

March 2010

OSSTF/FEESO Status of Women Committee Update

1. Status of Women Outreach Workshops - Spring 2010

The upcoming round of Status of Women Outreach Workshops will take place this spring in Toronto on April 9-10, 2010 and in Thunder Bay on April 30-May 1. These workshops are aimed at bringing together members interested in being involved with women's issues at the local level, and offer an important opportunity to meet others, share ideas, provide training and build a network.

The memo sent to district/bargaining unit leaders is attached and includes information on which districts are involved in the SW Outreach workshops this year, as well as details on the location, agenda and expenses.

If you are interested, speak with your district/bargaining unit to see if spaces are available for you to come as one of the district representatives. Contact Margaret McPhail (mcphaim@osstf.on.ca) for more information.

2. Urgent funding crisis threatens community child care

Send a message to Premier McGuinty!



After the Harper government cancelled the federal-provincial agreement on childcare, it made a one-time payout to Ontario in 2006. The McGuinty government chose to spread out this money over four years and make it part of the core funding provided to municipalities for child care. Now that money is gone, but the provincial government has made no commitment to replace what amounts to \$63.5 million in annual funding.

Without this funding, municipalities will be forced to make cuts to subsidies and spaces. At a time when demand already exceeds capacity, it is expected that over 7500 subsidized childcare spaces will disappear. This will not only affect low income families, but threatens the financial viability and future of all not-for-profit, public child care centres and spaces. Already we have seen the City of Windsor decide to close its municipal centres despite strong public opposition while other communities are dipping into reserves as a stopgap measure to preserve services for the upcoming year.

OSSTF/FEESO takes the challenges facing municipal/community childcare seriously. We support creating a comprehensive early learning program (ELP) for all children 0-12 as set out in the Pascal Report but know full implementation will take time. Meanwhile, thousands of children and families still need affordable quality care. And any loss in these services will cause serious distress.

The Ontario budget is coming soon. Please take time to read the attached news articles and materials by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care's (OCBCC), then visit their website at www.childcareontario.org/ontariobudget to send your message to the Premier.



*Status of Women
Outreach Workshops 2010*

**Toronto
April 9-10, 2010**

Districts 12, 13, 16, 17, 19,
30, 34, 35 (WLUSA)

Registration by: March 23,
2010

Thunder Bay

April 30-May 1, 2010

District 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B
Registration by April 7, 2010

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3. Status of Women: Highlighting local initiatives



It has been an active and exciting year so far for both new and established local SW Committees. Please send us news about what you are up to so we can share it with others around the province.

Here are some highlights we have heard about over the winter (flyers are attached to make it easier for you to “steal” the idea).

- The first annual poster contest to mark Women’s History Month was a great success in **District 29**. One of the student posters is featured on the left. Students donated their cash prizes to local women’s shelters.
- In February, **District 23** held a well-received workshop for members on pregnancy-parental leaves. As well as information, each participant left with hand-knitted baby clothing.
- **District 27** organized a Valentine’s Day poster contest for students. The contest focused on ending violence against women, noting this romantic holiday is also the day when the most cases of domestic violence are reported.
- In **District 3**, the SWC is asking members to donate appropriate used clothing to their *Community Closet*. The items of business casual wear will go to help women who have been through hard times and are now preparing to re-enter the job market.

4. New OFL Video on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The Ontario Federation of Labour recently produced a new DVD *Climb the Hill* and provincial Status of Women is looking into obtaining copies for use by local SW committees.

A series of factsheets on sexual harassment has also been developed by the OFL. They cover topics such as definitions, union strategies, role of union reps, collective agreement provisions and common myths. The fact sheets can be downloaded from the OFL website:

http://ofl.ca/uploads/library/health_safety/2010_Sexual_Harassment_Issue_Sheets.pdf

Additional factsheets will be made available later this spring and cover the changes under Bill 168 which amended the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to cover violence and harassment in the workplace. This legislation comes into effect in June 2010.

Did you know?



The Ontario Federation of Labour kit *No Longer Silent* is a good source of information on addressing violence against women both in the workplace and the community. The kit includes a sample workplace safety evaluation form as well as collective agreement language. Kits are free and copies can be obtained through Margaret McPhail (mcphaim@osstf.on.ca) at provincial OSSSTF/FEESO.

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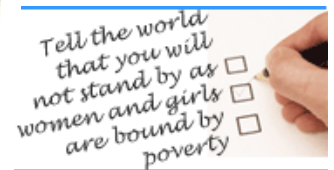
5. Campaign against Bill C-391

The Canadian Labour Congress continues its campaign to stop Bill C-391 which, if passed, would mean the dismantling of the long gun registry. Starting at the beginning of March, the campaign will focus lobbying efforts each week on two MPs who voted for the Bill last November, one Conservative and one Opposition member. If the votes of fourteen MPs can be changed, the Bill can be defeated. A list of identified MPs is attached with contact information for phoning, sending letters or emails, or meeting in person. You can also go to www.canadianlabour.ca/action-center/keep-our-communities-safe on the CLC website and send an email directly to the identified MPs each week.

The impetus for stricter gun laws and controls came out of the Montreal Massacre on December 6, 1989 and many women's groups as well as unions have now come out strongly against this attempt to scrap the long gun registry. Preventing violence against women will be the campaign theme for the first two weeks, which coincides with International Women's Day. Later themes centre on workplace safety, crime prevention and safer communities, safety and security for gun owners, and looking at car registration.

6. Care Canada

It is late notice, but members interested in making donations to Haitian Relief might consider *Care Canada* which emphasizes projects linked to girls and women. As the website says, their experience has shown them that empowering women and girls is the most effective way to provide long-term sustainable solutions and fight the root causes of poverty. They also have an IWD *Powerful Pledge* campaign underway to highlight the importance of women in the fight against poverty.



English link: www.care.ca/main/?en&IWDpledge

French link: www.care.ca/main/?es&IWDindex&PHPSESSID=05d3ac441b9a4e422ed86b0c226434c5

7. Check it out

The following items are also attached and may be of interest to you or your members.

- Media release on a new report *Reality Check*: which describes Canada's lagging performance in achieving women's equality. The report will be used at the *Beijing +15* meeting at the United Nations in early March. The full report can be accessed through the following links:

English: www.canadianlabour.ca/news-room/publications/reality-check-women-canada-and-beijing-declaration-and-platform-action-fiftee

French: <http://www.congresdutravail.ca/salle-des-nouvelles/publications/confrontation-avec-la-realite-les-femmes-au-canada-et-la-declaratio>

- Article by Antonia Zerbisias on Harper's announcement in January that he would "mobilize world leaders to save the lives of women and children around the world"
- Column "Harper runs roughshod over women's rights" posted on *rabble.ca* by Murray Dobbin
- BBC story on study showing that children think violence against women is justified if there was a reason for it.