



# NEWS@6

SUMMER 2021

*Marty's Message*

## A Worker-and People-Centred Economy

### Steelworkers,

With vaccination efforts ramping up across the country, people are feeling more positive about the future.

This hopefulness creates the perfect moment to consider what we want and strategize how to get there. COVID-19 has exposed how old systems have left working people and their families to suffer the brunt of the pandemic. These systems cannot be the way forward.

CEOs and the very wealthiest have done disturbingly well throughout the pandemic. The 20 wealthiest Canadians are nearly \$40 billion richer than they were before the pandemic hit. While relentlessly stuffing their pockets, the Galen Westons of our country actually cut pandemic pay for low-waged frontline staff.

***Workers are demonstrating incredible tenacity and strength. We are united in the idea that collectively, we deserve better.***

One term captures the situation: “pandemic profiteer” – a company or person generating massive, additional profits by exploiting the pandemic and its impact. Exploiting the very misery and prolonged suffering that workers and families have endured here and across the globe.

Steelworkers know all about pandemic profiteers – like bottle-packaging company Rexplas in Toronto, owned by Richards Packaging. Rexplas put Local 8300 members

out on strike in April after workers turned down a contract offer that failed to offer any wage increases in the first year.

Richards Packaging reported \$69 million in additional revenue due to the pandemic, and rewarded executives with big bonuses that increased compensation by 180%. Our members, mostly female and racialized workers, said no. With courage and solidarity, they fought against corporate greed and won a better contract.

In Sudbury, Local 6500 members – 2,500 strong – are standing up to multinational giant Vale’s attempt to cut health-care benefits, even as it rakes in giant profits. Members are saying no every day on the picket line.

Workers are demonstrating incredible tenacity and strength. We are united in the idea that collectively, we deserve better. We need a worker- and people-centred economy, and we’re determined to fight for it. Non-union workers are organizing to join a union. Union members are mobilizing and fighting for decent contracts. In this edition of News@6, you’ll read about some of these successes and how our Steelworkers are making a difference in our communities.

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# Health-Care Workers Launch “Seniors Deserve Better” Campaign

**THE USW DISTRICT 6 HEALTH CARE WORKERS COUNCIL** launched a new campaign to take action on staffing ratios and working conditions in long-term care homes. The “Seniors Deserve Better” campaign focuses on direct political and community action to improve conditions for workers and residents.

The long-term care sector has been in crisis for decades and the pandemic has exposed the short-staffing and deteriorating conditions inside many facilities.

The spotlight on the crisis was prime opportunity for the District 6 Health Care Workers Council to take action. The council partnered with the Institute for Change Leaders (ICL) for a series of organizing training sessions that were offered to members and

activists from the health care sector, as well as their friends and families.

A core group of activists have continued to meet regularly to plan this multifaceted campaign. A leading demand of the campaign is pay increases for long-term care workers – something that was introduced during the first few months of the pandemic but halted shortly after. The group is also calling for the establishment of a provincial law mandating long-term care homes provide a minimum of four hours of care per resident, per day.

“I can’t wait to get started and make real change in health care, because we certainly need it,” said District 6 Health Care Workers Council President Audra Nixon.

The campaign organizers even plan to invite legislators (supporting and

non-supporting) to spend a night in a long-term care facility to experience the conditions themselves.

“We expect to see a lot of support for this campaign,” said Staff Representative Richard Leblanc. “Everyone has seen the dire conditions, and even the operators of these facilities are frustrated with their low funding and inability to hire and retain workers.”

**If you are a long-term care worker in District 6 (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia or Ontario) and have a story to share or want to get involved, please visit [usw.ca/lcstory](https://usw.ca/lcstory). Sign up for campaign updates by texting\* ‘longtermcare’ to 32323. ■**

\*Standard message and data rates may apply. Visit [usw.ca/privacy](https://usw.ca/privacy) for full terms.



USW District 6 Health Care Workers Council, May 2019.

## Family and Community Education Fund Projects

### USW Local 9350

**Timmins, Ont.**

#### French Language Courses

A virtual French language course for NextGen members and Steelworker families helped participants learn and practice speaking French together, building confidence in using the language, with the aim of increasing solidarity with francophone Steelworkers and community members.

