

OCTOBER  
2022

# THE MEMBERS' VOICE



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

## WE ACKNOWLEDGE...

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



### Notice about our Office Hours:

The union office is gradually re-opening.

The Boardroom and staff are available by appointment, so please call us at 604-879-4671. Our office telephone hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



**@ we need your email address**

### Use of Employer Email Addresses

For legal reasons, the union does not use employer email addresses to send information to members.

If you have previously provided us with an employer email address, it has been deleted from our database. Please call 604-879-4671 or email us at [email@cupe15.org](mailto:email@cupe15.org) to provide us with a personal email address, so you can continue receiving information from the union.

## The CUPE Local 15 Pumpkin Carving Contest is now open!



By *Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer*

It's that time of year again! We look forward to seeing what your families can make. Children can PAINT, DECORATE, OR CARVE a pumpkin; it is your choice!

### Each category above will be judged in the following areas:

1. Funny
2. Original Idea
3. Scary
4. Best theme
5. Most unusual

Please take a picture with the pumpkin and email it to [dmohabir@cupe15.org](mailto:dmohabir@cupe15.org). Make sure to include the following:

- CUPE 15 member's name and employer
- Child's name and age

### PLEASE NOTE:

**The deadline is Monday, October 31st at 5:00 p.m.**

Winners will be notified and mailed their prize! Winners and their pumpkins will also be profiled in the next November's Members' Voice. Happy Carving!

## OCTOBER 2022 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The General Membership Meeting will be held on **October 26, 2022 using Zoom.**

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](http://www.cupe15.org). If you do not receive emails from the union office and would like to attend these meetings, please call us at 604-879-4671 or email us at [email@cupe15.org](mailto:email@cupe15.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 meeting). Child and dependant care reimbursement is available as per eligibility requirements in Local 15 Bylaw Section 31.

**Oct. 26, 2022  
5:30 p.m.  
via Zoom invite**

### UNDER DISCUSSION:

- Election of Delegates to the BC Federation of Labour Convention

## 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 the meeting, 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.

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



## It's time to cast a ballot in the Municipal election!

by Warren Williams, President



WARREN WILLIAMS  
PRESIDENT

Do you remember the anticipation of voting for the very first time?

At eighteen years old, we thought we knew everything about the world we needed to know, only to come to the realization

that there was much more to know than we ever contemplated. At eighteen, we were idealistic, self-assured, and maybe a little in awe of our path going forward, although we would never admit it.

At eighteen, most of us were coming out of high school and if we were fortunate, some of us were looking ahead to attend post-secondary education.

For some, it was our first experience becoming part of the work force. Most of us had never heard of the labour movement and what it stood for, nor did we understand the importance of voting. It ensures we protect our economic, social, and personal health interests going forward, not only for ourselves, but for friends and family.

At eighteen, casting a ballot meant much more than we understood.

Today, we know the importance of choosing wisely for our future. Today, we understand the importance of the labour movement. Today, we

understand that the politicians we put in office will either support our economic, social, and personal health, or hinder it.

I have had members upset with me because they felt that they were being told how to vote. I would never tell you who to vote for; it is your democratic right to choose. I will, however, remind you that in these municipal, city, and school board elections, you are voting for your future employers. You have the choice to cast your vote for candidates that labour has endorsed because we believe they will support the workforce that provides the services that a society needs in order to prosper.

Visit [vdlc.ca/vote-for-labour-endorsed-candidates/](http://vdlc.ca/vote-for-labour-endorsed-candidates/) and it will provide you with a list of labour endorsed candidates in your municipality, who will decide your future.

**ON OCT. 15TH, REMEMBER TO VOTE FROM 8AM TO 8PM**

## Have a happy and safe October!

by Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer



DEBBIE MOHABIR  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Hello Everyone,**

**CUPE Metro District Council**

Many of our members may not realize that CUPE Local 15 is an affiliate of other labour organizations and one of them is the CUPE Metropolitan

Vancouver District Council. Delegates are elected to represent the Local at monthly meetings and similar to our General Membership Meeting, vote on motions, discuss important topics, give reports, and listen to guest speakers.

