



# Social Services News

Community Services Divisional Council | Fall 2013



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**FOR MEMBERS IN**

CAS Local 116 executive member Virginia Ridley, left, greets NDP MPP Peggy Sattler at the Aug. 14 anti-layoff rally in London

## From apathy to action – our time is NOW!



Deborah Gordon

The theme of our Community Services Divisional Council at OPSEU's Broader Public Service conference this past June was: "Apathy to Action – Rebuilding the Social Safety Net."

Delegates at the bi-annual meeting were invited to gather their tools in preparation for the task ahead: repairing our badly tattered social safety net.

We asked ourselves what first 'sparked' our passion and commitment to social justice and social activism; what connected us to our work and to our communities, and how these 'threads' from our individual histories could become a tapestry of collective strength and solidarity.

What is the current condition of the tapestry itself?

Since 1990 the federal government has invested less and less into the quality of our 'fabric.' Prior to 1990 the federal "Canada Assistance Program" (CAP) funded provincial social service programs at 50 per cent of cost. That same year the Mulroney government froze this funding and within three years it had declined to a miserly 28 per cent of Ontario's social service costs. Downloading had begun in earnest.

In 1996, CAP was eliminated by the Chretien government to be replaced by the new Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) program. Further cuts to funding under this model reached close to \$4 billion. In 2004 the CHST was split between Health (CHT – Canada Health Transfer) and post-secondary education and social services (CST - Canada Social Transfer).

Our fabric was being torn apart by the feds and the provinces because no federal standards were established that would define how these transfers were accounted for and allocated.

As we have regularly experienced, whether due to change in government policy direction or during times of economic austerity, the provision of quality social services is increasingly challenged and too often low on

the priority list of governments.

Following the Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh on April 24, we were jolted from our collective slumber to the real costs of governments and private sector enterprises that use substandard materials and deplorable working conditions (both physical materials and poor policy-making through privatization and de-regulation). We cannot remain in a state of slumber or apathy thinking that these tragic events could never happen in Ontario.

It was a bracing reminder that it's time to open our activist toolbox and demand better quality materials from our governments!

One 'tool' being developed for the tasks ahead by your Community Service Divisional Council is a campaign to raise the profile of community-based social services and the work we do. Like OPSEU, our affiliated National Union (NUPGE) is committed to a Canada-wide campaign to give our work the prominence *is* so badly deserves. To learn more please visit [www.NUPGE.ca](http://www.NUPGE.ca).

I strongly encourage each our 20,500 CSD members to play an active part in this worthwhile campaign.

*'Rise like Lions after slumber, In unvanquishable number,  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you -  
Ye are many - they are few*

- Percy Shelley  
1819 Poem "The Mask of Anarchy"

Or in a more current form....

*"We are the 99 per cent!"  
Let's get mending!*

In Solidarity,

**Deb Gordon**, Chair



## A message from OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas

On Nov. 6, along with our brothers and sisters in the National Union of Government and General Employees (NUPGE), we will mark the Sixth Annual Community Social Service Workers Appreciation Day.

More than 20,000 OPSEU members work in social services. Your work knits the fabric of our society and for that we roundly applaud you. Social services express unalienable core values: inclusiveness, dignity, fairness, and compassion.

Whether you counsel a young person in crisis, assist an individual with developmental disabilities to live independently, empower a woman who has been abused, enhance the dignity of a senior, or support an individual to overcome an addiction, you are building a caring society.

And yet, stable funding for social services has been neglected too often by governments. With rising income inequality, the need for sustainable, quality social services is more critical than ever. Income inequality threatens the very social foundation of our cities and towns with most wealth going to the top 10 per cent. We have plenty of wealth in society to properly fund social services. We need our political leaders to respect and support the values we cherish. We need them to commit to a society that does not abandon the needs of its citizens. We have the means to build and sustain our social services in the face of growing demand.

OPSEU is committed to the fight for quality social services. We will defend everyone's equal access to quality social services because dignity is not optional.

In solidarity,



**Warren (Smokey) Thomas**  
President



## Public sector cuts hurt women

A global trend is evident in countries that pursue austerity and cuts to the public sector - women are disproportionately affected as both employees and as users of public services.

