

VOLUME 7 // ISSUE 2

**ONTARIO FEDERATION  
OF LABOUR  
ACTION  
REPORT**

SPRING 2017

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// Crystal Sinclair spoke  
at the Sister to Sister  
Women's Summit

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The Ontario Federation of Labour represents 54 unions and one million workers. It is Canada's largest provincial labour federation.

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**Spring 2017**

**VOLUME 7 // ISSUE 2**

# ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR **ACTION REPORT**

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## // WELCOME TO OUR NEW AFFILIATE:

**CUPE Local 2875 (530 members)**

Thank you for joining the Federation! We look forward to working together to create fairness for all Ontarians.



@CHRISBUCKLEYOFL

## FRIENDS,

The Ontario Federation of Labour has been working hard in the last months. With the recommendations for the Changing Workplaces Review now delivered to the Government of Ontario, but as of yet unannounced, we are pushing for the government to implement changes that will benefit the 1.7 million Ontarians who hold insecure jobs.

The government must not wait to make the changes that will improve the lives of these workers. Every day that the government delays, Ontario workers suffer.

We've been mobilizing to provide those workers ways to advocate for the changes they need. At the beginning of March, we launched a new postcard campaign, which asks affiliates to have workers sign postcards and send them back to the OFL. The Federation will organize in-person deliveries of the signed postcards to MPPs across Ontario. At those meetings, workers will tell their MPPs what changes they need to have decent work across Ontario.

The Make It Fair campaign held a telephone town hall to talk about decent work. It was attended by 1,500 people across the province, who asked about the issues that matter for workers in this province.

We've been reaching out in other ways as well. In mid-March Executive Vice-President Ahmad Gaied and I joined the host of G98.7's call-in program The Grapevine for a 2-hour show on decent work, and an op-ed co-authored by Clinic Director of Metro Toronto Chinese & Southeast Asian Legal Clinic Avvy Go and me was published in The Toronto Star on the Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates wrote about taking on precarious work and women. That op-ed was published in The Barrie Examiner on International Women's Day. We are getting the word out to the Ontario public that insecure work is not decent work, and that we can win changes that will mean good jobs for all.

At the end of March, the OFL Sister to Sister Women's Summit brought together women from the labour movement across Ontario to strategize, share expertise, and envision how to achieve equality both within labour organizations, and across the province.

On International Women's Day, the OFL hosted a breakfast briefing for female MPPs, senior political staff and advocates in which we presented information on how women are disproportionately affected by insecure work, particularly women of colour, Indigenous women, and women with disabilities. That same day the NDP rose in question period to ask a question about raising the minimum wage, using some of the facts presented at that meeting.

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women's identified women's labour as a key issue this year, and OFL Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates attended their meetings in New York, where she met with labour and political leaders from around the world, taking Ontario's Changing Workplaces Review to the world stage.

The OFL co-hosted with CBTU and the CLC a Black History Month event of films and political discussion, which underscored the need to take on racism in all the work we do. The OFL continues to advocate for Ontario's Anti-Racism Directorate to include the voice of labour in its work.

There are some ongoing labour disruptions in Ontario. We must continue to work together, in solidarity with the workers who are fighting for fair treatment and win gains for all of us.

In solidarity,

**Chris Buckley**  
President of the Ontario Federation of Labour



// FOLLOW AND RETWEET OFL AT:

@OFLabour and @ChrisBuckleyOFL

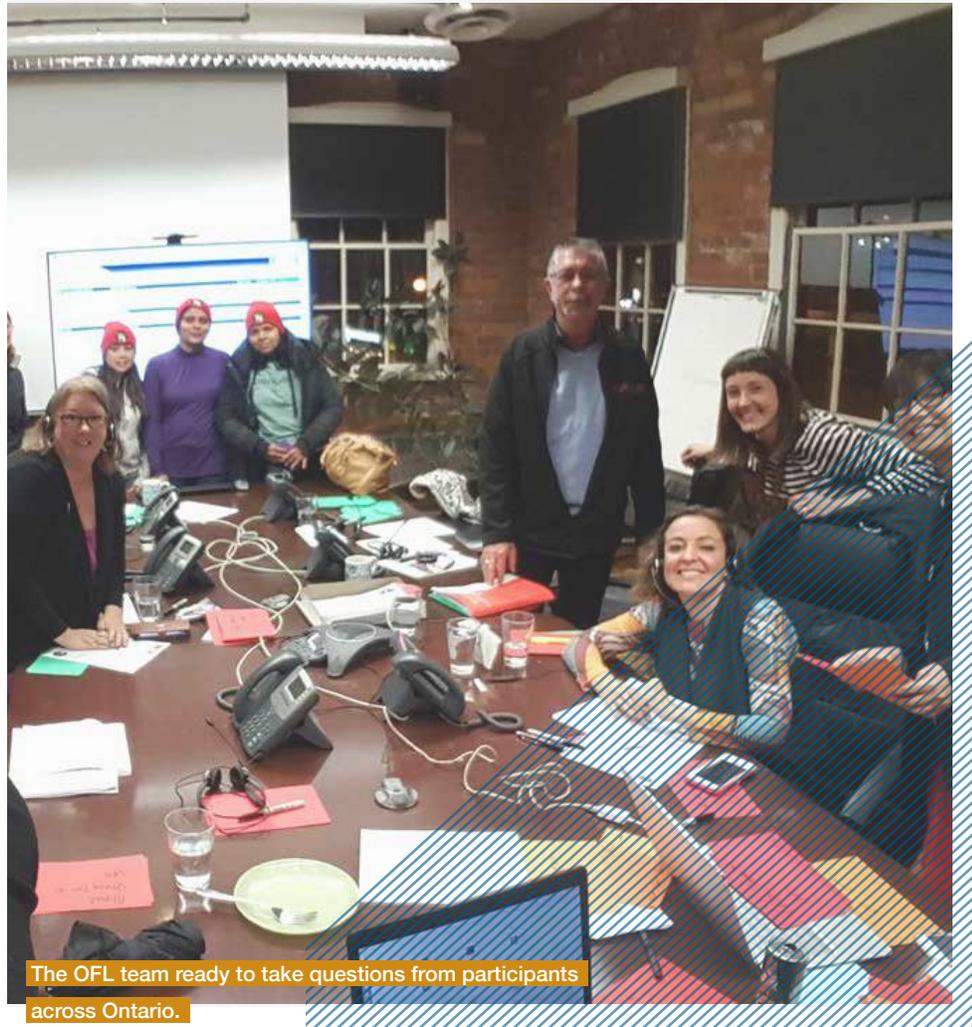
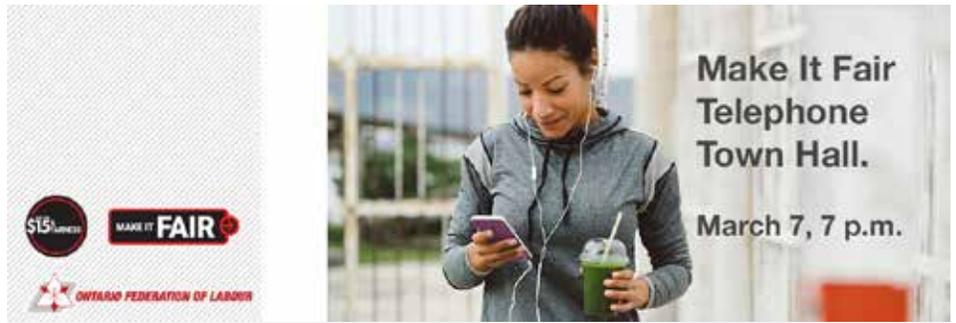
## DID YOU GET A CALL FROM US? THE MAKE IT FAIR TELECONFERENCE TOWN HALL!



Phones across Ontario rang on March 7, to invite Ontarians to learn about changing Ontario's outdated employment and labour laws.

It was the OFL's first-ever telephone town hall to talk about the next steps of the Make It Fair campaign and how to win decent work for Ontario this year. Over 1,500 callers from across the province were on the line to talk about the difference better employment laws would make in their lives. Participants heard from callers in cities across Ontario including Thunder Bay, Windsor, Brantford, London, Sudbury, Brampton, and Toronto. The callers' questions were a powerful reflection of the struggles working people are facing every day.

The telephone town hall allowed Ontarians from across the province the opportunity to speak with OFL President Chris Buckley, Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates, and Executive Vice-President Ahmad Gaied about the changes needed to create decent work across Ontario and the Changing Workplaces Review. Pam Frache, the Provincial Coordinator for the \$15 and Fairness campaign spoke about the push for a \$15 minimum wage and fairness at work, and cafeteria workers from UNITE HERE Local 75 told their story of being on strike for decent work. Callers expressed great admiration for the striking cafeteria workers – primarily



The OFL team ready to take questions from participants across Ontario.

racialized women on the front lines of the battle for fairness. The call was hosted by OFL Campaign Organizer Melisa Bayon.

One caller talked about working for a temporary agency and feeling frustrated by the difficulty making ends meet, and the challenge of feeding her family while not knowing when her next shift would be. She wanted to make sure that part of the OFL demands from the Changing Workplaces Review included fairness for temporary agency workers.