### USW Local 8782

**Nanticoke, Ont.**

#### Dream It, Be It, Career Support for Girls

A virtual community event encouraged teenaged girls to pursue their career goals and reach their full potential. Alongside other female mentors, Steelworker panelists introduced participants to topics like representation and confidence building, empowering teen girls to dream big for their futures.

#### Raising the Bar

An initiative introduced female Steelworkers to the Raising the Bar campaign. Participants shared feedback on their experiences at their job site and helped make a plan for rolling out the Raising the Bar campaign and similar efforts at their local union.

### USW Local 9239

**Belle River, Ont.**

#### Tackling Food Insecurity

A community engagement initiative invited Steelworkers to cook and serve meals to food insecure community members living in a tent city. Volunteers learned about activism, political action and members' rights efforts undertaken in the local union.

To learn more about the USW Community and Family Education Fund and how to apply for funding, visit [usw.ca/fcef](http://usw.ca/fcef).

# STEELWORKERS VOTE

## Coming Soon: More Opportunities for Steelworkers Vote Training

**IN ANTICIPATION OF A POSSIBLE SNAP FEDERAL ELECTION**, the USW offered a pilot version of a three-day online Steelworkers Vote course in June for activists to learn about politics, build their networks and volunteer for the NDP.

We'll be offering Steelworkers Vote online training again – both as an introductory course and at the campaigner level for those who have taken training previously.

Elections matter and Steelworker involvement can make a difference.

Find out first about future dates for Steelworkers Vote by registering your interest at [usw.ca/future-dates](http://usw.ca/future-dates).

### Marty's Message *continued from page 1*

Before signing off, I want to raise another issue that has been top of mind. Our union is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and communities and I encourage you to contact District 6 Education Co-ordinator Jackie Edwards to offer your members the Unionism on Turtle Island course, and to find out what else you can do.

Thank you for your efforts, your commitment and the work you do every day to make our union stronger.

In solidarity,



**Marty Warren**  
USW District 6 Director



# STAYING STRONG

Perhaps by the time you read this, the USW will have won



The USW Local 6500 members on the picket line in Sudbury with USW District 6 Director Marty Warren and USW National Director Ken Neumann. Photo: Teresa Brasch

## USW Local 6500 – Vale, Sudbury

USW members in Sudbury soundly rejected a second offer of contract concessions demanded by mining giant Vale, prompting the union to call on the company to commit to good-faith negotiations to settle a strike by 2,500 workers that began on June 1.

“The message from our members is clear: back off the concessions, get back to the table and negotiate a deal that puts people before profits – then the profits will flow,” said Local 6500 President Nick Larochelle.

## USW Local 7949 – Fenner Dunlop, Bracebridge, Ont.

Workers at mining supplier Fenner Dunlop were locked out of their jobs Feb. 12 after turning down an offer that would drastically change sick-day provisions. The 60 workers make conveyor belts for mining operations.

**Update:** All members are returning to work after successfully fighting off many concessions. The new agreement includes gains in wages and other areas. Congratulations!

Members of Local 7949 at Fenner Dunlop in Bracebridge, Ont., stood strong during the lockout.



**SHOW YOUR SUPPORT** Comment on posts on facebook

# NG in Struggle

*more of these labour fights. That's how solidarity works.*

## USW Local 8300 – Rexplas, Toronto

After steadfastly working through the pandemic, workers at bottle-packaging company Rexplas rejected the company's final offer that opened with 0%. The 35 members, a majority of whom are racialized women, work in quality control, packaging and shipping, and have worked for the company from five to 35 years. Rexplas and parent company Richards Packaging are pandemic profiteers with windfall revenues during COVID-19.

**Update:** USW Local 8300 members are back at work as of June 28 after ratifying a four-year agreement with wage increases of 5% over the term plus a signing bonus. Congratulations!



Members of Local 8300 went on strike against pandemic profiteer Rexplas.



## USW Local 2020 – First Contract Achieved at Elements Flamboro Casino, Dundas, Ont.

Unionized security officers at Elements Casino Flamboro fought back concessions like cuts to paid sick leave and weakened working conditions, winning 2% annual wage increases over four years, retroactive to 2020. This victory was achieved through first-contract arbitration after the employer locked out the workers in February 2021. At press time, the casino was still closed due to the pandemic, but workers are expected to return to work in late July.