Following the release of the 2012 federal budget, the Canadian Labour Congress argued that cuts to the public sector would result in increasing levels of inequality for women and other vulnerable groups. The gendered impacts of budget cuts over time have undermined women's role in the workforce and have contributed to an increase in women's inequality. The decline in women's equality as tracked by the United Nations shows that in 1996 Canada ranked number one in terms of sex equality. In 2010/11, we slipped to 18th place.

Adrie Naylor in her article, *Economic Crisis and Austerity: the Stranglehold on Canada's Families*, argues that cuts to the public sector have caused a "she-recession." Women have been more severely affected because they are much more highly represented in public sector jobs. Sheila Block, Director of Economic Analysis at the Wellesley Institute. *Austerity is bad for our health.* Cuts to the public service have a disproportionate impact on women, moving them into more precarious employment, increasing unpaid work, and placing a strain on family incomes especially in areas hardest hit by the loss of manufacturing jobs in Ontario.

Women comprise 60 per cent of Ontario public sector employees and 80 per cent of social service workers. On average women in the public sector are paid 4.5 per cent more than women doing comparable work in the private sector.

Social services cuts attack women, children and the most vulnerable. It's time to make this a women's issue.

**Community Services Divisional Council**

## Pushing back against austerity nonsense

The campaign to raise the minimum wage was launched in March this year across 14 cities in Ontario. On the 14th day of every month until the provincial budget is tabled in 2014, the coalition will hold events across Ontario calling for a raise of the minimum wage to \$14 an hour.

A coalition of community groups, unions, activists, and academics want the minimum wage to be immediately increased to \$14 dollars and adjusted annually.

The current rate of \$10.25 has been frozen for the last three years. People working full-time at minimum wage still live below the low income measure and struggle to meet their basic needs.

Inequality in Ontario is now as high as it was in the 1930s. The income for the top one per cent has increased by 71 per cent since the 1980s.

Raising the minimum wage to \$14 will put Ontarians 10 per cent above the poverty line. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has also acknowledged the need for the minimum wage to be increased to keep pace with inflation.

Workers are angry. In the US fast food workers staged a one day walkout in September where they demanded a \$15 per hour minimum wage. President Barack Obama has endorsed their campaign at the federal level. Momentum is building as low paid workers lead the call for decent work.

Join the movement and get involved in your local community. Participate in a day of action every 14th of the month in your local community, organize a day of action, or write to your local MPP.

To support the campaign visit:  
<http://raisetheminimumwage.ca/>



## Meet your Divisional Executive

(left to right) Front row: Silvana Cacciatore-Roy, Patti Markland, Karen McKinnon  
(left to right) Back row: Scott Collins, Erin Rice, Dave Lalonde, Beth Collier, Shawna Ahern



## September 18 Lobby Day at Queen's Park

Developmental services hosted a very successful Lobby Day at Queen's Park on Sept. 18. The event attracted almost 100 direct care givers, including more than 35 MPPs representing all three parties, many political staffers and more than two dozen family members.

This level of interest from decision-makers at Queen's Park brings into sharp focus the need to draft and implement a plan to address the crisis we experience daily in our sector. We thank those who helped to make this day such a huge success.

On Sept. 19 our sector held a one-day pre-bargaining conference. Guest speakers included OPSEU president Smokey Thomas, and staff members including political economist Randy Robinson, senior pay equity negotiator Ann Wallace, research officer Steve Crossman, and communication officers Shelia Keenan and Emily Visser.

At the meeting developmental services released its new campaign slogan "We can Afford to Care." The reasoning behind our slogan is that there is more money in this province than ever before and our sector faces an immediate crisis. We can afford to care in Ontario and we no longer can afford not to.

The developmental services sector executive would like to thank Tracy More, our developmental services negotiator, for her hard work as well as all the staff, members and presenters that made our pre-bargaining conference a success.

**Patti Markland**  
*Sector Chair*

## OPSEU developmental services tells Select Committee it's time to act

The OPSEU developmental services team, including Chair Patti Markland and President Warren (Smokey) Thomas, delivered a strong message to an all-party Select Committee at Queen's Park on November 13. This sector is in crisis. No amount of restructuring is going to fix it. There needs to be a substantial increase in funding so that people can access the services they depend on. It's a question of this government taking responsibility and making a real commitment.

