

SEPTEMBER  
2024

# THE MEMBERS' VOICE



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

## Attention City et al members: back to bargaining

by Steve Salsman, Staff Representative/Lead Negotiator and Warren Williams, President

ATTENTION CITY ET AL MEMBERS (MEMBERS WORKING AT THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, VANCOUVER BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION, RAY-CAM COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION, AND BRITANNIA COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY)

It is once again time to turn our minds to collective bargaining for the renewal City et al Collective Agreements. The City, Parks, Ray-Cam, and Britannia agreements will expire on **December 31, 2024.**

Notice of a special meeting to elect a new bargaining committee is found on page 3 and is posted on the union website. The formal meeting notice was also mailed to all home addresses, and emailed to all personal email addresses the union office has on file. If you did not receive this communication, please update your information by calling the office at 604-879-4671 or emailing us at email@cupe15.org.

Please take time to note September 19, 2024 on your calendar and make every effort to attend this very important meeting.

Your new collective agreement will determine your wages, benefits, rights, and working conditions over the term of a new agreement. Members elected to the bargaining committee will represent our members in this process; a process which is time consuming, complex, and at times quite stressful.

The elected committee is charged with the difficult task of negotiating these provisions on behalf of all affected members. The committee will seek feedback from the members via a survey, worksite visits, and other means as a way of identifying and determining the priorities of those who work under the four collective agreements. Please watch for these opportunities in the coming months.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing 2023 City et al Bargaining Committee for their dedication and incredible work representing CUPE Local 15 members during the last round of bargaining, despite

the significant upset of work-life balance that bargaining often brings. Paul Chohan

(Member at Large/Co-Chair), Starla Bayley (Parks/Co-Chair), Neil Pillay (City), Henry Lee (Parks), Jackie Smith (City), Ava Choy (City), Henry Williams Jr. (Parks), Jacqueline Davis (Ray-Cam), Issa Slimani (City), and Sung Wong (CUPE National Representative) came together in an environment of respect, inclusivity, and diversity. This committee embraced the value of all participants creating a space of safety and respect.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the special meeting on September 19th and to welcoming a new 2025 Bargaining Committee. **Let's go!**



### SEPTEMBER 2024 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**The General Membership Meeting will be held on September 25, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. using 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](http://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@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.

Article B.10.1(c) of the CUPE National Constitution allows for 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:

- 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), səliilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations.

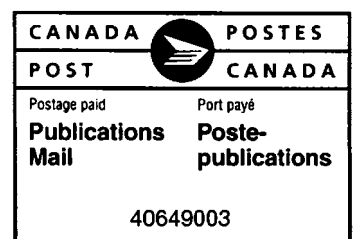


#### Mission and Vision Statements

**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



## Looking back and moving forward...

by Warren Williams, President



WARREN WILLIAMS  
PRESIDENT

Dear members,

After much thought and deliberation I can no longer continue to be silent.

I have learned that many members, including some of our Executive and Society Board members,

are disappointed that I didn't publicly comment on the negative social media posts leading up to the June General Membership meeting. These damaging personalizations and misleading comments attacked our integrity and defamed our characters.

Not only were these statements false, they are clearly a breach of our equality statement.

Sometimes, in politics, people use misinformation for their own ends. To clarify, all Local 15 member-activists receive per diems for food and lodging, depending on the event, not just the full-time officers, as has been suggested.

The individuals who compared our roles with the roles of City Council are very aware that City Council has nowhere near the oversight that your full-time table officers have. We oversee between eighteen and twenty-one staff members, as well as nineteen contract groups and collective agreements, which are divided into six sectors. A more accurate comparison would be that of a Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, City Manager, Superintendent of Schools, or a College/University President. These positions are literally responsible for running their

organizations, as your full-time officers are responsible for running CUPE Local 15.

In addition to defending the collective agreement rights of all of our members, we are integral in building positive working relationships with employers and all levels of government to strengthen those collective agreement rights and promote the positive work our members do for the benefit of the citizens they work for.