Participants in the call had the opportunity to leave questions and comments for the

speakers, and more than 50 of them did.

One caller from Mississauga left a message thanking the OFL for the call.

“It brought attention to the issues affecting young people, the increasing prevalence of temporary job agencies and the overall situation with precarious work. This is about the legacy we leave for the next generation. It's up to us, you can count on me to meet with my MPP. I ordered some postcards online too!” said the caller.

Many participants committed to signing on to our decent work postcards and scheduling meetings with their MPPs.

“I am a retired Unifor member and I'm involved with the Fight for \$15 here in Ottawa. I hope you are pushing for the return of card-check certification to make it easier to join unions. As a union member, I know how important it is to be in a union,” said another caller.

We thank everyone that came on the call and contributed to the conversation to win decent work for all Ontarians. Let's keep the momentum going!

To sign up for updates on the Make It Fair campaign go to [www.makeitfair.ca](http://www.makeitfair.ca).

## TELL YOUR MPP YOU WANT DECENT WORK FOR ALL ONTARIANS!

This is your chance to get involved – it's as easy as signing a postcard!

To mobilize members, raise awareness of employment issues and help win the day, the Make It Fair campaign is asking union members to sign postcards making it clear to their MPP that they want changes to the LRA and ESA which will improve employment standards and make it easier to join a union.

The postcards were launched at the end of January and they will be delivered to MPPs in the late spring in a series of constituency meetings.

The free postcards are available from OFL, or if you'd like to attend a constituency meeting with your MPP, contact Melisa Bayon [mbayon@ofl.ca](mailto:mbayon@ofl.ca).



## DISPATCH FROM THE MAKE IT FAIR CAMPAIGN! COMING UP NEXT!



The Changing Workplaces Review is in its final stages, so it is important that we encourage MPPs to do the right thing now before recommendations come out and after when legislation is being crafted.

**Constituency lobbies to deliver postcards the week of April 17 and the week of May 21.**

You have worked hard to have your family, friends, neighbours and co-workers fill out decent work postcards. The next step is to deliver them to your MPP!

If you have never met with an elected official before, don't fret! The OFL will be organizing webinar training sessions to make sure everyone meeting their MPP is ready to deliver the message about decent work in a persuasive and powerful way.

Remember, everyone can and should meet their MPP. They are elected by you to serve you and it's important that they hear from their constituents about the need for better working conditions for all Ontarians.

If you are ready to set up a meeting with your MPP, contact Melisa Bayon, OFL Campaign Organizer, who will set up a meeting with your MPP. MPP meetings will be scheduled the weeks of April 17 and May 21. To contact Melisa Bayon, email [mbayon@ofl.ca](mailto:mbayon@ofl.ca).

## ENDING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION MEANS OVERHAULING OUR EMPLOYMENT LAWS:

For far too long, race has defined one's opportunity in the workplace.

Racial discrimination extends into the far reaches of the work world: racialized workers are often not considered for jobs or promotions, and they are much more frequently employed in insecure, low-waged jobs with few protections or opportunities for advancement — despite comparable education, experience and skills.

We know that women, for example, are overrepresented in the 20 lowest-paid occupations, including cashiers, restaurant servers, food counter attendants and child care providers. The reality for female racialized workers is undeniably more stark.

Insecure work is at the core of racial inequality in Ontario.

Although workers of colour have slightly higher levels of labour market participation, they tend to experience higher levels of unemployment, be overrepresented in low-end occupations, and earn a lower income than non-racialized Canadians. These inequitable labour

On March 21, Avvy Go, the Clinic Director at the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic and a member of the steering committee for the Colour of Poverty, Colour of Change, and OFL President Chris Buckley co-authored an op-ed drawing attention to how racism affects precarious workers in Ontario. The op-ed was published in The Toronto Star.



market experiences in turn lead to higher poverty rates, higher health risks, lower quality housing, and greater contact with the justice system.

As a group, Canadians of colour earn 81 cents for every dollar paid to non-racialized Canadians. This wage gap is even wider for Indigenous and workers of colour who are female, have accessibility issues, and/or are recent newcomers to Canada.

This racialized wage differential is reflective of the unequal opportunity afforded to Indigenous workers and workers of colour in accessing well paying, secure jobs. It is therefore imperative that the government leverage the opportunity of the Changing Workplaces Review to apply an equity lens on employment conditions in Ontario and make meaningful changes to the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Labour Relations Act* in order to create decent work for all Ontarians.

For example, there must be an end to the proliferation of temp agency work in this province, where racialized workers are overrepresented. All workers must also have fair scheduling, equal pay and working conditions for the same work. There are over 85 exemptions to the *Employment Standards Act*, leaving workers without protections that are sorely needed, in jobs ranging from agriculture work to technology services.

The *Labour Relations Act* must also make it easier to join and keep a union. Racialized workers have a 30 per cent lower unionization rate than non-racialized workers, and the statistics are similar for recent immigrants compared to the rest of the population.

Unions are a key tool that workers have in order to make changes to their conditions at work and their lives outside of work too. Without the meaningful ability to organize into a union, workers are left without a voice on the job.

Unionization is especially important for precarious workers and low-wage workers. It empowers workers to enforce their basic rights under the *Employment Standards Act* by providing much needed resources and support. It also is key to improved wages, better working conditions, and the availability



of benefits beyond minimum standards.

In addition to updating the employment and labour laws in Ontario, the government must also introduce effective employment equity legislation to ensure all Ontarians have fair and equitable opportunities in the labour market. Strong legislative measures are needed to mandate employers to remove employment barriers, establish transparent human resource policies and practices, and cultivate a culture of equity and inclusion in all Ontario workplaces.

In the coming months, the government must have the courage to act. We encourage all Ontarians to stand up against racism and discrimination by demanding that the Changing Workplaces Review, and resulting legislation, takes on inequality in the labour market.

With recommendations expected in the spring, now is the time to make sure that through the Changing Workplaces Review, fair employment and labour laws are in place so that all workers are treated fairly — particularly racialized workers who the laws are currently failing to protect.

Ontario has a historic opportunity to improve the work lives of racialized Ontarians by raising the bar for all workers and giving more of them the right to collective bargaining.

Modernizing the laws are not just an issue of fairness, it is a fundamental issue of racial justice and equity for Ontarians. Besides, our economy prospers when more workers have access to decent jobs and make decent income.

It is time for our government to stand up for racialized Ontarians, to set regulations that will improve conditions for everyone, and in making those changes, improve the work prospects for racialized workers across our province.

**March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as named by the United Nations. The day commemorates the lives that were lost during the fight for democracy and an end to apartheid in South Africa. On March 21, 1960 police shot and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, who were protesting against the apartheid laws**



OFL President Chris Buckley and Executive Vice-President Ahmad Gaied with host Fitzroy Gordon. They were guests on Toronto's G-98.7 FM call-in program The Grapevine, talking about Make It Fair and taking listener questions.

## THIRD OFL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

In March, the OFL brought together over 211 women leaders from the labour movement and community organizations for the third OFL Women's Leadership Summit.

Women activists shared their skills, strategies and experiences in working together to challenge inequality.

The Summit focused on the need to build stronger unions, ensure diversity within the leadership and strengthening partnerships with community allies in the struggle for a more just and equitable society.

Participants came from every sector of the workforce. The Summit provided an opportunity to discuss the shifting demographics of the labour movement and its impact on labour leadership, and how women can advocate for equality.

"Union sisters know that, as women, trade unionists and community activists, we are at a critical crossroads for the future," said OFL Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates. "We must and we will Make It Fair for Ontario's working women and their families."

An Aboriginal welcome was provided by Darlene Kaboni from Wikwemikoong Unceded Territory, then OPSEU Indigenous Mobilizing Team member and Idle No More founder Crystal Sinclair addressed the crowd on Aboriginal rights, Truth and



Reconciliation, and how the labour movement can address anti-aboriginal racism. Day two featured an interactive panel that took on equity issues. It was hosted by CLC Secretary-Treasurer Barb Byers. The speakers addressed the ways in which women workers are affected and can resist discrimination. The speakers in this inspiring discussion were OFL VP for LGBTQI\* workers Chandra-Li Paul (IATSE), OFL VP Young Workers Briana Broderick (USW), CLC VP for Persons with Disabilities Jessica Burnie (OSSTF), OFL VP Workers of Colour Megan Whitfield (CUPW), OPSEU VP Affirmative Action Sara Labelle (OPSEU), and alternate VP for Aboriginal Workers, Michelle Riley (CUPW).





Margaret McPhail then took the stage to introduce an important new feminist research tool, the Rise Up! Feminist Archive which keeps a record of publications, art, and actions of women in the labour movement across Ontario.

The afternoon of the second day of the conference was focused on skills building, with workshops on building support on social media, closing the gender wage gap, winning employment law reform, the Indigenous journey: walking together, running for leadership positions, building a better future for child care, and inclusion and empowerment. In all of these workshops, participants identified the key challenges faced by women within their unions and research showing that the greatest potential for the future growth in the labour movement lies within workplaces dominated by women – and women from equity-seeking groups in particular.