OPSEU presented a working brief to the committee members and is currently putting together a comprehensive document to be completed by January 2014. This will be presented to the developmental services select committee members who are preparing a brief of their own based on the feedback they receive from OPSEU and others. They will present an interim report to the House by Feb. 26, 2014, and a final report by May 15, 2014.

The select committee will be holding meetings in communities across Ontario to gather information. Please consider attending a meeting and contributing your own story of what it means to work in developmental services.



## Mobilizer Training, Nov. 6 and 7

All mobilizers and bargaining team members met to strategize and prepare for our fight for better services and good jobs as we approach the expiry of 50 contracts in March 2014.





## Newly-elected CAS Divisional Executive

(From left to right: Michelle Halle, Jennifer Smith, Jane Kaija, and Nicole Dennison-Macleod)



## New regulation misses the mark

Child welfare in the province of Ontario continues to undergo massive structural changes. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services has introduced new funding allocations to child protection agencies based on local demographic information. A new regulation (Reg. 70) now requires agencies to balance their books annually, sign accountability agreements, and report on performance indicators based on meeting ministry targets.

The impact of these policies in our workplaces has resulted in employee layoffs, wage freezes, and deteriorating working conditions. Funding cuts will eliminate programs and services which we cannot fund.

The government continues to ask us to do more with less and is creating further instability and uncertainty with ongoing mergers of smaller child welfare agencies with larger ones.

London CAS has now joined Waterloo, Hamilton and Chatham, agencies that are also experiencing layoffs and closures of programs and services. On Aug. 14 London held a rally outside their agency with the message "Prevention is Protection" and demanded a moratorium on layoffs and transitional funding.

The ministry finally delivered in late October when it announced that agencies that balance their budgets will receive transitional funding but for those agencies that do not balance their budgets, they will be subject to a financial review and potential audits.

On Nov. 26 your sector chair, Jane Kaija and OPSEU president, Smokey Thomas will meet with the Minister of Children and Youth Services, Teresa Piruzza. We will make the case as forcefully as possible that funding must support actual needs and that workload remains a systemic health and safety issue.

**Jane Kaija**, Sector Chair

## PDT worker safety project

As part of the 2011 Provincial Discussion Table Consensus Agreement, there was a commitment to review and develop a provincially-coordinated approach to worker safety in the sector. Phase one of the project has been approved by the ministry. OPSEU health and safety officer Terri Aversa and CAS Sector Chair Jane Kaija attended the first working meeting in late October. More news will be forthcoming shortly.

## Welcome to our newest unit

A big OPSEU welcome to Dufferin County Child and Family Services who became members of our union in a vote held Sept. 26. Thanks to all the hard work by the organizing unit. On Oct. 24, the new bargaining unit elected stewards and a bargaining team as photographed below.



(Left to right: Wendy Mobbs, Jeannette Main, Maryanne Breadner and Doug Mason)



## London-Middlesex Local 116 fight lay-offs

On Aug. 14 members of OPSEU Local 116 rallied at the London CAS against management's proposed layoff of 27 members.

More than 150 Local 116 members wore black in the work place that day and rallied at noon outside London Middlesex CAS. Demanding that the Liberal government implement a moratorium on layoffs and transitional funding for the sector, speakers emphasized again that "prevention is protection!"

The CAS Local was joined by representatives from the college faculty and support staff as well as all three OPSEU Region 1 executive board members, Peggy Sattler (NDP MPP for London West) and Teresa Armstrong, (NDP MPP for London Fanshawe).



## Nov. 20, National Child Day

On Nov. 20, child welfare workers wore black to work to send a message to government that we should be putting kids first and that the ministry is failing under the current conditions. The sector invites all units in the coming year to participate in the CAS campaign, "Prevention is Protection."





## SECTOR 5: COMMUNITY AGENCIES

### Message from the Chair

At the BPS conference our sector elected a new executive committee. Our new executive is now comprised of chair Amy Clements; Paula Charepe, vice chair; Lin McInnis, secretary-treasurer, and Kareen Marshall as member at large. Since then, and due to unforeseen events, Lin stepped down from the executive and we welcomed Rose Henriquez to fill her position.

The executive has put forward an ambitious work plan for the next two years and we are excited to share it with all our members in the sector. Over the next two months we will be contacting each unit to exchange information about what is happening in your work place and how we can assist you.

