

Trail Daily Times

Social service workers asking for fair wage

Fri Feb 1 2013

Page: 3

Section: News

Byline: Timothy Schafer

Source: The Daily Times

In a day and age of rising costs most people's wages have not kept up to inflation.

For one sector of the provincial workforce, wages have not only been unable to keep up, they have been curtailed.

Community social service workers have had their starting wages decrease in the last 10 years by over \$1 to \$15.54, and had their benefits reduced, despite an 18.1 per cent increase to the cost of living.

Now, over one year without a contract, 10 Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) unions have taken its concerns public.

On Thursday those concerns hit the streets of downtown Trail when a picket line in front of the Trail Association for Community Living--as well as in Castlegar--was formed by some of the social service CUPE Local 3999's nonessential services workers.

The workers were protesting a lack of a raise in a decade, a clear message being delivered by the province as negotiations on a new contract have been stalled, said Local 3999 president, Niki Lord.

"In our opinion, as workers out on the front line, the people we support are not valued at all," she said. "They are looked upon as a

drain on the system, and the only way the government can save money is to take it out on the workers."

There are nearly 60 union members in Trail--and another 50 in Castlegar--affected by the contract, said Lord, and many of them were out on Thursday. Some members providing essential services were still on the job during the action.

© 2013 Trail Daily Times