"CUPE Metro is a unique forum for delegates from CUPE locals, who come together to discuss issues and events happening in the labour movement in the Vancouver metro area, BC, and nationally.

It is an opportunity to inform affiliated locals of the successes, failures, and issues that your local is experiencing. What happens in one local can affect another local. CUPE Metro is a great information source for all activists, new and seasoned, with monthly meetings, committees and education opportunities.

CUPE Metro works with CUPE locals and the broader labour movement and organizes community events such as the International Women's Day lunch, Ken Davidson Memorial Golf Tournament & fundraiser, May Day, Labour Day, and more." – CUPE Metro Website

Our very own Trustee, Aaron Cook was elected as a Trustee last year and at last month's meeting, Parks Sector Representative, Henry Lee was elected as a Member at Large. It is really important being the largest CUPE Local in BC, that we have representatives sitting at various affiliates' tables to give input and make important decisions that affect the broader labour movement. Congratulations Henry!

**Finance Committee**

Once again, it is draft budget time. The Finance Committee will be meeting to prepare for the upcoming draft budget. The budget is approved by the membership every November and I strongly encourage you to attend this meeting. This is the opportunity to see where your dues are spent, to ask questions, and then vote on the draft budget for 2023.

**Think Tank**

After two years of not being able to have a Think Tank due to COVID, we are finally able to have one. This is where the Executive, Trustees, and Staff meet to discuss and plan strategic goals for the Local. In the past, we have set high level goals on a capacity building plan to train, educate, mentor, and inform activists and members. Unfortunately, we have had to put a hold on some of the goals that we wanted to accomplish, but I am really excited to discuss new ideas and set new goals for the Local.

**PEBT**

Earlier this year, I was appointed as a Trustee on the Public Education Benefits Trust (PEBT). "The PEBT is a health and welfare trust. It provides employee benefits to unionized support staff in British Columbia's public schools." – PEBT website. The Board is made up of both employer and union Trustee representatives. This is a great benefit for Vancouver School Board members and also K-12 members throughout the province, who are unable to work due to an illness or injury. I am very proud to be a part of the PEBT and to be able to make decisions that support members when they need it the most.

**Please keep in contact with us!**

As many of you are aware, the majority of our sectors are preparing for bargaining and in order to make sure that you are all kept up to date, we ask that you make sure the Local has your personal email address, as well as your home address by sending an email to: [email@cupe15.org](mailto:email@cupe15.org). We do the majority of our communication to members through email, but there are occasions where we need to mail information to make sure that everyone is contacted. Please make sure to visit the website to see what is going on in the Local and your sector, as well as find your collective agreement. We also use the CUPE 15 Facebook page to share information as well, so please like our page.

**DECISIONS**

**BY THE EXECUTIVE**

At the Executive and Society Board meetings on September 20, 2022, the following decisions were made:

- To approve a donation of \$1000 for the Megaphone Hope in Shadows calendar.
- To appoint Kamal Gautam as the City Sector Chief Shop Steward.
- To approve the Vancouver Art Gallery Bargaining Committee to host up to two site visit meetings with food and beverage budget of up to \$250 total.
- To appoint Syed Musavi and Graham Malyon as the Non-Market Housing Operations OH&S Working Group Committee.
- To appoint Tajpreet Brar as the Alternate OH&S Representative representing Utilities Maintenance on the Parks OH&S Joint Operating Committee.
- To approve the CUPE Local 15 Respectful Workplace Policy.