Our goal as a sector is to raise the profile of community services workers in Ontario through

increased awareness of the services we provide and to have those services recognized as being a vital and necessary public service.

We want to achieve better contracts and collective agreements through co-ordinated bargaining efforts. We want to ensure our labour voice is heard – and listened to – by all levels of governments and their ministries in response to legislative changes and/or system transformations and their resulting implementation.

We look forward to working with all other sectors in the CSDC over the next two years and we are excited to move forward with you.

**Amy Clements,**  
*Sector Chair*



## SECTOR 7: BPS CORRECTIONS

### Message from the Chair



The BPS corrections sector executive would like to welcome our newest elected member, Jennifer Smith, who comes from an open custody facility operated by Dawn Patrol Child and Youth Services in Hamilton. Congratulations are also extended to Joe Davies, David Farrugia

and James Grenier on being re-elected for our next two-year term. A special thanks to Maurice Guenard for all the hard work and effort during the last term.

Our newly-elected sector executive met for the first time in October and updated our work plan to reflect the requests and plans that were explored by delegates at this year's BPS conference. We are expecting to see many improvements across the province as we are planning another bargaining conference and we have also started to develop our lobbying plan in support of our top three concerns.

Our members want fairness. We are professionals working with some of Ontario's highest risk clients.

When we compare wages and standards across the country we see that our province is lacking ethics and transparency. Our goal is to raise standards, wages and make WSIB coverage mandatory. At this time we are developing a flyer that will help all members educate MPPs and the communities they represent about our concerns.

Our sector executive is committed to monitoring and exploring trends. We are approaching the end of some ministry reviews and are anticipating significant changes to occur.

Youth justice facilities are still waiting to see the effects of how the past and upcoming "tough on crime" bills will be implemented and coincide with the YCJA. Things do not seem to be adding up as our members dispute how trends and statistics around crime are being portrayed. We are witnessing an increase of violence and other crimes and, for whatever reason, charges are often not being laid.

On the bright side, the ministry has demonstrated a commitment to improving health and safety standards by installing "Sally Ports" at a couple transfer payment of facilities at a cost of almost \$1 million. We are still waiting for an explanation why the standard doesn't apply to the remaining secure units.

We hope that our members will get involved and I look forward to helping everyone make improvements in all of our workplaces.

**Jonathan Guider,**  
*Sector Chair*



From left to right. James Grenier, Jonathan Guider, Jennifer Smith, Joe Davies and David Farrugia



## Meet your new Child Treatment Sector Executive

At the BPS conference this past June in Toronto our sector elected a new executive for the term 2013-2015.

### **Deb Gordon / Chair**

Deb is a social worker for St. Clair Child and Youth Services Sarnia. She is a well-respected activist and a leader in advocating for the rights of members and educating the public on the need for community-based children's mental health services. Deb has been a longstanding member of the Child Treatment Sector executive serving in several capacities. As chair she willingly shares her knowledge and her passion resonates when she speaks on the issues that matter most to our members.

### **Rachelle Lacoste / Vice Chair**

Rachelle works as a clinician for the Child and Family Centre in Sudbury in the francophone day treatment program. She has been member-at-large and vice chair on the executive. Rachelle brings her passion for her work to the table and has developed strong local and provincial connections with allies that believe in quality children's mental health services.

### **Mike Quinn / Secretary / Treasurer**

Mike works as a community counselor for Children's Mental Health of Leeds and Grenville in Kemptville. He also works as a volunteer firefighter and is very active in his community. Mike has previously served as member-at-large and secretary/treasurer on the CTS executive. He brings his skills of foresight and planning to the CTS table thanks to the 'transferable skills' he brings us from his many community 'hats'.

### **Tannis McGinn / Member-at-Large**

Tannis works as a Community Counselor in the early year's program at Pathways for Children and Youth in Kingston. Tannis is always willing to take on extra tasks as needed and is our resident 'techie' who is helping develop our social media skills. Thanks Tannis!

### **Theresa McMillan / Member at Large**

Theresa is our newest executive member. She works as a child and youth worker at the Children's Centre in Thunder Bay. Theresa brings her knowledge and commitment to meeting the challenges our part-time members confront in the child treatment sector.

