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Yukon Employees' Union
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Yukon Employees' Union

NEWS

May 2013

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New bursary application process

The Yukon Employees' Union believes the axiom that knowledge is power—and as such is a staunch advocate of education. Workers with knowledge become more engaged Union members and productive contributors to society. One way that YEU champions education is through financial contributions in the form of bursary awards.

A resolution to establish YEU Educational Bursaries for members and their dependents under the age of 25 was first approved at the 1993 Triennial Convention. Four \$1000 bursaries were introduced. At the 2002 convention, a second resolution increased the allotment to eight \$1000 bursaries, and split one into two \$500 trades' awards.

YEU currently offers two 'named' bursaries—the Don Galbraith Social Justice Award (\$1000) and the John Irving Trade Bursary (\$500). This year the Union modified the

bursary application forms, updated the point-rating system and simplified the instructions. These changes were introduced because in recent years as many as half the applicants lost their chance for an award by submitting incomplete applications.

Here are some suggestions about how to improve your chances of success:

- Be specific in your answers. For example, the form requests the years and months of your Yukon residency—therefore answering "all my life" is not enough.
- Please do not provide reference letters.
- It is not necessary to provide high school transcripts.
- You must be a YEU member or member's dependent 25 years of age or younger.

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YG bargaining team applies for conciliation

Although significant progress was made during negotiations towards a new collective agreement for employees of the Yukon Government, the sides have not been able to agree on the key issue of Self-Directed Special Leave. The employer wants to discontinue the Special Leave Pilot Project. The Union does not.

An overwhelming majority of YG members have been clear that keeping the pilot project intact is critical to achieving a fair collective agreement. Because of the distance between the respective positions, the Union Bargaining Team has

applied for conciliation. This means utilizing the assistance of an independent third party to help resolve this outstanding issue.

Conciliation is a normal part of the bargaining process when there is a serious disagreement. It does not mean that bargaining has stopped. The YEU team will continue to bargain in good faith so that members' issues receive a fair hearing. Our team meets again with the employer on June 3.

See the YEU website for more details and regular updates.

**Help support the PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy — June 15
YEU's team needs 2 more players. Contact YEU and join the fun.**

Union News

2013 PSAC National Equity Conferences

The Public Service Alliance of Canada released a call-out for the 2013 PSAC National Equity Conferences on May 1. The theme of this year's events is *Equity Groups Are All Affected*.

The conferences will be held from November 18 to 22 in Toronto. The registration deadline is Friday, June 7, 2013.

The complete conference call-out is published on the YEU website in PDF format. This is a 25 page legal-size document, so keep that in mind when printing.

For more information, call (613) 560-5457. You may also contact Michelle Rossignol, Administrative Assistant by email at conferences@psac-afpc.com.

Member of the Month

Carol Oberg—profile of a dedicated activist

Carol has been a member of the Yukon Employees' Union since 1990, when she began work with the Child Care Services Unit at Health and Social Services. Like many YEU members, she was not active in the Union during the first few years. Although she appreciated Union benefits, the negotiated contracts and other amenities that came from employment in a unionized workplace, she was content to let others attend the meetings and do the bulk of the volunteering that went along with being part of a collective. She was, after all, a busy person raising her young family and actively working in her community in other ways.



This changed when she needed to make a call to the Union on her own behalf. She found that the organization was there for her in a big way. They always had been, but up to that point, she hadn't needed their help and hadn't really appreciated fully the role that the Union played in ensuring that a worker's rights were protected.

Carol's experience led her to take many Union courses to inform herself of rights and obligations of both employer and employee, and has at times facilitated course work for others.

As well as serving as President of Local Y017, (Health and Social Services), she is Chair of the Public Service Alliance of Canada's Regional Access Committee and is an active

member of the PSAC Regional Women's Committee, the PSAC Health and Safety Committee and the PSAC Alliance Facilitator's Committee. She is also on the board of the Yukon Federation of Labour and the PSAC Area Council. She is a Shop Steward and sits on the Joint Labour Management Committee for Extended Care, and the advisory board for the Workplace Diversity Employment Office.

Without a doubt, this activism opened her eyes to the extent that organized labour contributes to society, not just in the workplace but in the community. The Union can be counted on by members who find themselves in difficulty for many reasons. Locals, committees and Area Councils help through hardship funds and educational funds. They roll up their sleeves to feed people at the annual Labour Day barbeque, shop for the food bank at Christmas, and buy socks for the homeless. Union members inform, participate and work directly to make life better for all people in our society. They live the principles of democracy, fairness, representation and inclusion.

There are many ways to become involved in your Union. Like Carol and the others who also are active Union members, you can find a role that suits your beliefs and aspirations. You will undoubtedly find that the benefits of Union work far outweigh the time spent. Just speak with one of your Local executives (call YEU at 667-2331 if you're not sure who to approach), or drop in to the Union hall at the bottom of Two Mile Hill and meet some of the people who work there. They can help you learn where to start. If you're from out of town, call toll-free to 1-888-YEU-2331. We encourage your participation. Together we're better!

President's Message



YEU President
Steve Geick

Violence in the workplace is not an abstract idea, or a theoretical issue that *could* happen in the Yukon. It is a present, harsh reality.

A former employee of Residential Youth Treatment Services recently spoke out publicly about her first-hand experience with physical violence at work. Her story perfectly

illustrates the reality of workplace violence and underlines the urgent need for the Yukon Government to take steps to protect workers.