Members of Local 2020 at Elements Casino Flamboro in Dundas, Ont., beat back concessions.

## Local 3950-74 – NRT (National Rubber Technologies), Toronto

Steelworkers were unfairly locked out by NRT on July 1. The 47 workers recycle scrap rubber (tires) into numerous accessories for the auto industry (mud flaps, helmet parts, auto interiors). The company's 63 concessionary demands include forced overtime, leaves of absence instead of vacation and other attacks on hard-won working conditions. The workers believe the company is moving operations to the U.S. and has locked out the workers to evade wind-up responsibilities such as severance pay. The union is pushing to return to the table to bargain a fair contract.

[www.uswdistrict6.com/USWDistrict6](https://www.uswdistrict6.com/USWDistrict6) so our members can see your support.

# Groundbreaking Activism

**Steelworkers win justice for workers suffering life-changing injuries and illnesses.**

**ON APRIL 20 THIS YEAR**, Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) announced a policy change dramatically affecting the lives of workers suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) who have been denied adequate compensation.

The announcement received no fanfare, nor did the union representatives – in particular Steelworkers activists – who spent years fighting for greater compensation for these workers.

"COPD is a debilitating respiratory disease which has been the greatest contributor of work-related fatalities within our retired membership this past decade," said J.P. Mrochek, the WSIB Worker Representative for USW Local 6500 in Sudbury.

"April 20, 2021, was a good day for injured workers in Ontario," Mrochek said of the WSIB announcement.

"This has been a decades-long struggle and credit goes out to all the activists who contributed to this victory. They are not mentioned in any official report, but they are exceptional people and deserve to be recognized."

Steelworkers who worked tirelessly on the issue over the years included activists from USW Locals 6500 and 2020 in Sudbury, representing mining and other industrial workers, and Local

2251 in Sault Ste. Marie, representing steel mill workers.

The battle dates back to the 1990s at least. Compensation boards routinely denied or reduced the level of various benefits to COPD sufferers – or to the surviving families of workers who died from the disease – if those workers had a history of smoking.

This so-called "smoking offset" policy was repeatedly challenged in appeals tribunals and in the courts by Steelworkers and other groups, including the Office of the Worker Adviser (OWA), the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) and the Industrial Accident Victims' Group of Ontario (IAVGO).

Relying on a growing body of overwhelming evidence from scientific research that countered the "smoking offset" policy, Steelworkers and others won numerous appeals and rulings over the years until, finally, the WSIB announced its policy change this spring.

The COPD victory is one of many successes realized by Steelworkers who continue to break new ground in seeking justice for workers who have suffered life-changing injuries and illnesses. Notable examples include:

## USW Local 2251 Wins Appeal on Work-Related Cancers

In March of this year, Andy Ladouceur, WSIB Worker Representative for USW Local 2251 at Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., won an appeal at the compensation board recognizing a member's mouth cancer as a work-related disease.

The successful appeal had its roots in work done by Local 2251 over many years, including the launch of occupational disease intake clinics in 2008 in response to WSIB denials of numerous skin cancer claims filed by members.

Ladouceur said the March decision is significant in that it not only helps the affected member and his family, but could also lead to recognition of many more cases of work-related cancers.

## Justice for Foundry, Rubber and Mining Workers

Last year, USW Local 2020 WSIB representative Jessica Montgomery began pursuing the compensation claim of a former foundry worker in Sudbury, Ont. Montgomery soon began to uncover many other cases of former employees of Neelon Casting, now closed, whose occupational disease claims were denied.

After months of work, including intake clinics organized by the union, Local 2020 has registered well over 120 claims – and counting – with the WSIB on behalf of former workers or surviving family members.

Steelworkers also have taken leading roles in two other major initiatives supporting workers and families affected by occupational illnesses and diseases – the Ontario Rubber Workers Project ([www.rubberworkersproject.ca](http://www.rubberworkersproject.ca)) and the McIntyre Powder Project ([www.mcintyreproject.com](http://www.mcintyreproject.com)).



## Injured Workers Assistance Program

Over the past year, the District 6 Injured Workers Assistance Program has won more than two dozen compensation appeals for USW members.