**BY THE MEMBERS**

At the General Membership Meeting on September 28, 2022, the members in attendance made the following decision:

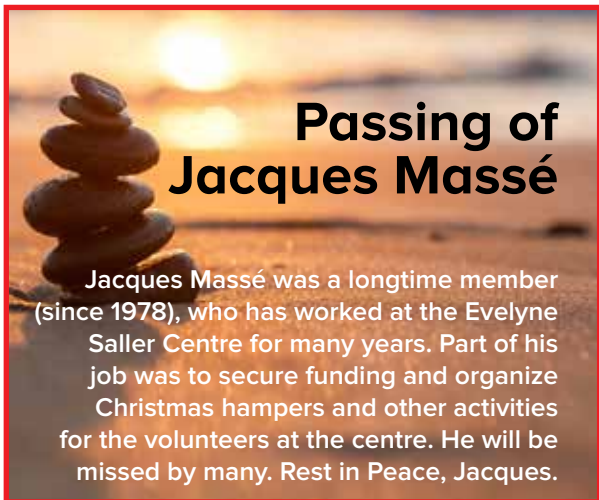
- To destroy the ballots from the Langara Student's Union election of Bargaining Committee.

**NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS ON OCT. 26, 2022 via Zoom**

**Election results**

The results of the by-elections at the General Membership meeting on Wednesday, September 29, 2022 of the two Trustee positions as well as the K-12 Sector Representative position are in.

After the nomination process closed, Vanessa Mani was elected as Trustee and John Kaptein was acclaimed also as Trustee. Chris Brown was acclaimed as the K-12 Sector Representative.



**Passing of Jacques Massé**

Jacques Massé was a longtime member (since 1978), who has worked at the Evelyne Saller Centre for many years. Part of his job was to secure funding and organize Christmas hampers and other activities for the volunteers at the centre. He will be missed by many. Rest in Peace, Jacques.

**How you can be a part of the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Retirees' Association (VMRRA)**

By Betty McGee, President of VMRRA

**Dear Retiree,**

Congratulations on your pending or realized retirement. We wish you a long and healthy retirement. Many of you will retire with the benefit of a Municipal Pension that you will receive for life. We are very fortunate as many retire without such a wonderful benefit.

I would like to invite you to join our Retirees' Association. We meet five times a year at Bonsor Recreation Complex and the meetings include a variety of guest speakers on subjects of interest to retirees. Our fees are minimal; ten dollars (\$10.00) per year.

In addition to our meetings, we host several social events throughout the year, which allows members from all the various worksites to visit.

This article is a part of an ongoing process to engage newly retired folks in the hopes that they might consider joining our organization. Our next meeting will be held November 2, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. and then our Holiday Luncheon will be held on December 2, 2022. No need to become a member to participate.



Attend a meeting or a social and if you enjoy it, then you can consider joining.

Please feel free to e-mail me at elizabethmcgee@shaw.ca for more information or if you would like a copy of our newsletter.

Also, the group is looking for someone to assist with our website and posting our newsletter. If there is anyone out there, retired or still active in the workplace who might have an hour or so five times a year we would really appreciate help with this issue.



**Your City et al Bargaining Committee has been elected!**

On September 20, 2022, over 70 members crowded into a meeting room at the Italian Cultural Centre to elect their bargaining committee for the next round of negotiations. Steve Salsman, Local 15 Staff Representative, will be the chief spokesperson at the local table with the City et al employers. Congratulations to the following members, who were elected to the Local 15 City et al Bargaining Committee:

- Issa Slimani and Jacqueline Smith (City)
- Starla Bayley and Henry Lee (Parks)
- Jacqueline Davis (Ray-Cam)
- Paul Chohan and Neil Pillay (At Large)
- Ava Choy and Henry Williams (Alternates)

STEWARD APPRECIATION



*by Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer*

We held the first Steward Appreciation Dinner post-COVID on September 29, 2022. It was a great event and it was really nice to be in the same room, instead of seeing each other on Zoom.

I have to say, I really enjoyed hearing everyone laughing and enjoying each other's company over a wonderful meal.

The appreciation dinner is something that stewards look forward to and I hope that everyone enjoyed the evening.

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A special thank you to the President of CUPE BC, Karen Ranalletta (below) for joining us and sharing her story of how she became a shop steward and a special thank you to the Secretary-Treasurer of CUPE BC, Trevor Davies for the wonderful gifts and raffle prizes.