Summit participants devoted their attention to developing strategies for organizing to win labour and employment law reform.

Union women know that women are disproportionately affected by the austerity agenda. At the summit they shared strategies for challenging the rise in precarious jobs and cuts to public services that are so vital to every community.

Throughout the discussion, women's struggles were connected with the struggles of other marginalized groups and participants identified key priorities for defending equity and standing against hate. The sisters did not lose sight of the austerity agenda being touted by the Ontario Liberals, municipal governments and employers across this province.

A full report of recommendations for action from the third OFL Women's Summit will be available at OFL.ca in the next few weeks.

## IWD 2017 ENERGY, POWER, AND A CALL TO ACTION!

International Women's Day felt more vital this year than ever. March 8 took place a little over a month after the Women's March on Washington and sister events around the globe.

This year's rally, march, IWD breakfasts and other events were all clear evidence of a renewed energy and a fighting spirit as women work toward equality.

OFL Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates was present for a CUPE breakfast in Toronto, and an International Women's Day event in Peel. At both, she called for the Ontario government to use the Changing Workplaces Review to address issues of the gender wage gap. She called for determined and focused efforts to continue until we achieve real equality.

The Toronto Steelworker Hall was full for the traditional Mary Spratt Breakfast and charged with energy from the speakers who included Marie Clarke Walker, Executive VP at the CLC, Vice-President of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council Andria Babbington, Toronto City Councilors Kristyn Wong Tam and Janet Davis, Parkdale High Park NDP MPP Cheri Di Novo, USW Director of Health and Safety and the Environment Nancy Hutchison, and Steelworkers Toronto Area Council President Carolyn Egan and spoken word artist Fadumo Mohamed.

The centerpiece of Toronto's International Women's Day celebrations is the march, and this year's boisterous and spirited 11,000-strong event was held under the theme "Stop the Hate, Unite the Fight, Build the Resistance, Unity is Power."

Key demands were front and centre, each one of them essential to achieving real equality: childcare, action on murdered and missing Aboriginal women, equal pay, an end to violence against women, stop racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, funding for women's services and more. Marchers drove home the urgent need for employment law reform to Make It Fair and win a \$15 minimum wage. Without action, the gender pay gap will grow.

This year, participant numbers across Ontario were very high – some events reported participation double or triple past years.

It is clear that women's issues are being taken up by women across the country – thousands of sisters determined to achieve equality.

**This year's rally, march, IWD breakfasts and other events were all clear evidence of a renewed energy and a fighting spirit as women work toward equality.**



# OFL ENDORSES DAY OF ACTION AGAINST WHITE SUPREMACY

On Saturday, February 4, thousands gathered in front of the U.S. Consulate in Toronto, and in cities across Canada to protest White Supremacy.

Speakers condemned the January 29 murder of six worshippers at the Centre culturel Islamique de Québec, as well as systemic racism in government policies including the recently announced ban on travel to the United States for citizens of seven majority-Muslim countries.

“The Ontario Federation of Labour supported this action,” said Executive Vice-President Ahmad Gaied. “Where there is Islamophobia and racism, the labour movement needs to stand up for the rights of workers to be able to work and travel safely wherever they go.”

The OFL continues to champion human rights and speak out against racism, discrimination, Islamophobia and all other forms of hate and bigotry. The labour movement will continue to stand up to ensure that immigrants and refugees are not turned away based on their religious beliefs, culture, country of origin or what the colour of their skin may be.

Attacks on Muslims and racist and Islamophobic policies have no place in Ontario or Canada.



# OFL MURAL FINDS A NEW HOME IN HAMILTON

With the recent sale of the OFL building, the fibreglass mural that hung in the lobby of the OFL for more than 50 years was taken down by the new owners of the building.

In order to ensure this piece of labour history was not lost, OFL staff contacted the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre in Hamilton who are thrilled to give this piece a new home.

The OFL and the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre are looking for the name of the artist who created this piece of art, which reflects the struggle of working people. If you can help with any clues to who the artist is, please contact Laurie Hardwick at [lhardwick@ofl.ca](mailto:lhardwick@ofl.ca)



# ONTARIO LABOUR MOVEMENT MOURNS FRED UPSHAW



Photo: CBTU

Fred Upshaw was a trailblazer and a dedicated trade unionist who led the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) from 1990 to 1995, securing wage increases for public employees and winning unit reform and human rights language in OPSEU contracts. He was the first Black trade unionist to lead a major Canadian union.

“The work Fred did for his brothers and sisters in the labour movement made lasting positive change for workers of colour across this province,” said OFL President Chris Buckley. “As the first Black president of a major Canadian union, Fred set an example for many younger labour activists and we should all be grateful for his work for greater inclusion and fairness within the labour movement and communities across Ontario.”

Fred Upshaw was born in Halifax in 1935 but moved to Toronto with his mother in 1941. He was the eldest of six children in a single-parent family.

His life as an activist began at Malvern Collegiate High School, where as student council president he led a walkout demanding that students be consulted over uniform changes. Upshaw was a debater and singer in his early years. Following a short stint on the executive of United Auto Workers’ Local 222, Upshaw became a registered nurse and took a job at Whitby Psychiatric Hospital where he was a member, and later president of OPSEU Local 331.

Elected to the OPSEU Executive Board in 1980, Upshaw became First Vice-President/Treasurer in 1984 and President of OPSEU in 1990, serving on the OFL Executive Board during his presidency from 1990-1995.

Upshaw’s presidency coincided with the five-year rule of Ontario’s NDP government under Premier Bob Rae. Upshaw led the union during the fightback against Rae’s Social Contract Act. As a key leader of the Public Services Coalition, Upshaw won agreements that minimized the impact of “Rae Days” and prevented layoffs. During Upshaw’s time in office, OPSEU won the right to strike for Ontario Public Service members, joint union-management control over the OPSEU Pension Trust (now OPTrust) and the colleges’ pension plan, and political rights for Crown employees. Always a human rights activist, Upshaw championed employment equity during his term in office.

He was also an active member of the OFL Executive Board.

“I worked with Fred for many years and I could always rely on him for support in taking recommendations to the board,” said former OFL Human Rights Director June Veacock. “This was in the old days when it was quite challenging to put human rights and equity on labour’s agenda. Fred was always progressive on those issues.”

Upshaw also served on the Worker’s Health and Safety Board, remaining a member until his death.

“Fred Upshaw was a clear and resolute voice on behalf of all workers while serving as OPSEU’s President on the Federations Board of Directors,” said former OFL President Gord Wilson. “Fred provided valuable insight for me and all of us serving with him on the Board. No one could doubt his commitment to improving the lives of working people and their families regardless of origin, race, language, sex or sexual orientation. Workers have lost a staunch ally. He will be sorely missed. Well done brother, well done.”

The OFL extends deepest condolences to his family, friends and his colleagues in the labour movement.

## PRECARIOUS WORK SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS OF INSECURE WORK

Precarious work is bad for one's mental and physical health, according to a new survey of nearly 5,000 Ontario workers by the Ontario Federation of Labour. The survey was detailed in a news article in the Toronto Star on March 20, by journalist Sara Mojtehdzadeh 'Precarious work's harsh realities.'

Almost one-third of survey respondents cite mental and physical health issues as impacts of precarious work. According to the survey results, young people (18 to 34 years), precarious workers, and women are more likely to experience mental health distress.

Survey results underscore the necessity of modernizing Ontario's woefully out of date employment laws.

"We need to consider the whole picture when it comes to employment, instead of just businesses' bottom line," said OFL President Chris Buckley. "I think that's what business critics are missing, when we talk about changing the employment laws to make improvements for workers. Precarious work makes people sick – period."

Buckley said that this is why the OFL and labour unions across Ontario, with the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign, are determined to make changes to the Employment Standards and Labour Relations

Acts to make sure workers don't face the overwhelming stress of long-term precarious employment.

"The government must have the courage to chart a different direction for our economy," said Buckley.

More survey findings also include:

More than one-quarter of all survey respondents are currently precariously employed (i.e., part-time, temporary).

More than 40 per cent of precarious workers cited full time jobs/stable income as a concern about their economic situation.

Of those young survey respondents (18 to 34 years), 45 per cent currently have a precarious job.

Nearly 90 per cent of all survey respondents have children, family members and/or friends who are precariously employed.

More than 80 per cent of survey respondents recognize that precarious work is more common today than 5 to 10 years ago.

Wages/pay equity and benefits were identified as top priorities across all demographics.

From July to the end of October, 4,771 Ontarians completed the OFL's survey, which asked about experiences of precarious employment and the experiences of family members. The 15-minute survey was conducted in person and online.

Of the survey respondents, 82 per cent were union members; close to three-fifths were female, and two-fifths were male.



# AFRICAN HERITAGE & BLACK HISTORY MONTH EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY: POLITICIZING OUR STRUGGLES



The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the legacy of racism and sexism facing Black women in politics, and the story of Viola Desmond and other anti-racist activists who refused to accept inequality; those were the stories that were featured at the CBTU/OFL/CLC Black History Month event in Toronto.