The program was created to provide expert representation to members at all levels of the compensation process, including return-to-work meetings, mediation, appeals and tribunals. To qualify for assistance, a local must enrol in the program at a cost of only 50 cents per member, per month. Enrol your local today! [usw.ca/iwap](http://usw.ca/iwap)

### Local 9548 President Wins Health and Safety Award

At a ceremony in May, USW Local 9548 President Cody Alexander received the annual Health and Safety Award presented by the Sault Ste. Marie and District Labour Council and the Workers Health and Safety Centre in Ontario.

Cody, whose local represents workers at the Tenaris Algoma Tubes steel mill, said the award reflects a commitment to safety from the membership and the local's health and safety team which includes activists Hans De Feyter, Eugene Caputo, Frank Cappelli, Lucas Bordin, Robin Coghill, Andrew Walker, David Cloutier and Eric Brown.



# BARGAINING SUCCESSES



## First Contract for 520 New Steelworkers at Voyant Beauty

More than 14 months after deciding to form a union and after overcoming challenges linked to a corporate ownership change, 520 Steelworkers employed by Voyant Beauty Holdings in Toronto ratified their first collective agreement in late March.

Chief among the gains in the three-year contract is the resolution of significant discrepancies in wage rates that had long existed within the workforce. As a result, total wage increases over the term will range from a minimum of 9% to 27% for some members. The agreement also lowers members' premiums for benefits coverage, improves shift duration times, shifts premiums and vision care, and codifies various terms and conditions of employment.

When the workers first voted to join the Steelworkers last year, they were employed by KIK Custom Products. Their attempts to negotiate a first collective agreement were delayed by the purchase of KIK's Toronto operations by Voyant Beauty Holdings, a drawn-out transaction which was completed in August 2020.

The Voyant workers produce and package beauty and personal care products as well as other products including hand sanitizers. Job classes include material handlers, packers, stackers, compounders, line mechanics, maintenance workers and laboratory employees including microbiologists. Given the size of the bargaining unit, a new USW local union – Local 9560 – was created to represent the Voyant Beauty workers.



## Foundry workers reach three-year deal after eight-week strike

An eight-week strike by more than 300 workers at the Magellan Aerospace foundry near Renfrew, Ont., led to a three-year collective agreement with wage, benefit and pension improvements. The members of Local 4820, who produce magnesium and aluminum castings, will receive total wage increases of 4.6%, pension and benefit gains, as well improved working conditions including hours-of-work provisions and other protections.



## Labrador mining camp workers achieve first contract

Food and accommodation workers providing services at a fly-in mining camp and mining company residences in Labrador West made significant gains in their first collective agreement. The Local 6185-11 members, employees of a subsidiary of U.S.-based Aramark, include cooks, housekeeping, maintenance, front desk and clerical workers. The three-year contract provides total wage increases of 8.5%, improvements on issues including paid sick leave; benefits; vacations; parental, bereavement and domestic violence leave; contracting out; and wage and benefit protection from missed shifts due to weather emergencies.



## Credit union workers strengthen defined-benefit pension

A 39-month agreement between Local 7129 members and Your Neighbourhood Credit Union Limited in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., provides total wage increases of 5.5% and improves the workers' defined-benefit pension plan. Contract language was also strengthened on issues including union security, vacation booking and union leave.



## Auto product manufacturers achieve significant gains

More than 300 members of Local 889L, working at CPK Interiors Canada in Port Hope, Ont., ratified a strong contract featuring a 3.5% wage increase and a \$4,000 lump-sum payment in the first year, followed by a payment of \$3,000 in the second year and a 2% wage increase and \$1,250 lump-sum payment in the third year. The agreement also improves shift premiums, bereavement leave, dental benefits, vision care and life insurance. CPK manufactures materials and components for automobile interiors.



## Interval House staff win first contract after two-week strike

Counsellors and frontline staff providing services to women and children escaping domestic violence in Brockville, Ont., won their first collective agreement following a two-week strike. The employees of Leeds and Grenville Interval House, all of whom are women, joined the USW in early 2020. Their first contract, a two-year deal, includes wage increases of 1% a year, as per the provincial government's cap on collective agreements in the broader public sector, and codifies benefits in the agreement's language.