These social media posts had nothing to do with these elected positions, rather they were used as a platform for political and personal gain.

The idea that I, as your President, or your Secretary-Treasurer pushed this agenda is a bold-faced lie to besmirch our character. What wasn't mentioned is that these are elected positions, and that whoever is elected to them, must put politics and personal gain aside and focus on the membership.

I would like to acknowledge the months of research done by our trustees and the finance committee. This is the group who brought the motion to increase the full-time officers' compensation forward to the June General Membership meeting. As President and Secretary-Treasurer, we followed our bylaws and completely recused ourselves from all discussions related to this motion. This was the right thing to do to protect the integrity of these elected positions and not place us in a perceived conflict of interest.

I want to thank the 300 plus members who attended the June General Membership meeting and I look forward to seeing you at our September General Membership meeting. As we step into the new season, it's a perfect time to acknowledge the strength and unity of our union. Your dedication and involvement are what make our collective efforts so impactful.

Being an active member is about more than attending meetings; it's about contributing to

a culture of fairness and support. Challenges, such as feeling unsupported, or concerns about retaliation can arise, but by staying connected and working together we can address these issues effectively.

Here are some practical steps for common situations:

- Feeling unsupported? Reach out to your union steward or site contact for support.
- Concerned about violations? Your steward or site contact can help determine if something is in breach of the collective agreement.
- Need health and safety information? Your OH&S Representative is your go-to person for OH&S matters. If there isn't one at your worksite, a steward or site contact will likely be able to help.
- Looking to resolve an issue early? Contact your steward or site contact to find solutions before it escalates.

Active participation and open communication is the key to our success. By addressing concerns proactively and supporting each other, we can resolve many issues before they grow, which will in turn foster a positive work environment.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our dedicated members, including our Executive and Society Boards, shop stewards, OH&S representatives, and site contacts. I would also like to thank the Office Manager and office staff, the Accounting Coordinator and accounting team, and the Staff Representatives. Your hard work and commitment are truly appreciated. A special thank you also goes to those of our employers, who recognize the value of union representation and collaborate with us to maintain a supportive workplace.

Together, we strengthen our union and improve our working environment. Thank you for your continued dedication and support.

## Secretary-Treasurer's report

by Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer



DEBBIE MOHABIR  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Welcome back, everyone!

I hope everyone enjoyed the summer and the warm weather. As we are now in September, we find ourselves moving into the fall season and re-establishing our regular routines, which can be helpful

for both mental clarity and overall well-being. These routines provide structure that can help reduce stress, improve sleep patterns, and encourage healthier eating habits. Whether it's a morning jog to kick-start the day or setting aside time for reading before bed, routines can transform chaotic days into ones filled with purpose and productivity.

September 30th is Orange Shirt Day/  
National Day for Truth & Reconciliation



The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation serves as a profound reminder of the importance of understanding and acknowledging the history and ongoing impacts of residential schools on Indigenous communities in Canada. This year's theme, "Advancing Reconciliation in Canada Through Allyship and Decolonization", emphasizes the collective responsibility to engage in the process of decolonization, which involves

recognizing and addressing the historical and systemic injustices faced by Indigenous peoples. Decolonization is a multifaceted process that includes restoring Indigenous rights, preserving cultural practices, and ensuring stewardship of the land. It is a journey that requires the commitment of all Canadians to learn, understand, and support Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. As allies, it is crucial to listen to Indigenous voices, understand the true history of colonization, and take action toward dismantling the structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice. The path toward reconciliation is ongoing, and it calls for a deep commitment to change, education, and the willingness to stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities.

"When you wear an orange shirt it's like a little bit of justice for us Survivors in our lifetime, and recognition of a system we can never allow again." – Phyllis Webstad

**Shown here is the Official 2024 Orange Shirt Society design, by Aliyah Bautista, grade 11 student from Ponoka, Alberta.**

See more from Debbie on page 4.



ATTENTION CITY ET AL MEMBERS - MEETING NOTICE

**City et al Bargaining Committee Election**

A special meeting to elect a bargaining committee has been scheduled on September 19, 2024 for all members working at the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, Ray-Cam Cooperative Association, and Britannia Community Services Society. These collective agreements will expire on December 31, 2024.