Over 80 labour and community activists came together for African Heritage Month to engage in a community-based discussion to help shape the political action work of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Ontario Federation of Labour and Canadian Labour Congress.

Three films were screened at the event, each recounting a struggle faced by African-Canadians. The films were the jumping off point for a wide-ranging discussion about the struggles facing communities of colour today, with the objective of developing strategies for political action to make Black voices heard.

Following the film screenings, Mojdeh

Cox (CLC) and Christopher Wilson (CBTU/ PSAC) facilitated a discussion that made links between the historical struggles and current times with the objective of identifying strategic actions going forward.

“The discussion after this event made it very clear that the activists in the room are committed to continuing the work against racism that exists in every corner of Canada’s work world,” said OFL Executive Vice-President Ahmad Gaied. “When activists watch historical films then report back that they face the same struggles today, it becomes even clearer that solidarity and continued work against racism is an essential element in the work of the labour movement.”

The OFL is committed to continuing to challenge Anti-Black racism in our times by working in solidarity with Black and racialized workers across Canada.



## WATCH THE FILMS:

The films presented at Empowering Our Community: Politicizing Our Struggles are all available online from the National Film Board at <https://www.nfb.ca/>. They speak to the historical struggles in the ongoing journey to justice.

### THE ROAD TAKEN



This 1996 documentary takes a nostalgic ride through history to present the experiences of Black sleeping-car porters who worked on Canada’s railways from the early 1900s through the 1960s.

### SISTERS IN THE STRUGGLE



This documentary features Black women active in politics as well as community, labour and feminist organizing. They share their insights and personal testimonies on the double legacy of racism and sexism, linking their personal struggles with the ongoing battle to end systemic discrimination and violence against women and people of colour.

### JOURNEY TO JUSTICE

This documentary pays tribute to a group of Canadians who took racism to court. They are Canada’s unsung heroes in the fight for Black civil rights. Focusing on the 1930s to the 1950s, this film documents the struggle of 6 people who refused to accept inequality.

## LABOUR ISSUES: FRONT AND CENTRE AT UNITED NATIONS



Delegation of Labour leaders meet with MP

Patty Hajdu. Photo: @pattyhajdu

Ontario Federation of Labour Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates was at the United Nations this March, during Women's History Month for the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women. This session, the priority theme was women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work

Just as in Ontario where we know that it is essential that our government act quickly to stem the growth of precarious work, the United Nations has identified the issue of work as critical to women's equality.

The Commission took on issues such as equal pay for equal work, the redistribution of unpaid work, women in the informal economy, removing barriers, women organizing, and unlocking opportunities.

The UN published the following on its website in advance of the session: "this year's session takes place at a critical juncture, as the world of work is changing fast, spurred by innovation, globalization and increasing human mobility. At the same time, it is adversely impacted by climate change, humanitarian crises, rising informality of labour

and economic inequality. For sustainable and healthy economies, the world of work must empower women and remove the persisting inequalities that hold women back from getting on equal footing with men. From equal pay and women's unpaid work to decent work, removing the barriers of discrimination and investing in women's access to digital and green economies, UN Women will unpack the key issues for women in the changing world of work."

The Ontario Federation of Labour was pleased to see that the United Nations itself recognized importance of addressing labour as a women's issue.

"I am proud to be one of the labour movement women who are here to address the challenges faced by working women around the world," said Coates. "For my part, I was very pleased to support the ILO and CLC statements to the Commission. It is essential for labour organizations to use the international forum to call on Canada to provide pay equity legislation, end precarious work, provide paid leave for domestic and sexual abuse survivors in the labour code, ensure that employment insurance addresses labour market inequalities."

The Commission is one of the largest annual gathering of global leaders, NGOs, private sector actors, United Nations partners and activists from around the world focusing on the status of rights and empowerment of all women and girls, everywhere.

Ontario has a chance to create the conditions for equality through its ongoing Changing Workplaces Review that could lead to changes in Ontario's *Employment Standards Act* and *Labour Relations Act*. OFL recommendations would increase decent work for all Ontarians, including women, and help to close the gender wage gap.

"The gender wage gap in Ontario exists, in part, because of outdated labour and employment laws in our province," said Coates. "Our government has an obligation to the women of Ontario to use the Changing Workplaces Review as an opportunity to address this clear inequality in our province."

The challenges faced by women in the work world cannot be underestimated and Coates and other labour leaders from around the world met to strategize how the challenges could be met, and equality for women achieved.

"It was an incredible experience to meet labour leaders from across the globe," said Coates. "It is so valuable to sit down and have a chance to talk about what it is that we, as a global labour movement can accomplish to ensure that all women are able to participate fully in the work world. We can win this together."

For more information on the Commission: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw#sthash.FPSP8iBB.dpuf>

## LONDON ASSEMBLY FOR DECENT WORK, COMING UP! SATURDAY APRIL 8 AT 10 A.M.

Did you know that the gender wage gap in London and surrounding regions is 28 per cent? Did you know that 48 per cent of the working population in London and surrounding regions earn \$30,000 or less a year? It's no secret that London has seen an increase in precarious work as good union manufacturing jobs have been replaced by part-time, temporary, low-wage work in the service industry and in contracted out work.

On April 8, there will be an Assembly for Decent Work in London. The London and District Labour Council, \$15 and Fairness and Make It Fair campaigns invite you to do something about the rise of insecure work in London. The Assembly will address the urgent need for labour and employment law reforms and strategize ways to win these changes this year.

The Assembly will lay out a plan to win and we want you there to help us do that. Keynote speakers at the event will include OFL President Chris Buckley and Pam Frache, Provincial Coordinator for the Fight for \$15.

"Ontario workers are eagerly waiting for the government to make changes to employment law that will improve their conditions at work," said OFL President Chris Buckley. "This is an opportunity to make sure the kids who enter the work world in the next decades can expect to be treated fairly in the work place. We must tell the Ontario government what is needed to Make It Fair.

Participants will break up into groups to discuss best practices for lobbying MPPs about insecure work and the Changing Workplaces Review, how to be effective door-to-door canvassers, and how to organize co-workers, family members, friends and neighbours by getting them to fill out decent work postcards to be delivered to MPPs across the province.

We need your help to build momentum in London. It is important for all workers that we raise the floor for everyone and that we make it easier for all workers to join unions this year. Otherwise we will continue to see longer lines in London soup kitchens, and larger concessions at the bargaining table for unionized workers. It's time to Make It Fair and win \$15 and Fairness now!

When: Saturday, April 8 at 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Where: OPSEU Union Hall, 1092 Dearness Drive \*A delicious lunch will be provided\*

RSVP at [http://www.makeitfair.ca/assembly\\_for\\_decent\\_work\\_london?](http://www.makeitfair.ca/assembly_for_decent_work_london?)

**"Ontario workers are eagerly waiting for the government to make changes to employment law that will improve their conditions at work," said OFL President Chris Buckley.**

## UN CSW TWITTER DIARY



### UNITED NATIONS CSW @UN\_CSW MAR 16

Let's make our economies and societies work for women and mothers! More facts about women at work: <http://unwo.men/EbvF309DfCs> #CSW61

### PATTY COATES @PATTYCOATES MAR 16

This empty chair signifies the women who were unable to attend #csw61 from the listed banned countries to the United States. @OFLabour

### PATTY COATES @PATTYCOATES MAR 16

Patty Coates Retweeted unioncsw Early morning briefing meeting with our trade union sisters around the world. #csw61 @OFLabour

### PATTY COATES @PATTYCOATES MAR 15

#csw61 social norms/gender equity/young persons-find themselves in an Empowerment Paradox between social norms & individuality. @OFLabour

### PATTY COATES @PATTYCOATES MAR 15

Women's rights are Human Rights-this is the mantra heard again and again at the #UNCSW61 from many countries! #csw61 @OFLabour

### PATTY HAJDU @PATTYHAJDU MAR 13

Happy to join female Canadian labour leaders for a constructive conversation on women in the workforce. #csw61#canlab



## GOVERNMENT NEEDS ECONOMIC PLAN TO CONFRONT ECONOMIC INEQUITIES FACED BY WORKERS OF COLOUR



The OFL and the Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change sent the following joint letter:

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change (COP-COC) welcome several of the announcements made earlier this week around the government's Three Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan, which includes the launch of Ontario's Black Youth Action Plan, public education and awareness campaigns, and an anti-racism impact assessment. The OFL is also very pleased to see your steadfast commitment to pass legislation that will mandate the collection of race-based data across multiple sectors and environments (e.g., education, child welfare, justice, education, and health) in the Spring of 2017.

Together, Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change and the OFL – which formally represents one million unionized workers across the province – calls on the Anti-Racism Directorate to construct a comprehensive strategy around the economic and employment disparities facing Indigenous workers and workers of colour in Ontario. This includes collecting race-based data across the Ontario labour market, applying an equity lens to Ontario's employment and labour laws, and committing to introducing mandatory extended and robust employment equity legislation. For other recommendations, please refer to COP-COC's and OFL's submissions on the Anti-Racism Directorate as well.

