

# MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

## SEIU-West

### November – December, 2010

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As we come to the close of 2010, it's good to review the events over the last year so that we can celebrate our accomplishments and look at what we need to improve upon in the coming year.

#### **Bargaining:**

As many members are aware, we've settled agreements in bargaining units large and small. The following is a summary of where we are at with our Units:

1. These units are preparing for bargaining:
  - Meadow Lake Associates Clinic
  - Bentley Moose Jaw
  - Canadian Linen
  - Ina Grafton Gage Home
  - Holy Family Roman Catholic School Division
  - Metis Addiction Council of Saskatchewan (MACSI)
  - Town of Assiniboia
  - Town of Leader
  - Extendicare (Parkside, Elmview, Sunset, Moose Jaw, Preston)
  - Prince Albert Group Homes
  
2. These units have ratified:
  - SAHO/Regional Health Authorities
  - Elmwood Residences/Kinsmen Lodge (wage re-opener)
  - Elmwood Group Homes (wage re-opener)
  - Bentley Hillsdale
  
3. South East Cornerstone School Division is currently in bargaining. They are bringing together 3 separate collective agreements as a result of the amalgamation of school districts. This huge bargaining project has taken approximately 2 years.
  
4. Cheshire Homes had a tie vote on the wage re-opener and are going back to the table.

If you would like any further details about any of these bargaining tables, please don't hesitate to contact me at [barb.cape@seiu333.org](mailto:barb.cape@seiu333.org)

## **Community-Based Organizations: who are they and what do they do?**

This is one of our sectors that have been struggling for recognition for decades. They work in group homes, addiction counselling, daycares, women's shelters, crisis and mental health centers, as an example. The funding is never adequate, whether it is in relation to wages and operating costs, or programming support or actual facilities. And while our government pays lip-service to the valuable work being done in these sectors, there needs to be more than just "talk" – we need action on a renewed commitment to the workers and clients in this sector.

Along with CUPE and SGEU, our SEIU-West members participated in a conference focused on a combination of lobbying efforts for greater government funding and increased public awareness of the valuable work these members do.

## **Legal Challenges:**

SEIU-West submitted supporting documentation for the complaint filed by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress to the International Labour Organization (ILO) regarding the violation of our rights with the introduction of essential services legislation and the changes to the Trade Union Act. The ILO came down with a decision citing that these changes were done without proper consultation with workers and their unions which violates international treaties signed by our government. While this is a great decision, it is also useful for the Charter Challenge on changes to the Trade Union Act (TUA) and the essential services legislation.

The Court of Queen's Bench Chief Justice Laing made the decision in September that the SFL *et al*/case will be the lead case in the challenge on those two pieces of legislation (Bills 5 & 6). SEIU-West, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) had all filed legal challenges in the Court of Queen's Bench, along with the SFL. In an effort to streamline the process, the Chief Justice has selected one 'lead case' and we are intervening. Many groups have applied to be interveners, so it's likely we won't be able to go to trial until the fall of next year.

## **Political Action and Education:**

- The Labour Issues Campaign is now being rolled out to the units across the province. A Labour Issues Facilitator has been assigned to each unit and the Facilitator will be in touch with the Chairperson of each unit asking for their co-operation in setting up a unit meeting so as to provide the presentation to the membership. Topics to be presented include new & changed legislation, healthcare, education, Crown Corporations, privatization and public/private partnerships (P3's). We hope that you find the presentations informative and pass the materials on to others.
- The Political Action and Awareness Committee were supportive of the NDP candidate who ran in Saskatoon Northwest in October. They connected with our members who reside in this constituency and they urged Executive Board members and other members to volunteer time working on her campaign. While Jan Dyky did not win the race, support

for the NDP candidate did increase when compared with the 2007 election results in this constituency.

- This year has been a busy and exciting time for the education department. This June we began by training nine new facilitators. Together with our experienced facilitators, 14 in all, they delivered one of our new workshops entitled "Unit Leadership, Building Strength and Solidarity". The course was offered across the province with 76 participants. The course was designed to provide newly elected officers with some orientation to SEIU-West as well as learn the basics of representing union members.
- We have since offered another new workshop for our elected union representatives. The "Facing Management" training was completed by over 125 members across the province. This program includes tips for meeting with management and advice on how to represent members in the discipline/investigation process.
- In the spring of 2011, we look forward to the new workshop "Stewards in Action II-The Next Step". This is advanced training for those unit officers and stewards who have already completed the "Stewards in Action - Level I" training. Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a steward, the grievance process, and how to write a grievance.
- In the last year, we have offered extensive Shop Steward Level I training sessions across the province in an effort to provide up-to-date information to new shop stewards. There will be more Stewards in Action sessions forthcoming. If you have members who are interested, please ensure that you contact the union office closest to you to add their name to the wait-list.
- **Notification of workshops will be mailed to all unit chairpersons. It is important to register early so watch for the details.**
- Over the past year, the Education Committee has sent members to attend the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour Equity Conference, Spring School, Organizing Institute, Prairie School for Union Women and the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Conference. If you are interested in such future opportunities, please make sure you watch for information for next year's conferences.
- Four scholarships valued at up to \$750 each were awarded by the Scholarship Committee this fall. There was tremendous interest in the SEIU-West scholarship program. Congratulations to the winners of these scholarships and good luck in your studies.

### **Staffing Changes:**

- We are happy to welcome two new union reps: Terry Zahorski in our Saskatoon office and Kerry Barrett in our Moose Jaw office
- Tom Howe has moved into a new role as Member Action Coordinator and Rebecca Kram has moved into a Research Officer position
- Our new Organizing Director is Sean Senechal
- In January, Christine Miller will be joining us as Communications Co-ordinator.

## **Looking forward...**

- We are planning for our 'founding' convention as SEIU-West in 2011. We will present a constitution to the membership to be voted on and hold elections for President, Secretary-Treasurer and Vice-President, as well as the whole Executive Board.
- SEIU-West is planning a Member Political Organizer conference in the Spring of 2011 for those members who want to become more politically active. We must remember that political activism isn't just around election time, but it is 365 days a year – every year.
- We will be doing some renovations to the Moose Jaw office due to expanded capacity for staff reps and the Organizing Department. As a result, the union hall hasn't been available for use for our members or outside organizations. We are anticipating that we will have five new offices and two meeting rooms available once the renovations are done. SEIU-West continues to grow to meet our members' needs!
- Over the course of the next year, we will be reaching out to those units we haven't visited to attend your unit meetings. If you have a meeting coming up, feel free to contact Shelly Banks, Vice President, to arrange to have someone from the Executive Board attend.

On behalf of the staff and Executive Board of SEIU-West, I wish you all the best of the holiday season. Spend time with your family and friends and be good to yourselves.

In Solidarity,

Barbara Cape  
President  
SEIU-West