It is important the union office has your current contact information in order to share bargaining news and information throughout the process. In the upcoming months, you will also have the opportunity to take a survey where you can tell us what improvements you would like to see in your collective agreement and your priorities.

Please make every effort to attend this important meeting. This is the first step in a lengthy process to reach a new collective agreement. A lot of hard work will be put forward from the beginning stages to the final steps, so it is important we begin on a united front. Your participation will help us achieve a new agreement.

If you cannot attend the meeting and would like to put your name forward to serve on the committee, please email Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer at dmohabir@cupe15.org. Training will be provided to all members elected to the bargaining committee.

You can also join our CUPE 15 Facebook group for the latest news; just search CUPE 15 in Facebook.



DECISIONS

BY THE EXECUTIVE

At the Executive and Society Board meetings on June 18, 2024, the following decisions were made:

- To donate \$1,000 to the Megaphone Hope in Shadows 2024/25 Calendar Project.
- To appoint Tracy Bodnar as the Primary OH&S Site Representative, and Matthew Charan as the Alternate OH&S Site Representative, at Hillcrest Community Centre.
- To appoint Ken Han (Kenny) Lee as the Primary OH&S Rink Maintenance Site Representative, and Inhwa Jung as the Alternative OH&S Rink Maintenance Site Representative, at Hillcrest Community Centre.
- To appoint Daniel Luong as the Primary OH&S Program Areas Site Representative at Hillcrest Community Centre.
- To appoint Celine Hsin as the Primary OH&S Site Representative at the North Shore Community Health Clinic.
- To uphold the decision of the Grievance Committee regarding an appeal of the Grievance Committee decision in the City Sector.
- To recommend approval of the Chartwells Memorandum of Agreement to the members.
- To recommend approval of the West End Community Centre Association (Little Sprout Preschool) Memorandum of Agreement to the members.

BY THE MEMBERS

At the General Membership meeting on June 26, 2024, the members in attendance made the following decisions.

- To receive the Financial Statement ending April 30, 2024.
- To defeat a proposed amendment to Bylaws 11.5 and 11.6 – Increase Remuneration for the Secretary-Treasurer and President Positions.
- To delete Bylaw 17.4.6 – Mobile Phone Allowance and move it to the CUPE Local 15 Policies and Procedures Manual.
- To defeat a proposed amendment to Bylaw 9.1.d) – Increase the Notice of Motion Requirement for Expenditures from \$1,000 to \$2,500.
- To destroy the ballots from the Vancouver School Board Bargaining Committee election.
- To destroy the ballots from the Chartwells Langara Ratification of Agreement meeting.

**NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS SEPT 25, via Zoom.**



**2024 CICan Conference**

Thank you for sending me to the 2024 CICan conference this year. I participated in the Creating Safe Spaces on Campus stream, the EDI stream, and Working with Survivors of Trauma stream; all of which were relevant to my work as a Foundation Program Assistant at Emily Carr University, and as a shop steward.

Besides the fact that I got to be around like-minded individuals from different universities and colleges across Canada, I also got to learn first-hand from their experiences with fiscal constraint, changing demographics, creative collaboration, and emerging technologies within their post secondary settings.

I realized during this conference that we all deal with the same struggles across the map. It was also a valuable reminder that as a union member, I need to never stop fighting for what's right and just in my community.

Thank you again CUPE. I honestly really enjoyed this experience.

Alex Fowler  
Emily Carr University

**VSB Job Share Opportunity**

SSA looking for a job share partner to work Thursdays and Fridays, starting as soon as possible, at Nootka Elementary School.

If you are interested, please contact Marina at 778-713-0831 or email marinant93@gmail.com.