We know that insecure work is at the core of racial inequality in Ontario. Although workers of colour have slightly higher levels of labour market participation, they continue to experience higher levels of unemployment and earn a lower income than non-racialized Canadians. In fact, as a whole Canadians of colour earn 81 cents for every dollar paid to non-racialized Canadians. This wage gap is even wider for Indigenous and workers of colour who are female, have accessibility issues, and/or are recent newcomers.

This racialized wage differential is partly due to the lack of opportunity afforded to Indigenous workers and workers of colour in accessing well paying, secure jobs. It is therefore imperative that the government leverage the opportunity of the Changing Workplaces Review to apply an equity lens on employment conditions in Ontario and make meaningful changes to the Employment Standards and the Labour Relations Acts that will create decent work for all Ontarians.

The government must also introduce effective employment regulating legislation to ensure that all Ontarians have fair and equitable opportunities in the labour market. This piece of legislation must assist in removing employment barriers, establishing transparent human resource policies and practices, and cultivating a culture of equity and inclusion in all Ontario workplaces.

## REMEMBER WESTRAY. ENFORCE THE LAW.

On this year's Day of Mourning, the Ontario Federation of Labour will join union activists across the province who are commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Westray Mine explosion that killed 26 coal miners. We'll be uniting under the Canadian Labour Congress's slogan "Remember Westray. Enforce the law."

"The importance of regulations to protect workers cannot be overestimated," said OFL President Chris Buckley. "The Day of Mourning is a day for all of us to remember the workers who are killed on the job and commit to ensuring that worker deaths are prevented in all industries."

The OFL's seven-year campaign, "Kill a Worker, Go to Jail," continues to draw attention to workplace deaths by contacting law enforcement when workers are killed on the job, and providing information about Bill C-45, which became law on March 31, 2004, establishing new legal duties for workplace health and safety, and imposing serious penalties for violations that result in injuries or death.

Ceremonies in local communities will be highlighting stories about workers whose families have been denied justice, and asking the federal government to mark the anniversary by announcing concrete steps it will take in 2017 to ensure better enforcement of the Westray Law.

Every April 28 we have gathered together in our communities around the world to pay respect to those working people who have died or suffered injuries and diseases on the job.

While we mourn the dead, labour and all people must dedicate themselves to fight for the living. Together we will win this fight.

# 25 YEARS SINCE WESTRAY MINE EXPLOSION



In the early morning hours of May 9, 1992 an explosion shook the village of Plymouth in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, killing 26 men.

The public inquiry which followed exposed a litany of “omissions, mistakes, incompetence, apathy, cynicism, stupidity and neglect.”

Words of Justice Richard, commissioner of the public inquiry into the Westray Mine disaster.

The title of his report says it all, *The Westray Story: A Predictable Path to Disaster*.

He said, “It is a story of incompetence, of mismanagement, of bureaucratic bungling, of deceit, of ruthlessness, of cover-up, of apathy, of expediency, and of cynical indifference.

The Westray Story concerns an event that, in all good common sense, ought not to have occurred. It did occur – and that is our unfortunate legacy.”

In his report, he wrote that the management displayed a disdain for safety and considered those who had safety concerns as “wimps.”

While it is not hard to get at the root causes of this disaster, the exact cause of the explosion is not known. No one lived to tell the story of what happened but based on what was found



**“The most important thing to come out of a mine is the miner”**  
**Frederic Le Play (1806-1882)**  
**Inspector General of Mines in France**

underground the sequence of events goes something like this.

At 5:20 a.m. an ignition source sets off a methane gas pocket in a roof cavity. Three men, seeing the flames overhead, start to run. Three others nearby realize something is wrong and reach for their emergency breathing packs. The methane fire leapfrogs across the ceiling, exploding one methane pocket to the next and generating deadly carbon monoxide gas as it goes. The fire passes over the fleeing men and they fall in their tracks. 10 seconds have passed.

The fire reaches the main tunnel, stirring up clouds of coal dust from around the conveyor system. Then, with a force many times greater than the methane explosions, the coal dust ignites, spreading the fire, and a massive shock wave through the mine, killing everyone. The wave continues for two kilometres to the mine entrance, blowing it to pieces. Less than one minute has passed. The 26 men in the mine never stood a chance. The Westray mine is now a grave for 11 of those men. A monument was placed on the approximate area of the mine where the remains of those 11 men are located.

Justice Richard’s report was released in 1997 and recommended sweeping changes to the provincial health and safety laws and those impacting mining in particular. Most of those recommendations were acted upon. The two top officers of the company refused to cooperate and testify at the inquiry.

Five months after the explosion the NS Ministry (Department) of Labour laid 52 charges under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) there. Thirty-four were dropped in December and the remaining charges were dropped a few months later because of concerns that it could jeopardize the criminal charges, although the police had yet to lay charges.

The RCMP did, in fact, lay criminal charges – 26 counts of manslaughter and criminal negligence causing death. The attempts to get this case to trial was a travesty of justice. The prosecutor refused to provide full disclosure to the defence. The judge called the prosecutor incompetent, and the prosecutor tried to get the judge removed from the case because of bias.

In the end the criminal charges were stayed because the prosecution decided there was not enough evidence to secure a conviction under the Criminal Code as it existed. By then the limitation to lay charges under the OHSA had passed.

Ultimately no one was held accountable for the deaths of those workers.

The USW led the battle to change the Criminal Code to hold corporations and their senior officers responsible if they fail to protect the health and safety of workers. Bill C-45, also known as the Westray Bill, was the result. It came into force in March of 2004.

This May 9, remember the miners who died 25 years ago.

## DAY OF PINK TAKES ON BULLYING



Every year, LGBTQI\* students, workers and their allies celebrate the second Wednesday of April as the Day of Pink. This April 12, the OFL is calling upon workers across the province to celebrate diversity by wearing a pink shirt and by organizing activities to challenge bullying in all its forms, including homophobic and transphobic bullying.

“Bullying, intimidation, prejudice and discrimination has an impact on everyone, not just the people who are targeted by it. When we allow members of any community to be marginalized and dehumanized, we contribute to a hidden form of violence,” said OFL Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates.

The Day of Pink got its start in Nova Scotia when two straight high school students saw a gay student wearing a pink shirt being bullied. The two students decided to wear pink shirts in solidarity with their classmate and, a few days later, got everyone at school to share in this expression of support by wearing pink to class. By creating a “sea of pink” in their school, these students helped to trigger an international movement to challenge homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools. In Canada, three-quarters of students and 61 percent of students with LGBTQI\* parents report that they feel unsafe at school, according to the EGALÉ Canada national school survey.



## NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE OFL SOLIDARITY AND PRIDE AWARD



You have an opportunity to make sure that someone you know gets the recognition they deserve.

We are calling for nominations from affiliates, local unions, and labour councils for the Ontario Federation of Labour's Solidarity & Pride Champion Award.

This new annual award is to acknowledge and celebrate individuals or groups who have made a significant or ongoing contribution to the advancement of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and two-spirit (LGBTQI\*) human rights, equity and inclusion.

The selection of an individual or group recipient of the OFL Solidarity & Pride Champion Award is based on exceptional achievement and union/community activism that incorporated and promoted human rights and equality for LGBTQI\* people. The OFL Solidarity & Pride Committee will review all nominations and make a recommendation to the OFL Officers and Executive Board. Recipients selected for the award will be honored with a plaque of recognition. Nominees must be leaders in advancing equality and quality of life for LGBTQI\* people in workplaces, community and globally.

For more information on the OFL Solidarity and Pride Champion Award, please contact OFL Human Rights and Women's Department Director Carrol Anne Sceviour by phone 416.443.7670 or by email [csceviour@ofl.ca](mailto:csceviour@ofl.ca). Nomination forms can be downloaded from [OFL.ca](http://OFL.ca)

# WSIB CHANGES UNDERWAY



On January 23, a delegation led by OFL President Chris Buckley met with Tom Teahen, President and CEO of the WSIB. The delegation included representatives from ONIWG, IAVGO Community Legal Clinic and the Injured Workers Consultants Community Legal Clinic (IWC), as well as representatives from the newly formed Health Professionals for Injured Workers group, a group which has raised concerns consistent with those of injured workers.

The focus of the meeting was to express shared concerns about the WSIB's approach to treating health professionals, referrals to medical consultants and the weighing of medical evidence. The group had tabled a list of key recommendations for change, and the goal of the meeting was to secure concrete steps and an action plan to address the key issues.

At the meeting, the WSIB announced some policy and procedure changes which had been made in response to the concerns raised by the OFL and our community partners.

Most important was the commitment that when the WSIB has concern or a need for further information regarding a benefit claim, the case manager will give the treating health professional the opportunity to provide further information or clarification before turning



**“The OFL appreciates the significant effort from health professionals for injured workers group and worker representatives who have tirelessly raised these concerns, and have aided in building our communities response to these very important issues,” said OFL President Chris Buckley. “We are committed to ensuring that every worker in Ontario has access to the benefits to which they are entitled.”**

initial review.

As well, the WSIB committed to undertake a review of their “Adjudicative Practice Document on the Weighing of Medical Evidence” to include the concerns raised by the worker community. A meeting will be scheduled in the near future to review and discuss the document, and the recommended course of action.

