a bit early to wish each of you a wonderful holiday season. This year, your hard work, resilience, and solidarity have made all the difference—not just in our workplaces, but in our community as a whole. We are proud to stand together with each of you, as members of a union that values strength, fairness, and mutual support. We hope you find time to rest and recharge with loved ones over the holidays. Here's to a New Year filled with continued unity, purpose, and progress.

In solidarity and with warmest thanks,
Your CUPE Local 15 Executive Board

NOVEMBER 2024 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The General Membership & General Society Meetings will be held on November 27, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. via the Zoom platform

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 www.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 or email us at email@cupel5.org to update your information. There will be a draw at the end of the meeting and three lucky winners will receive a gift card (retailers TBA at the meeting). Child and dependant care reimbursement is available as per eligibility requirements in CUPE Local 15 Bylaw Section 31.

Article B.10.1(c) of the CUPE National Constitution allows Honourary Members to attend membership meetings with voice, but no vote. If you are an Honourary Member and would like to attend, please email the office on the day of, or the day prior to the meeting.

UNDER DISCUSSION:

- Union and Society Budgets
- Financial Statement
- Committee and Staff Reports

Important Note – Virtual General Membership Meeting Invitations

After registering for the Virtual General Membership meeting, please do not share your link with fellow members. If they did not receive the invitation and would like to attend, please ask them to contact the union office and provide us with their contact information directly. Once this is done, an invitation will be sent to them and they can register to receive their own link. This is important to facilitate accurate attendance records.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE...

We live, work and play on the unceded land of the Coast Salish peoples—Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) Nations.

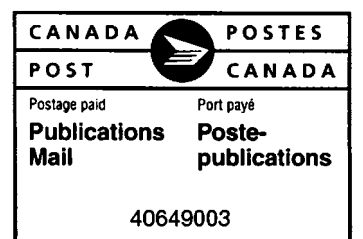


Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement – Serving our members' interests by advancing and defending their rights and the rights of all workers.

Vision Statement – A union founded on respect and advocacy that instills pride and a sense of belonging for the benefit of all.

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



A Time to Remember: Honouring Our Veterans This November

by Warren Williams, President



WARREN WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

Dear members,

As we take time to remember those who have given so much of themselves, I also want to acknowledge Mayor Sim and his family, who were affected by a recent act of violence at their home this Halloween.

Such actions are deplorable and reflect a profound lack of honour and respect for our community values.

November is a month when we pause as a community to reflect, honour, and express our gratitude for the sacrifices of those who have served. This month, CUPE Local 15 recognizes two important days: National Indigenous Veterans' Day on November 8th and Remembrance Day on November 11th.

On National Indigenous Veterans' Day, we take a moment to remember the bravery and contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit veterans. Their stories are powerful and reflect a deep commitment to our country, often in the face of unique challenges and hardships. Indigenous veterans have been a vital part of Canada's history, and on November 8th, we honour their courage and the sacrifices they have made.

Remembrance Day on November 11th is a time for us to come together to recognize all

veterans, who have served and continue to serve. For many of us, this day holds personal significance. We think of family members, friends, or colleagues who have answered the call of duty, sometimes far from home. Their commitment to protecting peace and freedom is something we honour deeply. As we observe a moment of silence, we remember their bravery and their service to us all.

I encourage each of you to observe these days every year in a way that feels meaningful, whether that means wearing a poppy, attending a local ceremony, or simply taking a quiet moment to reflect. Our gratitude to veterans and their families runs deep, and this month, we remember them with heartfelt respect and appreciation.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

by Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer



DEBBIE MOHABIR
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Annual Pumpkin Carving Contest

Please make sure to turn to the centre spread to see some of the entries submitted this year. Enjoy!

VSB Support Staff Recognition Day was November 5th

The Vancouver School Board has designated November 5th

of every year as the day to recognize the important and crucial work that our members do. Our members perform a variety of roles, including Office Support, Student Support Workers, IT staff, Indigenous Education Workers, Payroll, Benefits, and Accounting staff, Youth & Family Workers, SSBs, Multicultural Liaison Workers, and Settlement Workers, just to name a few. We appreciate that this day is dedicated to acknowledging this work. These members are the glue that holds everything together!

United Way Public Policy Institute

We would like to congratulate Health Sector Steward, Adriana Salcido, for being selected by CUPE Metro to attend the United Way Public Policy Institute. CUPE Metro will be sponsoring Adriana to attend this amazing opportunity. It is a training program led by Carole James, who endeavors to deliver it in a way that is inclusive, relational, and decolonizing. In Carole's words: "The United Way BC Public Policy Institute is a unique program, designed to support leaders in the non-profit sector to strengthen their skills in developing, designing, and advocating for their public policy work. The program provides an inclusive, interactive learning environment where participants explore a range of tools and approaches, share their knowledge and expertise with each other, all while learning from a diverse group of panelists and guest speakers." - Public Policy Institute/United Way British Columbia

Remembrance Day

On November 11, 2024, veterans across Canada are honoured and remembered for their sacrifices. Many have put their lives on the line for freedom, and this year I would like to speak about the history of Chinese veterans.