**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 Aaron Cook at cupeaaron@hotmail.com for more information.



# September is Steward Appreciation Month

by *Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer*

In the intricate tapestry of labour relations, union stewards emerge as pivotal figures, embodying the spirit of collective bargaining and the pursuit of equitable work environments. September, designated as a month of recognition, casts a spotlight on these unsung heroes whose dedication often unfolds behind the scenes. Stewards, by stepping into this role, champion the cause of fairness, safety, and respect for all members of CUPE Local 15, navigating the complexities of workplace dynamics with a steadfast commitment to justice.

Their multifaceted role encompasses a spectrum of responsibilities. From organizers to communicators, from advisors to advocates, stewards are the conduit in fostering a dialogue between the workforce and the union leadership. They are the custodians of workplace harmony, striving to resolve conflicts amicably and, when necessary, channeling concerns through the formal grievance process to uphold the rights of their peers.

The monthly gatherings of stewards across various sectors serve as a place where updates are shared, questions are raised, and collective wisdom is harnessed. This synergy not only strengthens the fabric of the union, but also ensures that the stewards themselves remain well-informed and prepared to address the evolving challenges within their spheres of influence.

It is perhaps less known that much of a steward's work is voluntary, generously offered amidst personal commitments and professional duties. This altruistic investment of time underscores the depth of their commitment to the cause of labour rights. When delays in response occur, it is often a testament to the balancing act stewards perform between their roles within the union and their lives outside of it.

The union's commitment to steward education shows the value placed on continuous learning and empowerment. Through workshops and training sessions on a broad array of topics, from health and safety to anti-racism, from legal frameworks to conflict resolution, stewards are equipped with an arsenal of knowledge and skills. This educational foundation is not just about

staying current; it's about enriching the stewards' capacity to serve their members effectively, and to be the architects of change and the defenders of rights within their workplaces.

In the intricate ecosystem of organized labour, chief shop stewards emerge as pivotal figures. Their multifaceted role encompasses collaboration with Staff Representatives, guiding and mentoring stewards, and ensuring the collective agreement's terms are upheld with confidence and support. This mentorship is crucial for fostering a robust and knowledgeable stewardship capable of navigating the complexities of labour relations. Furthermore, chief shop stewards serve as a vital communication link, informing the Executive Sector Representative of ongoing issues and significant cases, which ensures that the executive leadership is well-informed and prepared to address the concerns of the workforce.

The union's backbone is further strengthened by the active participation of non-steward members who contribute significantly by serving on various committees. These committees are instrumental in addressing member issues, providing advocacy, and shaping the union's direction. The dedication of these members, who may not hold steward titles but are equally committed to the union's cause, deserves recognition and appreciation for their voluntary service and the value they add to the labour movement.

The synergy between stewards, activists, and the union's leadership is fundamental to the union's efficacy. Stewards and activists, with their on-the-ground insights and relentless advocacy, play an indispensable role in organized labour. They are the union's eyes and ears, ensuring that the collective voice of the workforce is heard and that the rights enshrined in the collective agreement are protected and advanced. Without their tireless efforts and commitment to justice and fairness in the workplace, the union's ability to function and advocate effectively for its



members would be significantly diminished. Their contributions are the lifeblood of the union, empowering it to fulfill its mission of representing and safeguarding the interests of its members. Indeed, the narrative of organized labour is incomplete without acknowledging the critical role played by stewards and activists in upholding the principles of solidarity and collective bargaining.

As September unfolds, it is a time to pause and reflect on the integral role that stewards play in the labour movement. It is a time to appreciate the silent diligence with which they uphold the principles of fairness and solidarity, often at great personal sacrifice. Their unwavering dedication is the bedrock upon which the strength and unity of the union rest, making them not just the backbone, but the very heartbeat of the organization. In celebrating stewards, we celebrate the enduring spirit of collective advocacy and the relentless pursuit of a just and equitable society for all workers.

On behalf of the President, myself, Executive, and Staff, we would like to extend our sincerest appreciation and gratitude to all stewards and activists for the amazing work that you do to support members every day.

### Steward Appreciation Dinner

I am pleased to announce that we will be having our Annual Stewards/Activists Appreciation Dinner on Tuesday, September 24, 2024 to say thank you to stewards, activists, and committee members for the amazing work they do.