# BARGAINING SUCCESSES



## Sawmill workers cut a good deal

Local 9260 members at Midway Lumber in Thessalon, Ont., negotiated a five-year agreement with total wage hikes of 7.75%. Aside from the general wage increases, base hourly rates were raised by \$2 for mechanics and by \$1 for third- and fourth-class boiler house operators. The contract also improves the bonus plan, bereavement leave, the boot allowance, benefits and union orientation language.



## Retirement home workers negotiate pandemic bonus

A pandemic-related recognition bonus is among provisions of a 38-month agreement negotiated by Local 8748-11 members working at Great Northern Retirement Home in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. The workers, including cooks, servers, nurses, and utility and housekeeping employees, will also receive total wage increases of 6.25%.



## Pressure vessel manufacturing workers secure good contract

Local 003-09 members employed by Chemetics Inc. in Pickering, Ont., negotiated a three-year agreement that will see wages rise 2.75% annually, for a total increase of 8.25%. The contract also improves provisions on paid sick days, shift premiums and bereavement leave. Members, who include welders, grinders, assemblers, machinists, drillers, plasma/laser cutters and maintenance workers, manufacture pressure vessels for the oil and gas industry.



## Hardwood workers solidify job security, seniority rights

Local 8748-20 members employed at the Boniferro Mill Works sawmill in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., negotiated a five-year contract that strengthens job security and seniority rights. The workers, who produce high-quality hardwood for commercial manufacturers, will receive wage increases ranging from 1% to 5% in the first year, followed by total increases of 6.5% in the following four years. Other gains include improved pensions and benefits and employer contributions to the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.



## Strong second contract for Timmins industrial workers

After reaching a good first contract in 2019, Local 7580 members employed by INEOS Calabrian Corporation in Timmins, Ont., made further gains with their second agreement, providing total wage increases of 6.5% over four years as well as improvements in pensions, floating days off, statutory holiday time and service bonuses. Existing hourly wage rates are between \$43.51 and \$44.78. The workers produce sulfur dioxide used in mining and other industrial applications.



## Steel mill workers make gains in four-year deal

Workers at Stelcrete (Salit Steel) operations in Welland, Ont., reached a four-year agreement with 50-cent hourly wage hikes each year, for a total increase of \$2 per hour over the term. The workers, who produce rebar and structural steel, also improved their shift premiums, vacations, bereavement leave and vision care.



## Newfoundland security officers lock down wage gains

Members of Local 1976 unit 551, working as security officers in Port Aux Basque, N.L., achieved a two-year collective agreement with wage gains of 4%. The security officers, employed by the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, receive a 3% wage increase in the contract's first year, followed by 1% in the second year.



## Retirement home workers improve wages, language

Employees of the Chartwell Collegiate Heights Retirement Home in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., members of Local 8748-15, negotiated a two-year contract that increases wages by a total of 5%. The agreement also improves shift premiums as well as bereavement leave and life insurance provisions.



Members attended a three-day online Steelworkers Vote course in June.

# Online Education

**USW EDUCATION IS BACK IN ACTION ONLINE** after in-person courses were cancelled last year due to the pandemic. USW District 6 had 11 online courses scheduled in June, in addition to 20 online courses already completed.

“We’re focusing on ‘tools’ courses,” said Jackie Edwards, District 6 Education

Co-ordinator. “We’re offering online courses for shop stewards, officers and financial officers and health and safety training. People need to learn the basic skills to do their jobs as union activists.”

Course material was redeveloped to suit the online format and keep content engaging for participants.

Going online opens up courses

to participants who find it hard to attend in-person if they live and work in remote locations or have family commitments that make it difficult to be away from home.

To find out more about USW Education, visit [usw.ca/education](https://usw.ca/education) or reach out to your steward, officers or USW staff representative. ■

# Keeping Health and Safety Front and Centre

**THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE** of workers’ health and safety in an unprecedented way. With vaccination rates on the rise and the provinces gradually reopening, District 6 Health and Safety Coordinator Sylvia Boyce offers the following advice to sustain this momentum:

## Maintain COVID-19 Guidelines

Workplaces can become hot spots for transmission, so protocols like handwashing, use of masks and regular cleaning and disinfection should continue.