# Congrats to our 2022 Bursary recipients!

**Dear CUPE 15,**

My name is Emi, and I am a recipient of the VMECW Society Member Bursary for the 2022/2023 school year. I want to personally thank each one of you for making it possible for me to pursue my dream of becoming an elementary school teacher.



As a mother of two young children, this generous contribution toward my education will allow me to continue to focus on my goal of becoming a teacher. One of my goals is to help people understand that through education, we can build stronger communities and a better future for ourselves and the next generation.

I hope to one day soon, give back and serve the families in our communities by sharing the skills and knowledge that I will learn and develop while I am pursuing my degree in Education. Your assistance makes my goals that much more achievable.

Thank you again for your generosity and support. I won't let you down!

Gratefully and sincerely,  
Emi

**Dear Vancouver Municipal, Education and Community Workers' Society,**

As a recipient of the 2022/2023 VMECW Society Member Bursary for part-time studies, I would like to express my gratitude for funding this scholarship. It is an honour to be selected and I am deeply appreciative of your support. I am currently enrolled part-time in the



Master of Urban Studies program with Simon Fraser University. My goal is to further advance my knowledge and skillsets in my career in Planning with this program. With the financial assistance that CUPE Local 15 has provided, this would be a tremendous help in contributing to cover a portion of my educational expenses and allow me to focus more on my studies.

Thank you again for your generosity and support that enables me to reach my educational goals and allows me to have a better work-life balance.

Sincerely,  
Winnie Lee

**Dear CUPE 15,**

I would like to express my gratitude to CUPE 15 for awarding me the VMECW Society Member Bursary.

I am currently working as a Student Support Worker for the VSB. I am very excited to start my Disability and Applied Behaviour Analysis program at Douglas College. This program will allow me to learn new skills and to build on my existing experiences to help my students.

This bursary provides much needed financial support and allows me to focus on my studies.

Sincerely,  
Mondi Lee

**Dear Vancouver Municipal Education and Community Workers Society,**

I am deeply honoured to have been chosen as the recipient of the VMECW Society Dependant Bursary. Thank you for your generosity; it will help shape me in to a successful person and create a brighter future for myself as I complete my education at Simon Fraser University. I am very thankful for receiving your generous support. Because of your bursary, I am able to put all my focus into growing my knowledge in Health Sciences and not have to worry about the costs of my education. Thank you again for your thoughtful and generous bursary award.

Sincerely,  
Charlotte Stary



**Hello,**

My name is Julian Groll. I am currently in my second year at SFU, with the hopes of completing a joint Honours in Anthropology and Archaeology. During my free time, I like to climb, ski, and I am currently training to beat my half marathon personal best of 1:43:54. I am extremely grateful to be the recipient of this bursary, as it will help further my education and push me to excel further.

Thank you,  
Julian



**Dear CUPE 15,**

When I received the news that I had been awarded the VMECW Society Dependant Bursary, I was ecstatic.

Attending graduate school is not cheap - let alone a business graduate school, so the bursary helps offset the tuition cost that my family and I have taken on. This in turn, allows me to focus more on my academics without the constant dread of the financial burden. A big thank you to CUPE is in order.

To those students contemplating whether they should apply, I encourage you to go for it! Any amount helps and while it helps to relieve the financial burden, it can also alleviate the stress that comes with it. The way I see it, we are going to school as an investment to set ourselves up for success. When applying to bursaries, carry that same mindset. You are taking the time to write an application that can supplement your investment in attending school.

Cheers!  
Joseph Lau



**Dear CUPE 15,**

I am currently in my second year at the University of Victoria. My plans are to graduate in the Education program at the University of Victoria and become a teacher. I enjoy helping people and that's why I chose teaching as a career. Thank you for your generous support.