While it will be important to continue engaging with WSIB, especially around the review of the best practices document on weighing medical evidence, and to ensure that the various commitments are reflected in formal WSIB policies and guidance materials, this is a promising start.

“The OFL appreciates the significant effort from health professionals for injured workers group and worker representatives who have tirelessly raised these concerns, and have aided in building our communities response to these very important issues,” said OFL President Chris Buckley. “We are committed to ensuring that every worker in Ontario has access to the benefits to which they are entitled.”

to a medical consultant. This has long been a high priority and area of concern for health professionals and injured workers alike.

The WSIB also committed to improving communication with health professionals and injured workers. They committed to ensuring that treating health care professionals are provided with greater clarity regarding the medical evidence the WSIB requires to make a decision on entitlement to benefits. When a referral is needed for a medical consultant review, the decision maker will ensure the parties are informed of the reason for the referral. As well, they agreed to continue working with the OFL WCB team on the quality of their decision letters.

The WSIB committed to reinforcing to medical consultants that in cases where there may be contradictory or insufficient medical information, they are required to contact the treating health care provider to discuss findings.

In cases where a second medical consultants' review is necessary they will attempt to send the review back to the medical consultant who did the

## 2017 Ontario Region Summer School July 2 - 7, 2017

The Ontario Region's 2017 Summer School will be running from July 2 -7, 2017 at the UNIFOR Family Education Centre in Port Elgin.

Courses being offered include: Facing Management Effectively, Member Engagement - Member Action, Mental Health in the Workplace (New for 2016), Parliamentary Procedure and Public Speaking, Steward Training Level 1, Transforming Conflict, WHSC: Making the link between Occupational Disease and the Workplace, Appeals, and Documenting Health and Safety, and ODRT Level 1 (Rights and Obligations) and Level 2 (Benefits and Services).

For more information and to register, please visit our website at: <http://canadianlabour.ca/union-education/workshops-and-courses/ontario-region-summer-school>



Canadian Labour EDUCATION

**ONTARIO REGIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL**  
JULY 2 - 7, 2017 @PORT ELGIN

**LABOUR EDUCATION**  
makes our movement stronger

REGISTER ONLINE AT:  
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Canadian Labour Congress  
Congrès du travail du Canada

## 2017 Ontario Region Women's School July 9 - 14, 2017

The Ontario Region's 2017 Women's School will be held from July 9 - 14, 2017 at the UNIFOR Family Education Centre in Port Elgin.

Courses being offered include: Candidate Development for Women, Collective Bargaining Level 1, Union Women on Turtle Island, Using Modern Tools to Talk with Your Members, Taking Unions to Next Generation, Sisters in the Struggle (ETFO Members Only), and UNIFOR Women in Leadership (for UNIFOR Members only).

For more information and to register, please visit our website at: <http://canadianlabour.ca/union-education/workshops-and-courses/womens-summer-school>



Canadian Labour EDUCATION

**ONTARIO WOMEN'S SUMMER SCHOOL**  
JULY 9-14, 2017 @PORT ELGIN

**LABOUR EDUCATION**  
makes our movement stronger

REGISTER ONLINE AT: canadianlabour.ca/labour-education

Canadian Labour Congress  
Congrès du travail du Canada

# THE LATEST NEWS FROM PREVENTION LINK

**PREVENTION LINK**   
 >>> DISABILITY PREVENTION AT WORK <<<<



It's been a busy few months for the Prevention Link team. With ongoing curriculum redesigns, networking opportunities at various health and safety events, a successful Disability Prevention Strategies workshop provincial tour and the implementation of an upcoming Occupational Mental Health & Illness 101 workshop, the program is in full swing.

## CURRICULUM REDESIGN

As laws, policies and procedures change, so too must Prevention Link materials. That is why the team has been making curriculum updates to Prevention Link core and topical courses. Updated materials for Occupational Disability Response Training Levels 1 and 2, along with selected materials for topical can be purchased at [www.preventionlink.ca](http://www.preventionlink.ca).

## NEW ODRT LEVEL 1 & 2 DEBUTS AT CLC WINTER SCHOOL AND KDLC

From March 5-10, participants at the Canadian Labour Congress Winter School in Port Elgin took the Prevention Link Occupational Disability Response Training (ODRT), levels 1 and 2. They were the first classes to receive the updated curriculum.

The course focuses on the rights, obligations, and benefits and services in the Ontario worker compensation system. The Ontario Region's 2017 School shared the latest rights, obligations, and benefits and services when dealing with the province's workers' compensation system, as part

of its course curriculum.

## KDLC SCHOOL OFFERS ODRT LEVEL 1, 2 & 4 IN PICTON

Prevention Link's long-time instructor Eric De Poe (pictured) recently guided workers and health and safety representatives, attending the KDLC Eastern Ontario Labour Education Spring 2017, through the updated ODRT Level 1 & 2 curriculum. The school, hosted at Picton's Isaiah Tubbs conference centre in Picton, Ontario, also offered Return to Work (RTW) ODRT Level 4 curriculum, which uses the social model of disability prevention and therapeutic return-to-work principles to explore attitudinal barriers and how to eliminate them.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY EVENTS

Members of the Prevention Link team have attended various Ontario communities, including OHCOW's midwinter health and safety clinic in Hamilton. The program continues to reach out and network with workers, employers and health and safety representatives to provide information about the services offered through our innovative disability prevention at work program.

## DISABILITY PREVENTION STRATEGIES

More than 100 secondary prevention champions, benefits representatives, Return-To-Work Specialists, Health & Safety reps, Human Resources, Workplace Leadership and Union Stewards attended Prevention Link's

one-day Disability Prevention Strategies course.

One of the greatest barriers for people with disabilities, when returning to work, is the process of reintegrating into the workplace. RTW best practices framed the foundation of the day-long course which encouraged participants to use real life examples to put disability prevention into practice and learn the importance of a RTW policy.

Prevention Link will announce upcoming dates and cities for the course this fall.

## OCCUPATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH 101

It is time to have the conversation about mental health and illness in Ontario workplaces. Mental illness is considered the number one cause of workplace disability in Canada, yet stigma against those suffering from mental illness is still a reality. That stigma is a key reason why many Ontarians don't talk about mental illness in their workplaces.

Starting May 6 in Toronto, Prevention Link will launch a series of mental health workshops aimed at opening the conversation around mental health challenges in workplaces across Ontario. The half-day workshop, which will be offered in Sudbury, London and Ottawa, will enable participants to learn about and talk more openly about mental health in the workplace. The conversation will be guided by Dr. Wendy Stanyon, a mental health nurse and academic. To register, visit [www.preventionlink.ca](http://www.preventionlink.ca)

## POLICE REACT TO WORKER DEATH

On February 15 of this year a workplace death in Sudbury struck close to home for labour's health and safety community. Julien and Sue Dionne lost their only child, Rhéal to a workplace tragedy. Julien served for many years on the staff of the Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC).

The WHSC provides training programs to support workplaces in their efforts to identify, assess and control, or better yet eliminate, hazardous working conditions that give rise to work-related injury, illness and death.

In a condolence letter to Julien and Sue, the OFL Health and Safety Director Vern Edwards wrote, "Losing a child is always tragic but I cannot begin to understand the deep sense of grief of losing your only child. For you Julien, a man who spent his entire adult life fighting for better health and safety for workers this is unfathomable."

Rhéal was operating a truck on the grounds of his employer when an overhead object fell, crushing the cab and killing him. Rhéal leaves his wife Jessica and a young son Noah.



**"It is rare that we receive a response from the police when we ask that a worker's death be investigated through the C-45 lens. I am pleased that at least on this occasion we have been heard," said OFL President Chris Buckley.**

On March 31, 2004 Bill C-45, became law. It established new legal duties for workplace health and safety, and imposed serious penalties for violations that result in injuries or death.

Each time the OFL is advised of a worker killed on the job, the OFL gets involved by sending an information package about Bill C-45 to local police, including a letter asking that the police consider negligence by the

employer as a possible cause of the death. This was the third time the OFL had reached out to the Chief of the Sudbury police over a workplace tragedy.

In this case, the Chief of Police responded, thanking the OFL for its work around workplace injuries and offering assurances that investigators into the case are fully aware of their responsibilities and obligations in relation to the potential that the incident may involve foul play and criminal wrong-doing, as well as the possibility of criminal negligence by the employer.

"It is rare that we receive a response from the police when we ask that a worker's death be investigated through the C-45 lens. I am pleased that at least on this occasion we have been heard," said OFL President Chris Buckley.

# JUNIOR HOCKEY PLAYERS ARE WORKERS, TOO

The Ontario Federation of Labour is throwing its support behind the members of the Canadian Hockey League Players' Association (CHLPA), which represents approximately 1500 junior hockey players across Canada

On March 21-23, the Ontario Court heard the case for the certification of a \$187 million class action law suit, filed by the players against team owners in Ontario, Québec and Alberta for violating the players' right to a legal wage.

