Message from the Chair

Greetings Community Services Division Members!

Our Community DNA (Developing, Networking, Advocating) continues to build connections among our members and in our communities across the province! You will find in this edition of our CSD newsletter updates on what is happening in your Sectors, at Queen’s Park, on the public policy front as well as upcoming opportunities to support your OPSEU sisters and brothers across the province in their work to keep community services on the map.

On October 6 we will be voting for a new provincial government. Our participation in this election is more important than ever now that we know that Liberals have chosen to cut public services to fund corporate tax cuts, leaving the most vulnerable behind once again in their provincial budget.

The only significant investment commitment that was directed to vulnerable Ontarians was funding for children's mental health services. We expect the government to direct a significant portion of this funding to support the rebuilding of community capacity in this sector.

Members should be proud of the many years of lobbying and campaigning that the child treatment sector has pursued. The launch of a provincial CYMH coalition in March 2011 will keep this issue on the map. Now we must continue to fight for the sustainability of all our social services. Get election ready at the BPS, make sure your bargaining unit doesn’t miss out!

A big thank-you to those members who forwarded suggestions for our newsletter. The Name the Newsletter contest has been extended to Friday June 3rd. The winner will be announced at the BPS conference.

In Solidarity,

Deborah Gordon, CSDC Chair
Legislation News

Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions

In March the NDP supported “Walk the Talk” pressuring the government to act on the 23 recommendations made by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. The provincial Conservatives also put forward a motion for the government to act on the recommendations within 60 days and it passed. The recent budget announcement targets children’s mental health in the first phase of the 10 year mental health plan.

Health and social services sector chairs are undertaking an initiative to assess the impact of mental health issues throughout all OPSEU sectors. A “Mental Health Assessment Survey” will be going to all sector executives in April. The survey results will form the basis of a report that will be presented at the BPS conference in June. The final report will assist in development of a campaign jointly to advocate for mental health issues across sectors in the province.

Pensions TOPPS fund

This is a brand-new pension plan for OPSEU members working in the Broader Public Sector. TOPPS fund is a target benefit plan which is available to provide pensions for BPS members without pension coverage.

Please visit: www.opseu.org/benefits/toppsfund for features of the TOPPS fund. If you’re not currently a member of a registered pension plan email: toppsfund@opseu.org to have a presentation with your bargaining unit today.

WSIB

President Thomas wrote to the Minister of Labour on March 21, asking that the government include coverage in its WSIB funding review. Many of the members in social services do not qualify for coverage under WSIB guidelines.

Workers who are injured on the job and excluded from WSIB sometimes rely on social assistance and the health care system to get by. This should not be happening to workers who work with the most marginalized and vulnerable in care facilities, in developmental services and child treatment centres.

2011 Provincial Budget

More money for corporations to fund cuts to public services

The provincial budget left behind the most vulnerable groups in Ontario while putting a banker, Don Drummond, in charge of finding ways to further cut our public good to protect corporate greed.

Our work protects and strengthens our communities. Our work promotes a society that is caring and compassionate, that is what Ontario should stand for. And yet, Developmental Services and Children’s Aids Societies face restructuring, amalgamations, deficits and no recognition that clients deserve better.

Members working in childcare and community agencies saw no investments made to these vital services. With growing inequality, the government chose to keep ODSP and OW rates well below the poverty line, to freeze the minimum wage and not to give social assistance recipients $100 for a healthy food supplement.

The only nod that the government made to our public good in our fields of work was a new investment to Child Treatment agencies. This came after years of lobbying and raising the flag about the danger of leaving children and youth with mental health needs on waitlists for services. Let’s vote in October for the kind of Ontario that we believe in.

Your Sector Executive
Sector Updates  Developmental Services

New Quality Assurance Measures

I am sure that by now you have all viewed the DVD on Quality Assurance Measures for Developmental Services. Below are key areas for those members whose work falls under this the legislation.