Aimee Turko





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**

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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, Paul Chohan  
College/University: Eduardo Rodriguez  
Rose Palozzi  
Cultural: Courtney Gillen  
Health/HSSCBA: Roxshanna Shankar  
Health/HSPBA: Mia Nickel  
Parks: Bernie Dionne, Henry Lee  
K-12: Chris Brown, Cynthia Schadt

**Trustees:**

Aaron Cook, John Kaptein, 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  
Tia Tang, Office Manager  
Nadia Thibault, Office Assistant  
Michelle Yim, Office Assistant  
Sharmila Patel, Office Assistant  
Kristi Bounegru, Office and Accounting Assistant (Temporary)

**Building Service Worker:**

Elaine Duan

**CUPE National Representatives:**

Andrew Ledger, Bryan Bickley (on leave), Sung Wong (temporary)

**CITY ET AL BARGAINING COMMITTEE ELECTION**

**Langara Bargaining Committee Meetings**

**By the Langara Bargaining Committee:**  
**Adrian Livesley, Carrie Chapman, Steven Brouse, Rose Palozzi, and Gail Johnson**

Hello Langara CUPE members,

Welcome back to the start of a new school year! Your Langara College Bargaining Committee has been off during the summer, and has resumed meeting to prepare for the upcoming round of bargaining with the employer.

Our current contract expired on March 31, 2022, and remains in effect until a new contract is negotiated and ratified. We are excited to be finalizing a set of proposals, and have scheduled a series of ratification vote meetings for you, the members.

The presentation of the bargaining proposal package will only occur at Meeting #1 (Nov 3).

**Please take this opportunity to participate in the bargaining process. This is an important meeting and your vote matters! NOTE: You only need to attend one of these meetings to vote.**

**Meeting #1**

Date: Thursday, November 3, 2022  
Time: 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (light refreshments will be served)  
Location: T Gallery  
Details: Presentation and Voting

**Meeting #2**

Date: Friday, November 4, 2022  
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Location: L224  
Details: Voting only

**Meeting #3**

Date: Monday, November 7, 2022  
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Location: L224  
Details: Voting only

We will be sending updates out by e-mail, so please provide the union office with your current personal e-mail address to: email@cupe15.org.

**We want to hear from you!**

Please send your questions or comments to: langarabargaining@gmail.com.

**OH&S CORNER**

**October in OH&S**



*by Aaron Cook, Union OH&S Committee*

**October is not just for digging out your favourite costume and trick or treating. October has a few awareness campaigns I would like to highlight.**

October 10th is World Mental Health Day. It is a day to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health. This is especially vital in our current times of the ongoing pandemic, homelessness, rising costs and affordability issues. The list goes on and on as to why our mental health has been tested and could use a helping hand.

October 16-22, 2022 is Invisible Disabilities Week. This raises awareness for those with arthritis, autism, multiple sclerosis (MS), and other hidden conditions. People with invisible disabilities are faced with extra barriers in addition to the ongoing issues surrounding their condition that needs to be highlighted. Often people are not believed because of the nature of their disabilities. People cannot see a wheelchair or cane and thus sometimes don't know what someone might be going through, despite their outward appearance. This type of treatment has personally affected me and it is not fun. I have attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and anxiety. I also have some physical issues surrounding a

broken ankle from when I broke both inner and outer joints on my left foot. Other than limping from time to time and having trouble with stairs, all of my issues are generally not outwardly noticeable.

The end of October is particularly brutal for someone like myself because of Halloween and all the fireworks and loud bangs that happen. Jump scares or things that flash bright sometimes have an effect on those with PTSD and can be triggering. Masks, scary movies, fake weapons, blood, and gore are a Halloween staple and for some it can be too much. Please keep this in mind when in the office or worksite. While everyone generally loves a good time and a fun work atmosphere, please make sure that it is fun for everyone.

People often ask why I talk so openly about my issues and why I have no problem doing so. I do this because I want to end the stigma surrounding mental health. The more we all talk about it, the more it becomes normal and not such a big deal. We all have issues; they just differ from each other and we should be talking about it to help each other when and where we can. While I am not a therapist or a medical professional, if you or anyone else needs an ear to listen or you need someone to vent to, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at: cupeaaron@hotmail.com.