## Be Mindful of the “3Cs”

Reduce risk by minimizing time spent in:

- Confined spaces
- Crowded places
- Close contact

## Evaluate Heat Stress Programs

Summer temperatures can make working with masks uncomfortable. Joint Health and Safety Committees should assess the heat stress programs.

Keep in mind that additional considerations such as decreasing intensity of work and providing frequent water and cooling breaks are recommended.

For help with any health and safety issues, please contact Sylvia Boyce at [sboyce@usw.ca](mailto:sboyce@usw.ca). ■



# Update – District 6 Strike Fund

**THE DISTRICT 6 STRIKE ASSISTANCE FUND** is a Steelworkers success story! What began as “the power in point-one (0.1%)” has grown to an almost \$30-million fund.

The fund was established to build our union’s power – so employers would know the USW has the resources to support our members on strike or lockout.

For an additional 0.1% in dues, locals that join the fund have access to additional strike pay after three weeks – for those who take part in picket duty. There is also a benefit fund that can help with emergency drug or dental costs.

Since the District 6 Strike Fund was set up, 80% of USW locals have signed on.

As the fund has grown, so has the amount paid out. The fund now pays \$100 a week in addition to strike pay from the USW International Strike and Defense Fund. Any new locals welcomed into USW District 6 are automatically signed up.

The fund is overseen by a committee of USW staff and members from participating locals.

**Not yet part of the D6 Strike Fund?** Ask your USW Staff Representative how to join. ■



Sudbury MPP and Steelworker Jamie West joined members of USW Local 6500 on the picket line in Sudbury, Ont.

## USW Demands Safety Review Following Hamilton Workplace Deaths

**USW DISTRICT 6 DIRECTOR MARTY WARREN** has called for government intervention at Hamilton manufacturer National Steel Car following the deaths of two Steelworkers.

Workplace fatalities claimed the lives of Fraser Cowan, 51, on Sept. 2, 2020, and Collin Grayley, 35, on April 23, 2021. The USW wants Ontario’s labour ministry to review the company’s overall safety program, in addition to

the standard investigations the ministry is conducting into each fatality.

“Two fatalities within eight months is deeply alarming. I am calling on the Ministry of Labour to conduct an immediate and thorough review of the onsite health and safety program,” Warren said.

“While both deaths are being investigated by the ministry, the USW will conduct our own investigation,

make recommendations and continue our goal to ensure all workers can return safely to their families at the end of their shifts.”

Warren also called on Ontario’s attorney general to direct law enforcement and Crown prosecutors to take steps to ensure greater enforcement of laws aimed at holding employers criminally accountable for workplace deaths and injuries. ■

# USW Cares



Photo (left to right): Danielle MacNeil, Maison Baldwin House Representative with USW Local 9211 Women's Committee representatives Dyana McMahon, Sue Desbiens, Carole Ayotte, and Lillian Ryner.

## Steelworkers Make Great Neighbours

### THANKS TO THE WORK OF THE USW LOCAL 9211

Women's Committee, Maison Baldwin House, a women's shelter in Cornwall, Ont., received a \$2,000 donation from the Steelworkers last December.

The Women of Steel contribution was divided into a \$1,000 donation to Maison Baldwin House, and 20 gift cards of \$50 for each of the women who were staying at the shelter at the time of the donation.

Maison Baldwin House assists women and their children in the transition from violent and abusive circumstances to a safe and secure environment by providing safe shelter and services.

The organization, like our union, works proactively to end violence against women in our society.

Maison Baldwin House said the Women's Committee's donation will go a long way, especially after the holiday season which brings extra costs. ■

## We want to hear from you!

Every day, Steelworkers contribute in the communities we live in. We want to know how you and/or your local union are stepping up to lend a helping hand to your neighbours. Tell us at [usw.ca/uswcares](https://usw.ca/uswcares) so your story can be shared on our social media channels or in the next issue of **News@6!**

## Record-breaking Donations from Sault Ste. Marie Steelworkers

**IN 2020, UNITED STEELWORKERS MEMBERS** from a number of local unions in Sault Ste. Marie tallied \$230,000 in donations to local community organizations in the Algoma region.