Your 2013-2015 executive aims to continue its lobbying for adequate funding and support for our members through system transformation that will be implemented over the next two years.



Left to right: Tannis McGinn, Mike Quinn, Rachelle Lacoste, Deb Gordon, Theresa McMillan

## Who is your work funded by?

In October the Royal Bank of Canada announced a five-year, \$100 million commitment to “improve the wellbeing of one million children and youth.” The goal of the RBC’s “Believe in Kids” pledge is to help one million children and youth people become healthier and happier by 2018.

Who could argue with that? This sort of announcement makes those of us who work in children’s mental health very excited! Imagine, “investment” in our services! We have long cried out to the ministry about chronic underfunding and targeted dollars for specific programs.

So why, then, are you reading about the RBC pledge, in your union CSD newsletter? The answer begs a host of larger questions.

Who should be funding after-school programs and 125 children’s mental health programs across Canada? Who decides which programs should receive the grants and which are in most need? Is RBC’s process transparent and equitable? What if your small community doesn’t have an RBC branch? Does this mean your kids are left out?

There are more questions. I wonder how and from where the largest bank in Canada is getting the information it needs to determine which programs the children’s mental health system is most in need.

Mostly, I wonder what will happens in five years when the bank’s commitment is finished? What’s next for the families and the workers who have provided the programming? Will there be post-pledge gaps when the money runs out?

Some of us also wonder about the “slippery slide” and what precedent this sets for corporations that fill funding responsibilities that have historically been the task of governments.

What are your views on this move by corporations to fund programs that governments won’t? Let us know. Send us an email. Share your views and we’ll publish a sample in the next issue of the newsletter

**Tannis McGinn,**  
Member-at-Large



## New Ministry Service Framework agreement 2013

### The times they are a changin’...

The draft Ministry of Children and Youth Services Child and Youth Mental Health Service Framework document was released earlier this year. This 53-page document outlines what will be “core services,” the creation of lead agencies in (yet to be identified) communities; processes that describe who will be eligible for services, and how to access them as well as the new roles and responsibilities of boards and agencies via accountability agreements.

To read the document, please visit:

**<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/topics/specialneeds/mentalhealth/ServiceFramework.pdf>**

Get familiar with this document as it will strongly shape the future affecting children, youth, their families, and our working lives.



## Made in the USA: Tim Hudak's plan to cut your wages

*It's the must see video of the season!*

This autumn, OPSEU produced and released "Made in the USA: Tim Hudak's plan to cut your wages. It's a 17-minute video that describes what labour law and rights might resemble if Tim Hudak and his Conservative party is ever elected to power at Queen's Park.

Not intended to be a horror show, the video nonetheless paints a very scary picture of what Hudak has in mind for working people if and when he ever manages to import U.S.-style "right-to-work" laws to our province.

OPSEU assigned former CBC journalist Bill Gillespie and a small film crew to three U.S. states that have adopted right-to-work legislation to investigate what impact those laws have had on unions and working people. Right-to-work laws, known as "free rider"

laws in union circles, allow individuals in unionized workplaces to receive the benefits of labour representation without paying the dues that make those benefits possible. In Canada, such laws would run counter to an historic 1946 ruling by Supreme Court Justice Ivan Rand.

The result of Gillespie's investigation reveals that union membership levels have plummeted, wages and benefits have been viciously slashed and that the strength of organized labour has been significantly diminished thanks to reduced dues-payments.

As a member of OPSEU you will have likely received a DVD copy of "Made in the USA" by now. It's well worth viewing to gain a glimpse of what Ontario will look like under a Tim Hudak regime.

### BARGAINING HIGHLIGHTS FALL 2013

## Currently at the table in 2013

The following sectors are in bargaining:

**Child Treatment ..... 3 units (1 bargaining, 1 conciliation, 1 arbitration)**

**Developmental Services ..... 3 units**

**Youth Justice ..... 1 unit (1 conciliation)**

**Children's Aid Societies ..... 1 unit (conciliation)**

**Community Services ..... 3 units (2 bargaining, 1 conciliation)**





Authorized for distribution

Warren (Smokey) Thomas  
OPSEU President



# Social Services News

Community Services Divisional Council

[www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org) [www.sefpo.org](http://www.sefpo.org)