The history of Chinese veterans in Canada is a testament to courage and resilience. Despite facing significant discrimination, including the imposition of a "head tax" and exclusionary immigration laws, Chinese Canadians have served valiantly in the Canadian military. During the First World War, over 200 Chinese Canadians enlisted, some of whom fought and died on the Western Front. The Second World War saw over 600 Chinese Canadians serve across all branches of the military, with some even recruited as secret agents in Asia. Their service contributed not only to Canada's war efforts but also played a crucial role in advancing civil rights for the Chinese Canadian community. The legacy of these veterans is honoured by memorials and remembrance initiatives that acknowledge their sacrifices and contributions to Canada's history.

The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society, located in Vancouver, has worked diligently to preserve this history and stories so they are not forgotten.

"The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society (CCMMS) was founded in 1998. Our mandate has been to collect, preserve, document and commemorate the role of Chinese Canadians in service to Canada's military, with a focus on the role these "unwanted soldiers" played in the community's efforts to achieve full equal rights in Canada. In recent years, we have expanded our work beyond purely military stories. We recognize that our veterans were part of a larger community that faced and overcame challenges on every front. Today, our projects take a broader view: we find and share "lesser-known stories" of everyday Chinese Canadians as revealed through their experiences, records and artifacts. Our hope is to engage and educate new generations on the sacrifices and remarkable endurance of earlier generations, on whose shoulders we stand today." - Chinese Canadian Military Museum

One of the very few Chinese women in the military was Mary Laura Wong, also known as Mah. She was a notable figure in Canadian military history. She enlisted with the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) during World War II and served as a teletype keyboard operator stationed out of the old Hotel Vancouver. After the war, in 1947, Mary was chosen to be among the first Chinese Canadians to receive their citizenship papers. In March of 2016, Mary passed away in Toronto in her 93rd year. Her service is a testament to the courage and determination of Chinese Canadians who overcame discrimination to contribute to Canada's war efforts. Mary's story is not just one of military service; it's a narrative of resilience and pioneering spirit, as she was one of the first Chinese Canadian women to receive Canadian citizenship post-war. Her legacy is a reminder of the diverse and multifaceted history of Canada's veterans.



I encourage you to visit the Chinese Canadian Military Museum website to learn more about those who were considered the "unwanted soldiers".

As this is the last issue of the Members' Voice for the year, I would like to wish all of our CUPE 15 members a happy holiday and best wishes for a happy and healthy new year!



BARGAINING SURVEY

ATTENTION: MEMBERS AT THE CITY, PARKS, RAY-CAM, AND BRITANNIA

Your Bargaining Committee has met and is reviewing the work of the past committee.

We are in the process of finalizing the bargaining survey, which is very important because it helps us develop our proposals to the employer. The survey will be open from December 10, 2024 to January 14, 2025. Please keep an eye out for a mailing from the union that will include a QR code.

Note: To ensure you receive the survey invitation when it is first launched, the union office must have your personal email address on file.

Should you want to connect with the bargaining committee directly, we have set up an email address at bargaining2025@gmail.com. We will do our best to respond to messages, but the bulk of our proposals will be formulated from the information received in the survey.

We look forward to representing your interests at the bargaining table.

City et al Bargaining Committee

- Starla Bayley, Parks – Chair
- Ava Choy, City – Vice-Chair
- Henry Lee, Parks – Executive Liaison
- Lorraine Evans, Britannia
- Shelley Bach, Ray-Cam
- Mike Shaul, City
- Steve Anderson, Parks
- Jessie Mann, Parks – Alternate
- Henry Williams, Parks – Alternate
- Warren Williams, President
- Steve Salsman, Staff Representative

Call for Interest
- Alternate OH&S Representatives for the Union OH&S Committee

The Union OH&S Committee has vacant Alternate OH&S positions in the Health Sector, Cultural Sector, and Langara College.

If you are interested, please email Henry Lee at trendfitness@yahoo.com for more information.

Bursary Thank You



I want to express my sincere gratitude for the part-time VMECW Society Member Bursary. Your support is a tremendous help in easing the financial demands of my studies at UBC, and I appreciate the hard work and dedication

CUPE 15 puts into creating opportunities like these for members. The bursary program has made a meaningful difference in my academic journey, and I encourage all eligible members to take advantage of this valuable resource. The financial assistance provided can be instrumental for those pursuing further education and professional growth. Thank you again for your ongoing commitment to supporting our union members.