A trained, dedicated professional came to the Yukon from Ontario to work for the government as a residential care worker. On her first day on the job she was punched in the face by one of the youths she was working to help.

She was punched on two more occasions, and nearly a fourth time. She explained that she received no support at all from the employer, and resigned in fear for her own and her client's safety, and to take her story public.

The employer's spokesperson Pat Living responded by saying, "Individuals who come to work at a group home have to be aware that they are going to be working with potentially violent or aggressive youth."

I certainly hope that the employer will offer a more adequate response, because Living's statement would appear to condone the violence. While the risk may be inherent in the duties of the position, the employer has the obligation to mitigate that risk in every way possible to ensure that the safety of both the staff and the clients is maintained.

When a violent incident occurs, it is also the responsibility of the employer to provide adequate follow-up and support for all those involved—something it appears did not happen. As a result, a dedicated professional resigned her position. It is a sad day when this is the only recourse left for an employee who was confronted with violence at work.

Exposure to physical violence at work is certainly not confined to group homes and correctional facilities. It can and does occur in schools, hospitals and senior care facilities—and in the most unexpected job settings. Complacency in the face of violence is not an option.

The subtext of this incident underlines the necessity for effective whistleblower legislation. The government expressly prohibits employees from making public statements related to their positions or government policies.

In this case the employee could not come forward with information about inadequate workplace safety without first resigning. Whistleblower legislation that protects employees who speak out publicly is urgently required.

YEU front and centre at Yukon Trade Show

The Union's participation in the 2013 Yukon Trade Show from May 3 to 5 helped raise awareness about organized labour in the territory.

Our booth at a prominent location near the entrance to the event displayed information about the many ways YEU contributes to Yukon communities.

The trade show offered an opportunity for Union volunteers to speak with members about the status of collective bargaining and recent Union initiatives. It also presented an occasion for dialogue with non-unionized Yukoners.

Our booth was busy throughout the three days of the show. We attracted additional visitors by offering prizes awarded by draws at the end of each day. Three i-Pod Touches were

won by booth visitors. A hooded sweatshirt donated by the PSAC Yukon Aboriginal People's Committee was awarded by a draw on the last day of the event.

The i-Pod Touch winners were Maryse Sevigny, Kat Loewen, and Kyrn Evans. Kylie Townend won the hooded sweatshirt.

Many thanks to our volunteer members for the hard work.



YEU Executive member Jack Bourassa answers questions from a visitor at the Union's trade show booth.

New bursary process

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- You must be attending an accredited post-secondary college or university, and carrying a full course load.
- You must provide both your letter of acceptance and documentation showing full-time enrolment. Simply being accepted is not the same as enrolment and attendance.
- Distance education, correspondence courses and half course-loads are not eligible.

There are two additional questions on the application form that need to be answered.

- How will your course of study contribute to the Yukon? This is a grassroots question—how will what you are studying be beneficial to the territory, and will you return to the Yukon to apply what you've learned?
- Explain how your course of study relates to the philosophy, goals and objectives of the labour movement. This is

Meetings & Events

KVA Local Y018 AGM—Thursday, June 6, 3:00 p.m., YOOP Hall, Dawson City (barbecue to follow)

National Equity Conferences registration deadline—Friday, June 7, 2013

Peter Gzowski Invitational—Golf Tournament for Literacy, Saturday, June 15, Mountain View Golf Course.

YEU Monthly Executive Meeting—2nd Thurs., 6:30-9:00 p.m., YEU Hall

Y010 Monthly Meeting—2nd Wed., 5:00-7:00 p.m., YEU Hall

Y017 Monthly Meeting—4th Wed., 7:30 p.m., YEU Hall

Y023 Monthly Meeting—1st Thurs., Noon

Y025 Monthly Meeting—3rd Wed., 6:00 p.m., YEU Hall

a labour-funded bursary—so you must describe how your course of study will benefit the labour movement.

Bursary applications may be submitted at any time during the year, although YEU actively solicits them between June 1 and the September 30 deadline.

Completed application forms can be delivered to the YEU office by hand, mail, fax or email. A signature is required on the application, so if you choose to apply by email, please scan a signed application form and forward it as a PDF attachment.

Regardless of the delivery method, completed applications must be received at the YEU office, or postmarked, no later than midnight on September 30.

The Bursary Committee meets in the first part of October to review the applications and choose the award recipients. Everyone who applies will be notified about the results of their submission.

If you have any questions about the YEU bursaries, please contact Lorelee Kesler at 667-2331, or email her at lkesler@yeu.ca.

Y026 Monthly Meeting—3rd Thurs., 7:00 p.m., Dawson City

PSAC Regional Access Committee—3rd Thurs., 5:15 p.m., YEU Hall

PSAC Aboriginal Peoples Committee—1st Tues., 5:15 p.m.

PSAC Racially Visible Committee—1st Wed., 5:00 p.m.

PSAC Regional Women's Committee—2nd Tues., 5:15 p.m.

PSAC Health & Safety Committee—1st Thurs., 6:00 p.m.

Dawson Regional Women's Committee—1st Wed., 5:15 p.m., Legion Hall

PSAC Regional Youth Committee—4th Thurs., 7:00 p.m., Lucy Jackson Training Room, YEU Hall

Yukon Employees' Union Office—2285-2nd Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1C9. Telephone—867-667-2331, Fax—867-667-6521, Toll Free—1-888-YEU-2331, Email—contact@yeu.ca, Website—www.yeu.ca, or visit us on Facebook.

Staff

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Office Hours—Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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