"There should be no exemptions from the *Employment Standards Act* and minimum wage laws," said OFL President Chris Buckley. "How is it that someone can work for 50 hours a week and not get paid? This is a clear sign that our laws are not working."

The OFL has waged a campaign in tandem with the Ontario government's Changing Workplaces Review, calling for an end to all exemptions and exclusions under both the *Employment Standards Act* and *Labour Relations Act*, equal pay and benefits for equal work, the right to join and keep a union and much more.

"I'm a hockey fan, but I believe that our national sport shouldn't be used to exploit young workers for profit by team owners," said Buckley.

As early as 2002, the Canada Revenue Agency deemed the players in the Canadian Hockey League to be employees under the Canada Labour Code, entitling them to be covered by the provincial minimum wage.

However, players have never been legally compensated for the over 50 hours per week they work. Instead, on average, players are paid \$60 per week. The class action suit was filed in 2014.



**MAYWORKS**  
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**APRIL 28 – MAY 7, 2017**  
ART AGAINST PRECARIETY

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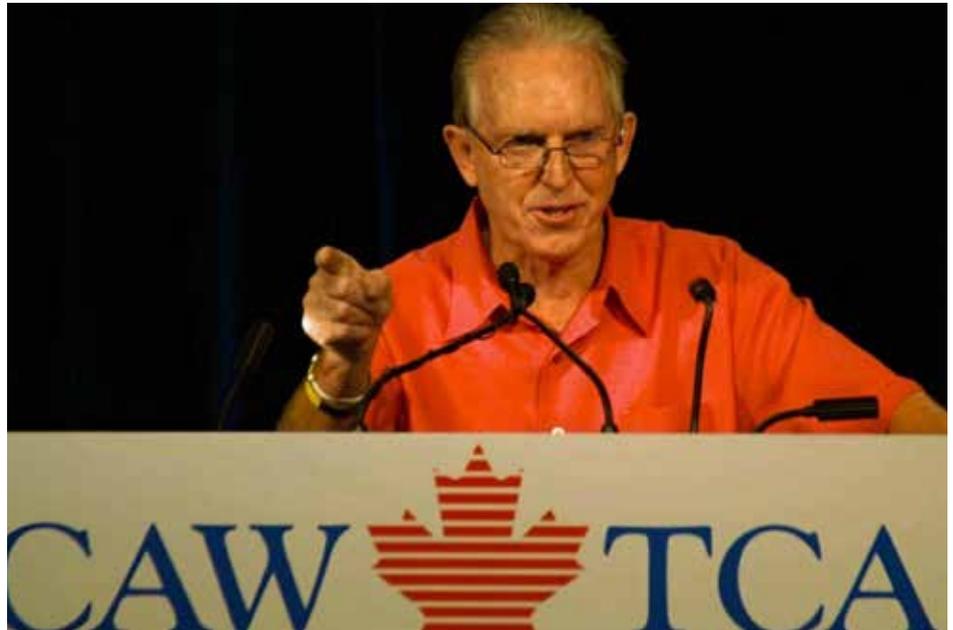
A large blue banner for the Mayworks festival. The text is in bold, orange and white. Below the text is a row of seven small images: a woman in a red dress, a man in a hat holding flowers, a cartoon of a post office, a couple kissing, a woman in an orange shirt, and a crowd of people. At the bottom are social media icons and the website URL.

# THE OFL MOURNS THE PASSING OF CANADIAN AUTO WORKERS FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FORMER CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS PRESIDENT BOB WHITE

The labour movement has lost a great activist and visionary leader. The OFL mourns the passing of former CAW founding President and former Canadian Labour Congress President Bob White, and sends condolences to his family, friends and all those with whom he stood in solidarity.

“The work Bob did for Canadian workers has shaped labour rights in this country,” said OFL President Chris Buckley. “His commitment to social justice and fairness was legendary. He was a role model for labour activists across this country and beyond, including for myself. What was also remarkable about Bob was his treatment of others – he treated each person with dignity and respect, regardless of their title, socio-economic position, gender, race, age or sexual orientation. His warmth and generosity of spirit drew people in and his brilliance and tenacity made him the leader that he was.”

Bob White saw the interconnections of worker and social justice struggles worldwide. He was a champion of the anti-apartheid movement. He served as the first Canadian president of the OECD’s Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) and as chair of the Human and Trade Union Rights



Committee of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. White’s work to build a more inclusive labour movement laid the groundwork for solidarity in social justice struggles across Canada.

“Wherever organizations of any type come together, there are challenges to be met and risks to be taken. Bob was not afraid to embrace change and the discussions that come along with it, but he also knew that in the end, it was working together that was the key to achieving justice for workers. It was an inspiration to see his work” said Buckley, who called White a long-time personal hero.

The historic 1984 contract negotiations between the United Auto Workers and General Motors Corporation that led to the formation of the CAW were documented in the film "Final Offer." This invaluable document is an extraordinary film about revolutionary events.

You can find "Final Offer" online at [nfb.ca](http://nfb.ca).



# WHAT WOMEN WANT: DECENT WORK

On March 8, the OFL held its first ever International Women's Day Breakfast at Queen's Park, co-sponsored with the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign. This special briefing for female MPPs, senior political staff, and advocates focused on the wants and needs of working women in Ontario – with a special emphasis on creating conditions for decent work.

Fifty people, including Ministers, MPPs and staffers took the opportunity to learn about the effect of precarious work on women and how they can use the Changing Workplaces Review to close the gender wage gap.

Female MPPs from all parties attended the event. The event drew attention to the fact that the Changing Workplaces Review disproportionately affects female workers, because they are more likely than men to have insecure jobs. Women are overrepresented in jobs with low income, few workplace benefits, little job security, uncertain work scheduling, and no protection through unions.

In fact, over 60 per cent of the 1.7 million Ontarians who earn at or near the minimum wage are women, and women without a union are 8 times more likely to earn poverty wages. They are half as likely to have a pension at their workplace. Females also make up two-thirds of part-time workers in Ontario and are more likely to land in the 20 lowest-paid occupations such as



cashiers, restaurant servers, food counter attendants, and child care providers.

"It's easy to suggest that women just go into what was once considered 'non-traditional jobs', careers in STEM fields, the trades, etc., but that misses the point," said OFL Secretary-Treasurer Patty Coates. "It's not just about getting a different job – it's about making all jobs better so that everyone can have decent work. Collectively, we can do better to ensure that vulnerable workers, particularly women – women of colour, women from newcomer communities, young women and women with disabilities are not stuck in bad jobs."

Thevaki Thevaratnam, Director of Research and Education for the OFL, presented on needed changes to the *Labour Relations Act* that will make it easier for Ontarians to join and keep a union. She spoke for the need to protect the Charter right of 'freedom of association', the right to strike, and workers in the case of contract flipping. Thevaratnam also highlighted the importance of eliminating exemptions and loopholes, removing barriers to joining a union, and providing an arbitration option for new collective agreements.

Pam Frache, Provincial Coordinator for the Fight for \$15 and Fairness, outlined the changes

that are needed to the *Employment Standards Act* including fair scheduling, paid sick days and adequate vacation, and equal pay and working conditions for temp workers. "Precarious work is not inevitable," said Frache. "We can end the exemptions that leave three out of every four workers without the full protection of the *Employment Standards Act*. The vast majority of Ontarians want meaningful change, including a \$15 minimum wage. What we need right now are MPPs who will be decent work champions and deliver that legislation in 2017."

The event also celebrated the work of Ministers, female elected officials, and senior advisors, reflecting on the changing world of work for women and how we can collectively advance women's equality. Assembled MPPs were strongly urged to advocate this year for changes to Ontario's employment and labour laws that ensure all workers are treated fairly, no matter their gender.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 8, 2017**

**ASSEMBLY FOR DECENT WORK**

– London, Ontario

Come and learn how you can tell your MPP what Ontarians need to ensure that every job in Ontario is a decent job. (see page 14)

**April 12, 2017**

**DAY OF PINK (ANTI-BULLYING DAY)**

The International Day of Pink is a Canadian anti-bullying event held annually on the second Wednesday of April.

**April 19, 2017**

**EQUAL PAY DAY**

On this day a woman, on average, has worked enough to earn as much as a man made the previous year.

**April 21–23, 2017**

**ONTARIO NDP CONVENTION**

– Toronto

**April 28, 2017**

**NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING**

Events hosted by labour councils across Ontario. Contact your local labour council for more information: <https://www.whsc.on.ca/Events/Day-of-Mourning>

**May 1–31, 2017**

**ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH**

In December 2001, the Senate adopted a motion proposed by Senator Vivienne Poy to officially designate May as Asian Heritage Month in Canada.

**May 7–12, 2017**

**CLC CONVENTION**

Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 255 Front Street West, Toronto, Ontario.

**May 17, 2017**

**INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA**

The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia is observed on May 17 and aims to coordinate international events that raise awareness of LGBT rights violations and stimulate interest in LGBT rights work worldwide.

**June 1, 2017**

**INJURED WORKERS' DAY**

Every year on June 1st, Ontarians pay respect to the hundreds of workers who have died or become injured while working on their job sites.