Best regards, Long You



GOOD AND WELFARE POLICY 10.4.1

REMEMBRANCES, CONDOLENCES, AND CONGRATULATIONS

- (1) Upon the office being notified of the following occurrences, the Society shall provide either flowers or a fruit basket, or make a donation to a specified charity, at a total cost of up to \$100.
 - i) Death of a member or retired member
 - ii) Serious illness or injury of a member where absence exceeds two weeks
 - iii) Death of an immediate family member, including spouse, child, parent, or sibling
 - iv) Birth or adoption of a child
- (2) Upon the office being notified of the death of a member's extended family member, the Society shall send a card of condolence.

Call the union office at 604-879-4671 to let us know about a co-worker who is eligible as per the policy below and we will send flowers or a fruit basket on behalf of CUPE Local 15.

DECISIONS

BY THE EXECUTIVE

At the Executive and Society Board meetings on October 15, 2024 the following decisions were made:

- To appoint Eddie Uechi as the Primary OH&S Representative for Rink/Arena workers on the Parks Joint OH&S Committee.
- To receive the Financial Statements ending August 31, 2024.
- To amend Policy 10.3 – Christmas Donations effective January 1, 2025. (See full policy page 8.)

BY THE MEMBERS

At the General Membership meeting on October 23, 2024, the members in attendance made the following decisions.

- To change the name “Chief” Shop Steward to “Lead” Shop Steward throughout the CUPE Local 15 Bylaws. (Note: CUPE National must formally approve all amendments to the bylaws and at the time of publication we are awaiting their response.)
- To elect fifteen delegates to represent CUPE Local 15 at the 61st Constitutional Convention of the BC Federation of Labour. (See delegate list on the cover.)
- To defeat a motion to post the CUPE Local 15 Policies and Procedures manual on the CUPE Local 15 website.
- To receive the Financial Statement ending August 31, 2024

NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS NOV. 27, 5:30pm via Zoom.



Notices of Motion - Union

1. 2025 Proposed Budget

The Executive recommends approval of the proposed 2025 CUPE Local 15 Budget.

Notices of Motion – Society

1. 2025 Proposed Budget

The Executive recommends approval of the proposed 2025 VMECW Society Budget.

2. 2025 Proposed Capital Budget

The Executive recommends approval of the proposed 2025 VMECW Society Capital Budget.



THE MEMBERS' **voice** PUMPKIN CARVING CONTEST

NOVEMBER
2024





As the prizes make their way to the winners, the anticipation for next year's event is already growing. May the spirit of innovation and the joy of creation continue next year!



UNDERSTANDING THE DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE: A cornerstone of equity in the workplace

*Submitted by Lucia Rincon, Lead Shop Steward,
Vancouver Coastal Health – HSPBA*

What is the Duty to Accommodate?

In today's evolving workplaces, ensuring that every employee has the opportunity to thrive is not only a legal obligation, but a moral imperative. One of the most important tools we have to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion is the duty to accommodate.

The duty to accommodate refers to an employer's responsibility to adjust working conditions or workplace policies to remove barriers that prevent employees with disabilities, religious obligations, family responsibilities, or other protected grounds from fully participating in the workforce. This legal obligation stems from human rights legislation across Canada and is key to promoting fairness in the workplace.

Accommodations can take many forms, depending on the individual's needs and the specific situation. Examples include:

- Flexible working hours for those with family care obligations.
- Modified duties or equipment adjustments for employees with physical disabilities.
- Quiet spaces or modified uniforms for individuals observing religious practices.
- Work-from-home options or job-sharing arrangements for employees managing chronic health conditions.

Why is Accommodation Important?

The duty to accommodate isn't just about complying with legal requirements; it's about fostering an inclusive workplace where every employee has the opportunity to succeed. Accommodation ensures that workers are not unfairly excluded or disadvantaged based on factors outside their control. By offering reasonable adjustments, employers

demonstrate a commitment to equity, diversity, and respect for human rights.

The Accommodation Process

The process for seeking accommodation is a shared responsibility between the employer and the employee. It often involves:

1. **Employee disclosure:** The employee typically needs to inform their union about their need for accommodation. They may need to provide documentation, such as medical information, to support their request. The information is completely confidential and on a need-to-know basis.
2. **Employer response:** Employers must work with the union and employee to find a reasonable solution. The employers are required to make sincere efforts to remove barriers.
3. **Collaboration:** The process is often one of collaboration, where both the employee, union, and employer explore alternatives to find an accommodation that works for everyone. In some cases, this may mean a series of small changes that collectively meet the employee's needs.
4. **Undue hardship:** Employers are only exempt from accommodating an employee if they can prove that doing so would cause undue hardship – for instance, if the accommodation would cause significant financial strain or compromise safety. However, this bar is set high, meaning employers must seriously consider all reasonable options before claiming and demonstrating undue hardship.