## Chartwells members ratify four-year deal

On June 21, 2024, Chartwells members ratified the four-year Memorandum of Agreement, expiring September 30, 2027. Thanks to all the members who came out to cast their vote!

*Chartwells Langara/CUPE Local 15 Bargaining Committee. Left to right: Gail Johnson, Staff Representative; Sophie Bennett, College/University Sector Executive Liaison; Sarbrinder Mand; Kiran Johal, Committee Chairperson; Sashi Lehman*





*Vanessa Mani-USB*



*Starla Bayley-Parks*



*Ravina Lal-City*



*Sheri Nielson-USB*



*Suzette Magni-USB*

**THANK  
YOU**  
😊

**to our  
CUPE 15  
Stewards**



*Lorena Spencer-USB*



*Lucia Rincon-HSPBA*



*Seagrin Worster-City*



*Priscilla Santos-USB*



*Rufa Sese-USB*



*Cynthia Schadt-USB*



*Brad Ferguson-City*



*Susanne Ruhle-City*



*Antonius Sunawan-Langara*



*Bobby Burgess-CBA Health*



*Henry Lee-Parks*



*Amanda Leung-USB*



*Candace Barry-CBA Health*





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, Casual Office Assistant

**Building Service Worker:**

Elaine Duan

**CUPE National Representative:**

Dan Todd



**Congratulations CUPE Lifeguards on the BC Champion Team**

Vancouver lifeguards have made a difference in water safety by making a splash at the Canadian Pool Lifesaving Championship, held at the Saanich Commonwealth Place in Victoria, BC from June 7-9, 2024.

This unique sport, which combines swimming skills with the use of rescue tubes, manikins, fins, obstacles, and line throws, adds a thrilling and humanitarian purpose to the competition. Aquatic Leaders Deniz Erturk and Hamed Faragardi, and lifeguards Jaquelin Najera Granados and Abigail Skinder, collectively earned 18 national medals, leading the Pacific Lifesaving Club to become the first BC team to capture the national championship title. Energized by this achievement, our lifeguards are eager to integrate a lifesaving sports program in city services to empower communities and inspire Vancouver's next generation of lifeguards.

The club's name is "Pacific Lifesaving Club", the first club in British Columbia to win a Canadian Lifesaving Pool Championship title in history, operates primarily at Vancouver Aquatic Center, Kerrisdale Pool, and Lord Byng Pool.

The accompanying photo taken at the Vancouver Aquatic Center, shows them celebrating their success with the national title banner after a training session. Deniz Erturk is first standing from the left in lifeguard uniform and was working as an Aquatic Leader on this day, Abigail Skinder is second standing from the left, and Jaquelin Najera Granados is second standing from the right.

Congratulations are proudly extended to our very own Local 15 members Deniz, Hamed, and Jaquelin, and CUPE Local 1004 member Abigail, from the CUPE Local 15 Executive Board.

**Clothing donations needed**

The Gathering Place is a community centre in the downtown south area and services the needs of street kids, seniors, and the unhoused. They are in desperate need of sleeping bags and men's clothing donations, including all sizes of pants, jeans, sweatpants, t-shirts, shirts, winter coats, jackets, sweaters, shoes, boots, runners, belts, and good condition underwear and socks.

Women's and children'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 generosity.

**25-Year Member at Ray-Cam passed away over the summer**



We are sad to share that one of our long-time members at Ray-Cam, Emerita Rodrigo Labor Orosa, passed away on June 22, 2024 after a long nine-year battle with cancer.

Emerita was born in the Philippines, where she worked as a nurse before coming to Canada. She was one of the longest working staff members at Ray-Cam, giving the community over 25 years of dedication and hard work. Emerita had the best sense

of humour and was always joking around with her coworkers. Over the years, she made such an impact on so many children and families, and had the opportunity to see many of the children under her care grow up.

She loved travelling and boat cruises. Her favourite place was Las Vegas, where she would go every year. She leaves behind her husband Antonio, and children Christine, Marie, Patricia, and Paolo.

A moment of silence will be held in Emerita's memory at the September General Membership meeting.