**June 1-7, 2017**

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT AWARENESS WEEK**

On June 1st, 2007, The Ontario government recognized the first week of June as Sexual Harassment Awareness month to increase awareness of sexual harassment, how to prevent it, and to honour the memories of all those who have been victimized.

**June 12, 2017**

**WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR**

World Day Against Child Labour. Every year on June 12 the World Day Against Child Labour is observed to raise awareness of the plight of child labourers world-wide.

**June 21, 2017**

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY**

National Aboriginal Day is a day recognizing and celebrating the cultures and contributions of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

**ONTARIO PRIDE EVENTS**

**APR. 28 – MAY 7:** Guelph Pride  
[www.guelphpride.com](http://www.guelphpride.com)

**MAY 21 – MAY 27:** Elliot Lake Pride

[www.elpride.ca](http://www.elpride.ca)

**MAY 29 – JUN. 5:** Pride Durham  
[www.pridedurham.com](http://www.pridedurham.com)

**JUN 3. – JUN. 10:** Pride Niagara  
[www.prideniagara.com](http://www.prideniagara.com)

**JUN. 17:** Kingston Pride  
[www.kingstonpride.ca](http://www.kingstonpride.ca)

**JUN. 3-10:** Barrie Pride  
[www.barriepride.com](http://www.barriepride.com)

**JUN.3 – JUN. 11:** Timmins Pride  
[www.timminspride.com](http://www.timminspride.com)

**JUN. 7 – JUN. 17:** Thunder Bay Pride  
[www.thunderpride.com](http://www.thunderpride.com)

**JUN. 9 – JUN. 18:** York Pride  
[www.yorkpridefest.com](http://www.yorkpridefest.com)

**JUN. TBA:** Hamilton Pride  
[www.pridehamilton.ca](http://www.pridehamilton.ca)

**JUN. 17:** Brantford Pride  
[www.brantfordpride.ca](http://www.brantfordpride.ca)

**JUN. 24 – JUN. 26:** Kenora Pride  
Facebook “Kenora Pride”

**JUN. 1 – JUN. 25:** Pride Toronto  
[www.pridetoronto.com](http://www.pridetoronto.com)

**JUN. 4 – JUN. 10:** Belleville Pride  
[www.bellevillepride.ca](http://www.bellevillepride.ca)

**JUL. TBA:** Sudbury Pride  
[www.sudburypride.com](http://www.sudburypride.com)

**JUL. 21 – JUL. 30:** Muskoka Pride  
[www.gaymuskoka.com](http://www.gaymuskoka.com)

**JUL. TBA:** Peel Pride  
[www.peelpride.ca](http://www.peelpride.ca)

**JUL. 10 – JUL. 15:** Brockville Pride  
<https://brockvillepride.weekly.com>

**JUL. 20 – JUL. 30:** Pride London  
[www.pridelondon.ca](http://www.pridelondon.ca)

**JUL. 31 – AUG. 13:** Simcoe County Pride  
[www.simcoepride.com](http://www.simcoepride.com)

**AUG. 8 – AUG. 13:** Windsor-Essex Pride Festival  
[www.wepridefest.com](http://www.wepridefest.com)

**AUG. 21 – AUG. 27:** Capital Pride (Ottawa)  
[www.ottawacapitalpride.ca](http://www.ottawacapitalpride.ca)

**SEP. 15 – SEP. 24:** Peterborough Pride  
[www.peterboroughpride.ca](http://www.peterboroughpride.ca)

**This list of LGBTQI\* Pride events across Ontario is accurate at the time of printing. Please check your local listings for the most current updates.**

# STRIKE SUPPORT

The Ontario Federation of Labour supports locked-out and striking workers across this province, as well as advocating for necessary changes to employment and labour law.

“I encourage all of our brothers and sisters in the labour movement to provide some kind of support to the workers on the lines,” said OFL President Chris Buckley. “Our labour movement is as strong as we make it and we can push for better conditions for all by backing up the workers who are forced to take to the picket line because of unfair conditions.”



If workers in your region are locked out or on strike, please be sure to inform the OFL by contacting Melisa Bayon, Campaign Organizer, at [mbayon@ofl.ca](mailto:mbayon@ofl.ca)

Some of the Ontario workers on the picket lines include:

**CUPE Local 2049** Parry Sound and Nipissing Children’s Aid Society Workers were locked out December 23 and they’re still on the line.

**CUPE Local 2073** which represents 227 counsellors, literacy instructors, audiologists, speech language pathologists, interpreters/interpreter trainers, clerical support, program coordinators, program assistants, information technology specialists, and other staff at 24 Canadian Hearing

Society offices across Ontario, has been without a contract since 2013, and on Strike Since March 6, 2017:

These strikers are asking that you take action by sending a letter to Julia Dumanian, CEO of the Canadian Hearing Society. You can find more information at <https://cupe.on.ca>

**UNITE HERE Local 75** at U of T Scarborough - On strike since February 9, 2017:

Subcontracted cafeteria workers at University of Toronto Scarborough are still on strike. Striking campus cafeteria workers - the majority of whom are women, immigrants, and people of colour - are holding a weekly Silent Vigil at Queen's Park against poverty-wage jobs on campus. Their hourly wage, is \$11.50 per hour for the majority of the workforce. At just ten cents above the minimum wage, this makes the cafeteria workers on campus are among the lowest paid campus workers in the GTA. For more information follow @unitehere75 or email [mhollin@unitehere.org](mailto:mhollin@unitehere.org).

# STAFF CHANGES

Assistant to the Officers **Shannon Devine** will be returning to Unifor as of May 15. **Rob Halpin**, who has been serving as the Executive Director of Prevention Link, has been appointed as the Assistant, replacing Shannon. OFL Director of Organization Services **Laurie Hardwick** will take over at the helm of Prevention Link. Make It Fair campaign organizer **Melisa Bayon** will be taking on a new position as Director of Political Action and Outreach. We thank **Shannon** for her time at the OFL and congratulate **Rob, Laurie** and **Melisa** on their new positions!

## THE OFL TEAM

### EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE OFFICERS:

**SHANNON DEVINE**

### OFL STAFF

(In alphabetical order by last name)

**MELISA BAYON**, Campaign Organizer

**JUDY CHOW**, Administrative Assistant (Secretary-Treasurer & Administration)

**VERN EDWARDS**, Health & Safety Director, OFL

**LAURIE HARDWICK**, Organization Services Director

**PAULETTE HAZEL**, Administrative Assistant

**JANE LIU**, Controller

**BRIAN MORGAN**, Production Coordinator

**KATHY NEUMANN**, Administrative Assistant (President, Exec. V.P. and Exec. Assistant)

**MEAGAN PERRY**, Communications Director

**RENATA PUCEK**, Bookkeeper

**AMALIA SAVVA**, Administrative Assistant

**CARROL ANNE SCEVIOUR**, Human Rights and Women’s Director

**THEVAKI THEVARATNAM**, Research and Education Director

### PREVENTION LINK STAFF

(In alphabetical order by last name)

**ERIN DOUCETTE**, Return-to-Work Coordinator

**SUE FRATRIC**, Administrative Assistant

**JODY JONES**, Return-to-work Coordinator

**ROB HALPIN**, Executive Director

**OGHO IKHALO**, Senior Communications and Outreach Specialist

**ETHIRAJU RAMACHANDAR**, Administrator/ Finance

# OCCUPATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH & ILLNESS 101



>>> WITH DR. WENDY STANYON

Limited seating.  
BOOK EARLY!

## MEET THE SPEAKER:

DR. WENDY STANYON is a mental health nurse and academic committed to raising greater awareness about mental illness. She led the development of Mindsight, an online educational resource to promote mental health awareness, reduce stigma, and teach users basic strategies and resources for supporting individuals living with mental illness.



## It's time we have the conversation about mental health in your workplace!

Mental illness is considered the number one cause of workplace disability in Canada. Yet, stigma around the topic is a key reason why many Ontarians don't talk about mental illness in their workplaces.

This half-day workshop is your chance to become more informed and talk more openly about mental health in the workplace. Join us in promoting a greater understanding of occupational mental health and illness.

This discussion will also include a demonstration of **Mindsight**.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: WSIB Representatives, RTW Specialists, Health & Safety, Human Resources, Workplace Leadership and Union Stewards.



\* » **BUY 10** for only **\$750**

» **CLC Toronto Convention delegates**  
**SAVE 25% OFF** with promo code

- TORONTO** » May 6, 2017 (Intercontinental Toronto Ctr.)
- SUDBURY** » June 3, 2017 (Radisson Hotel)
- LONDON** » June 10, 2017 (Double Tree by Hilton)
- OTTAWA** » June 17, 2017 (Ottawa Public Library)

Workshops will run from 9am–12pm.

Cost: **\$100\***

### For further information:

Tel. (416) 443-7683

Fax: (416) 441-1893

e-mail: [info@preventionlink.ca](mailto:info@preventionlink.ca)



OCCUPATIONAL DISABILITY  
RESPONSE TRAINING 

>>> PREVENTION LINK

PREVENTION LINK   
>>> DISABILITY PREVENTION AT WORK



>>> [preventionlink.ca](http://preventionlink.ca)