Agencies must develop individual support plans for each person receiving supports and services. We will also be required to provide the individuals we support with information on healthy lifestyles including diet, nutrition, fitness, hygiene and personal safety.

Agencies must now provide adequate supervision to ensure the safety of everyone receiving support. New staff, board members and volunteers must provide a criminal reference check that includes a “vulnerable sector screen.” This screen takes considerably longer than a criminal reference check.

Violet Stringer, Vice-Chair

Central Bargaining News

Central Bargaining talks broke off in March at the Developmental Services Provincial Discussion Table. The parties realized that they had more work to do around funding for the sector.

The unions have some real concerns that COMSOC’s current funding mandate is unrealistic in maintaining the current level of service the sector delivers to its vulnerable clients.

The membership of this sector cannot afford to wait through another provincial election with more inaction. OPSEU will be mounting a campaign to urge the government to do the right thing and urgently improve services and funding to this sector. More details will follow through mobilizers and the sector executive at the caucus meeting at convention on April 6. Please make sure to attend.

Developmental Services Central Bargaining Team

Children’s Aid Societies

Pink Shirt Day Feb 23

The past few months have been very exciting times for the sector. There has been a great deal of activity in the field. The Pink shirt day was a huge success with Sudbury CAS leading the way with their flash mob presentation at the Local Mall. Way to go Jane and Team! Others hosted chili meals, wore their T-shirts, had donuts and coffee, challenged management to raise funds for local charities and special Kudoo’s to Michael for dying his hair pink!

Flash Mob

Students and staff from Lasalle Secondary School in Sudbury broke into dance alongside members of OPSEU, Child and Family Centre, Children's Community Network and Children's Aid Society to draw attention to bullying.
Children’s Aid Societies continued

Provincial Budget

The sector submitted a pre-budget submission which is posted on the OPSEU website, and a Sector Activity Plan for the next year. The Liberal budget did not include any funds for the CAS while some agencies still face deficits this year. It is unclear how the transformation and sustainability of the sector will be achieved if agencies aren’t funded to cover deficits.

There will be a caucus meeting at convention on the Thursday night and we hope to see everyone in attendance. It’s always great to hear updates from the locals and share stories, receive encouragement and gather information and resources.

Sustainability Commission

The Sector has been meeting with the Commission. They have been receptive and open to information sharing. Your local president and or OPSEU staff reps can provide you with details about the Commission. Please review the recommendations at: [http://www.sustainingchildwelfare.ca/](http://www.sustainingchildwelfare.ca/) and send a comment to the Commissioners through the contact us page.

Amalgamations

Amalgamations are proceeding as planned and we have heard from the Commission that there will be no recommendations for more mergers. In the coming year the organizing department and staff reps will work with units affected by mergers. OPSEU has lead the way in advocating for both member’s and clients in this sector. Our members can count on OPSEU’s vision and commitment to improving working conditions in our workplaces.

Provincial Discussion Table

The Sector will be in discussions at the PDT table your team members are Rick Pybus, Johanne Wyss-Huskinson and Brenda Mallott, the alternate to the table is Melody Lachance. We will have regular updates on the PDT. If you have any questions please contact any of the team members and or Tracy More the staff negotiator assigned. On a further note, the Sector would like to encourage all members to join the online google group for CAS members. You can do this by contacting Brenda Mallott and requesting to be added, Brenda’s email is on the CAS OPSEU website.

Child Treatment

The “Ontario Action Network for Child and Youth Mental Health” has been launched!

After almost two years of work the OAN-CYMH coalition was officially launched on March 10th 2011. OPSEU’s Board of Directors supported a motion in May 2010 to provide start up funds for this coalition and we are truly grateful for their endorsement and support. President Smokey Thomas signed the OAN-CYMH pledge endorsing his commitment to "Take a Stand" for Child and Youth Mental Health.