Beneficiaries included the Algoma Residential Community Hospice (ARCH), Royal Canadian Legion Branch 25, St. Vincent Place and Women in Crisis and breakfast programs at the Algoma District School Board and Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board.

Sault Ste. Marie Steelworkers have partnered with these organizations over the years, and in addition to donations, members volunteer during events and for other needs. Earlier this year, the Sault Ste. Marie USW was named *ARCH's Community Partner Hospice Hero*.

# Solidarity in Hard Times

Calling all local unions! Join Steelworkers from across the country for a new series of one-day online conferences – **Solidarity in Hard Times.**

**Registration is free!**

**July 21:** Staying Healthy and Safe

**September 15:** A Fair and Equitable Recovery

\*New date

**November 10:** Solidarity Looks Like This

Find out more at [usw.ca](https://usw.ca)





Members of USW Local 9329, taken outside of the long term care home they work at. They are wearing matching t-shirts with a pink heart with a “We love our residents” caption on top.

## USW Local 9329 is District 6’s 2021 USW Jefferson Awards Champion

**MEMBERS OF USW LOCAL 9329** work in a long-term care home in southwestern Ontario. The pandemic hit long-term care homes across Ontario hard and theirs wasn’t spared. They had two bad outbreaks in the beginning of the pandemic and again earlier this year. But members responded with empathy, courage and strength.

The support that Steelworkers showed the residents of the home during these difficult periods was unmatched. They spent breaks and meals helping residents video chat with their families. They came in early or stayed late as they sat with scared and lonely patients in the last moments of their lives so they wouldn’t be alone. They gave up time with their families and loved ones in order to work longer or double shifts and consecutive days in a row.

Although their hands were full, local union members also continued to contribute to their community. They held a food drive for the local pantry, adopted a family for Christmas and provided other long-term care facilities with food donations for staff.

“We saw and did things we never thought we would have to. Our members stood together and supported each other through tears and struggles. I am very proud of this team!” said Lisa Cook, USW Local 9329 President.

# Workers Choose USW to Improve Working and Living Standards

**AFTER JOINING THE UNITED STEELWORKERS UNION** in April, more than 160 workers at Atlantic Gold's Touquoy Mine in Moose River, N.S., started preparing for negotiations on their first collective agreement in June.

Health and safety, working conditions and wage rates were expected to be major issues in bargaining. Atlantic Gold is a subsidiary of an Australian gold mining company, St Barbara Ltd.

"These workers are generating healthy profits for their employer, yet their wages and working conditions are significantly inferior than the standards in the mining sector, in Atlantic Canada and at the St Barbara operations in Australia," said USW District 6 Director Marty Warren.

Workers in virtually every economic sector are joining the Steelworkers to improve their working and living standards. Other groups of new USW members in District 6 include:

## University of Guelph Post-Doctoral Scholars

In April, some 150 post-doctoral scholars at the University of Guelph voted 91% in favour of joining the USW, culminating an 18-month grassroots campaign to improve their working conditions. The "postdocs" are academic professionals who hold a PhD but who have not attained a permanent or tenure-track position. Many are subjected to continual contract positions, with sub-standard working conditions that often don't include benefits and other essential supports.

## Northern Ontario School Bus Drivers

Approximately 200 school bus drivers in Sudbury and Sturgeon Falls, Ont., joined the Steelworkers to address concerns over health and safety, wages and benefits. Workers also hope to improve working conditions to make the job more attractive to new workers to address a longstanding shortage of drivers. The workers are employed by Northway Bus Lines and Alouette Bus Lines, which are owned by the same parent company.

## University of Toronto Residence Assistants

Residence assistants, commonly known as residence 'dons,' at the University of Toronto Chestnut residence recently voted to join the USW. They join another group of U of T dons that joined a few months earlier. Residence dons act as a resource for students in residences and are responsible for community development, social/educational programming, crisis intervention, referrals, policy enforcement and residents' overall well-being.

## Steelworkers Happy, Relieved to Receive COVID-19 Vaccines

**HEALTH CARE WORKERS HAVE BEEN ON THE FRONTLINES** of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have borne the brunt of the virus from the beginning of the pandemic to today and have witnessed many of its tragic moments.