Challenges and Misconceptions

A common misconception is that accommodation must be expensive or disruptive. In reality, many accommodations are low-cost or involve simple, practical changes that make a significant difference for the employee involved. Whether it's allowing

extra breaks, changing a shift, or modifying a workspace, small changes can create big improvements in inclusivity and productivity.

Additionally, some employees may feel hesitant to ask for accommodation, fearing stigma or judgment. It is crucial for employers to provide a safe space where employees feel supported in raising these issues. Promoting open dialogue and ensuring confidentiality are key aspects of building trust and encouraging accommodation requests.

Creating a Culture of Accommodation

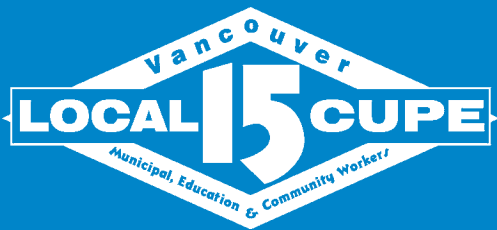
Workplaces that embrace accommodation create a culture of respect and inclusivity. By ensuring that everyone, regardless of their personal circumstances, has the tools and support they need to contribute fully, we strengthen our teams and build a more resilient, engaged workforce.

At its core, accommodation is about recognizing the diverse needs of our employees and responding with empathy, compassion, and flexibility. When we remove barriers for individuals, we enable everyone to reach their full potential, and that benefits all of us.

Conclusion

The duty to accommodate is not only about meeting legal requirements, it's about creating a workplace where everyone has a fair chance to succeed. By working together to meet the needs of our members, we promote fairness, equity, and a stronger, more inclusive work environment.

If you have any questions about accommodations in our workplace or need support in seeking accommodation, please reach out to your union representative for assistance.



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: Aaron Cook, Paul Chohan
College/University: Sophie Bennett, Rose Palozzi
Cultural: Courtney Gillen
Health/HSSCBA: Roxshanna Shankar
Health/HSPBA: Lucia Rincon
Parks: Bernie Dionne, Henry Lee
K-12: Chris Brown, Cynthia Schadt

Trustees:

Seagrin Worster, Sheri Nielsen
Vanessa Mani

Staff Representatives:

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

Office & Administrative Staff:

Mark Gloumeau, Accounting Coordinator
Nancy Strider, Accounting Assistant
Mei Wu, Accounting Assistant
Tia Tang, Office Manager
Michelle Yim, Office Assistant
Geneviève Dubuc, Office Assistant
Megan Wong, Office Assistant

Building Service Worker:

Elaine Duan

CUPE National Representative:

Dan Todd



On behalf of the Jr. Black Achievement Awards Society, thank you for placing an ad in the 2023-2024 Excellence and Elegance Awards Ceremony Program. Your support of our youth is encouraging, and this was a very meaningful gesture. Your contribution helped make this evening possible, so we are very grateful and want to extend our sincere appreciation. Again, thank you for helping to create possibilities!

In community, Candace Knoll, President JrBAA

Policy Amendment on Donations

At their October 15, 2024 meeting, as per the recommendation from the Finance Committee, the Executive Board voted in favour of the following policy amendments effective January 1, 2025. Strike-out denotes deleted text and **bold** denotes new language.

10.3 Christmas Donations

- 10.3.1 The membership instructs the Board of the Society to allot monies up to \$150 per request to a maximum of \$1,500 (1995 dollars) for Christmas donations. One year moratorium for 1992. **Upon receipt of donation request letters from City of Vancouver Non-Market Housing residences, the Society shall provide donations in the amount of \$400 each, to a maximum of fifteen residences, toward their annual Christmas meal events.**
- 10.3.2 Donations for Christmas events in residences and facilities be granted on the following basis:
 - (1) Ten donations be given on a first come basis at \$150 each (total \$1,500);
 - (2) It be specified that the money must be spent on activities or food for facility residents and/or clients;
 - (3) Facilities which have received previous donations be pre-authorized and that new requests be considered by the Executive Board.**Upon receipt of donation request letters, the Society Board may approve up to an additional five Christmas donations in the amount of \$400 each.**

'tis the season TO DO A UNION WORDSEARCH!

Words to find: Holidays, Festive, Solidarity, Union, CUPE, City, Park, School, Community, Members

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