The coalition includes youth, parents, agencies, community partners, organized labour groups and anyone who is concerned about the state of Child and Youth Mental Health Services. Representation from the CTS Executive includes Pat McGregor (Vice Chair), Tracy More (Sector Negotiator) and Deb Gordon (Chair). Mike Quinn (CTS Member-At-Large) has been appointed as one of the Coalition’s trustees. Please check out the coalition website at [www.takingastand.ca](http://www.takingastand.ca) and spread the news via Facebook and Twitter!
Sector Updates continued

Child Treatment continued

NUPGE Mental Health Week

On March 8th Deb Gordon, CTS Chair attended a press conference at Queen’s Park along with President Smokey Thomas, Al Donaldson (Chair of Adult Mental Health Sector) and France Gelinas (NDP Health Critic) to demand that government “Walk the Talk”. Thousands of postcards were delivered to Premier McGuinty that day during question period.

CTS Coordinated Bargaining

22 CTS Locals are preparing for bargaining this year and we continue to ‘set the table’ through mobilizing the membership. Mobilizing kits have been mailed out to all those units in bargaining.

“Lost in Translation?”

The government has long proposed the idea that families do not wish to tell their story more than once. This has led to a policy direction that appears to be leading us towards a “single point access model” that will screen who will be eligible for CYMH services. Will this translate to better, more timely services with more time for direct service to clients or more bureaucracy?

It remains to be seen. Keep your ears and eyes open and contribute to the discussion and debate on the transformation ahead! Let’s ensure it turns out better than this cartoon!

Deb Gordon, Sector Chair

Corrections

Key issues in our sector continue to be job security, the unacceptable lack of wage parity and health and safety, made worse by the lack of adequate workplace insurance.

York Detention Center

Members of York Detention Center won a decision that awarded severance pay to casual employees. Unfortunately, they were not awarded successor rights. The employer’s recognition clause did not provide them with protection outside of the city of Toronto, when their jobs were moved to the Roy McMurtry Center in "Brampton, Ontario" in 2009.

Pay Equity

Sector 7 is reviewing their collective agreements to make sure pay equity payments and maintenance of plans are up to date as per pay equity legislation. If you have an issue with your plan please bring it to the attention of your staff rep and your sector executive members.
Corrections continued
2010 NUPGE Correctional working session

The NUPGE working session was a great opportunity to build solidarity and discuss common trends in corrections across the country. The BPS Corrections Executive Committee is striving to improve our sector’s attendance at the upcoming BPS Conference. The focus of our sector educational will be “Coordinated Bargaining,” a long-term goal for our sector. Coordinated bargaining will assist the 22 individual bargaining teams to develop similar strategies for demand setting across the province. Through negotiated bargaining we will achieve better recognition and have a greater chance of improving wages, benefits and Health and Safety standards.

Jonathon Guider, Sector Chair

Community Services
Sector 5 Inaugural Meeting at BPS conference

Sector 5 leadership outreach begins in May. A mobilizer will be contacting all sector 5 units to meet where possible with the leadership and to support participation in the upcoming BPS conference. The members in this sector face challenging working conditions. Many work shift work, juggle multiple jobs, and do not have access to pensions.

The Community Services Divisional Council recognizes the importance of strengthening the voice of sector 5 members and has mounted efforts to support member leadership development.

At the table in 2011

The following sectors will be in bargaining:

Child Treatment 22 units
Developmental Services 50 units
Youth Justice 16 units
Children’s Aid Societies 12 units
Community Agencies 31 units

Highlights:

Local 484, Ottawa Children’s Treatment Centre received arbitration award of 2.5% over two years.

Local 588, St. John Bosco Child Care Centre received employer paid registration to professional college (ECE), mat leave top up, one extra day off, increase to the childcare discount, and an extra step on grid after 5 years of ECE.

We take heart from the show of force of Wisconsin public sector workers who are fighting back against vicious attacks on unions.

It’s time to stand up against corporate greed.

Name this Newsletter Contest

Submit a name for this newsletter and your local could win a gift certificate for $100 from OPSEU enterprises (extended). Email your submission to: dagordon@rivernet.net by June 3 (include name & local).