When news came that vaccines to protect against COVID-19 had been approved for use, a collective relief came over many of us.

Earlier this year, as vaccination efforts across the country ramped up, Steelworkers working in health care shared what being vaccinated has meant for them.

"If I ever wanted to see my family again safely, getting vaccinated would help speed that up," said Janis Trotman, a Personal Support Worker (PSW) at a retirement residence in Toronto and a

member of USW Local 8300.

Visit [usw.to/gottheshot](https://usw.to/gottheshot) to read the vaccination stories of USW members working in health care.

Please note: Vaccination is voluntary. Speak with your health professional about any serious allergies or other health conditions you may have before you receive a vaccine. ■





**WORKPLACES ARE SAFER FOR EVERYONE**, when we take women into account.

The **Raising the Bar** campaign supports women and health and safety committees in addressing the hazards and health issues women workers face. There's an action guide, inspection checklist and presentation package.

It's not every day employers ask to learn more about a union initiative. When human resources leaders from the HR Strategy Council reached out, District 6 Health, Safety and Environment Co-ordinator Sylvia Boyce offered a webinar, along with Dorothy Wigmore, occupational hygienist, ergonomist and action guide contributor.

"It was an opportunity to share information about women's work, health and safety and profile our union's efforts on this important issue," said Boyce.

At a District 6 Women's Committee online event, 80 participants from Ontario and the Atlantic provinces discussed issues they've dealt with in steel mills, mining, long-term care, manufacturing and telecommunications.

"The women thought the new guide was an amazing tool that would help them deal with issues in the future," said Janet Moffat, Women's Committee Co-Chair. ■

[usw.ca/raisethebar](http://usw.ca/raisethebar)



Members of USW Local 6500 and Nickel Belt NDP MPP France Gélinas take action on the picket line in Sudbury, Ont

## Take Action! Sudbury Deserves Better from Vale

**SEND A MESSAGE TO LET VALE** management know you support the 2,500 members of USW Local 6500 who are on strike for health benefits and a fair agreement.

While small businesses across Greater Sudbury have struggled throughout

the pandemic, mining giant Vale has taken \$67.7 million from Canadian taxpayers in pandemic wage subsidies that it doesn't even need.

Vale wants to take even more from our community, by cutting vital health benefits that Sudbury workers and

retirees depend on.

Vale must end its attack on health benefits and negotiate an agreement that is good for workers, retirees, families and the local economy.

Send your message: [usw.to/vale](http://usw.to/vale) ■





Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath joins NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh at a campaign stop in 2019.

## Jagmeet Singh Sits Down with News@6

**JAGMEET SINGH IS THE LEADER** of the federal NDP and former Ontario NDP Deputy Leader

**Starting with election speculation, is the NDP ready for a federal election?**

**JS:** If it comes to that, yes, we're ready. But this isn't about us.

People across this country are still struggling in this pandemic. If Justin Trudeau calls an early election, it will be because he thinks it's good for him and his party. It will show he was never serious about delivering the help he promised in the budget, like child care or raising the minimum wage.

**From CERB to the wage subsidy, the government has taken a lot of the NDP's ideas during the pandemic, so why are some of these programs still not working?**

**JS:** What's become obvious over the last six years is that Justin Trudeau likes to look like he cares, but he isn't serious about his promises and he refuses to put the needs of working people ahead of his wealthy and corporate friends.

With the wage subsidy, for example, he refused to listen to us and make sure it actually protected jobs. He let corporations take the money, hand out big CEO bonuses, and then fire their workers or push them out onto the picket line. It's not acceptable.

**What about Erin O'Toole?**

**JS:** Again, Erin O'Toole says he wants to be a friend to workers but he's no friend to workers when he votes against paid sick leave and pharmacare or makes it harder to join a union. And don't forget, he personally proposed a bill that would have made it even harder to protect worker's pensions.

**We can't let you go without asking about your old stomping grounds at Queen's Park. What do you think about Doug Ford's COVID response?**

**JS:** Like we're seeing in Ottawa, Doug Ford keeps putting his friends first. And he's going to extreme lengths – not for people – but to ram through unconstitutional changes to election law so he can silence those who don't agree with him ... I can't help but think about how much better off people would be with Andrea Horwath as Premier. ■