

All we want for Christmas is Fairness for Residents and Workers

Saskatoon – The newest members of Service Employees International Union West (SEIU-West) are calling on their employer, Revera Retirement Communities, to do right by the residents and staff at three of their sites; the Marion Chateau in Regina, the Bentley in Saskatoon and the Bentley in Yorkton. These members are attempting to negotiate their first collective agreement with their employer, and are seeking equal treatment, and benefits to those workers employed with the same employer at the Bentley Hillsdale in Regina and the Bentley Moose Jaw.

“All we want is what is fair for us and the residents,” said Rene Spelliscy, Unit Chair at Marion Chateau in Regina. “While Revera plans on rent increases, they aren’t willing to increase their investment in the people who provide the care and services the residents rely on. Workers at the Bentley Hillsdale, which is less than a mile away, part of the same company and do the same job with the same employer, get more compensation than we do. The employer wants to treat us differently. Why are we less valuable than their other employees? Why are our residents worth less?”

The employer is seeking to reduce all employees’ hours to a level that will disqualify them from all benefits such as vacations, sick leave and health benefits. “What we have here is a carrot being dangled that employees can never reach,” said Kerry Barrett, SEIU-West Negotiator. “They won’t be able to work enough hours in order to actually qualify and use the benefits.”

In response to this, the employees of all three facilities voted 98% in favour of job action last week in order to support their bargaining efforts.

The employer abruptly ended the last bargaining session at the end of October saying they had to go ‘get their marching orders’. Until this week, the Union was unable to obtain a commitment from the employer to return to the bargaining table. The employer has now agreed to meet with the Union’s representatives in January but have just recently filed an Unfair Labour Practice claiming that SEIU-West is bargaining in bad faith. “This is a response from the Employer to the strike vote. We are confident that bargaining can get back on track in the new year,” said Barrett.

“Resident care is the utmost importance to our members,” said Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West. “The workers in these facilities are all about increasing the quality of life for the residents. They not only prepare and serve meals, but provide housekeeping services, transport residents to and from appointments and other personal activities that keep them engaged in their communities. The residents value the staff, surely the employer should too.”

SEIU-West represents over 13,000 working people in the province of Saskatchewan including over 1,200 working in Nursing Homes, and Retirement Communities. Our members are your family, friends, and neighbours and are an important part of the services in your communities.

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