

NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S

UPDATE



FEBRUARY 2020

Making Our Case – and Winning



STEELWORKERS

ushered in the new year with a flurry of successes on multiple fronts, from trade cases to

collective bargaining to organizing, demonstrating the effectiveness of our union's activism, particularly when it is led by rank-and-file members.

From health care, to the service sector to manufacturing, USW activists have negotiated industry-leading collective agreements while also bringing hundreds of new members into our union.

Recent organizing victories at workplaces across the country include more than 500 workers at manufacturing giant KIK Custom Products in Toronto voting to join the USW.

On the trade front, thanks to compelling evidence presented by USW members, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT) issued a key ruling defending aluminum extrusion producers and workers across Canada.

Following a strong, co-ordinated case put forward by Steelworkers' leadership and local activists, the CITT renewed measures to combat dumping of subsidized Chinese aluminum into the Canadian market.

Evidence of the real threats to the livelihoods of Canadian workers was provided by grassroots USW leaders – Florian Pellerin of Local 7046 (Laval, Que.), Cheryl Craig of Local 9042-54 (Mississauga, Ont.) and Ryan Strath of Local 6034 (Calgary).

Over the last two years, since Steelworkers won the right to participate in such cases, the majority of CITT rulings have gone in our union's favour.

Concerns Remain Over 'Improved' NAFTA

Steelworkers led the way in winning the fight to remove harmful U.S. tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum. And when Canada's Liberal government agreed to a new NAFTA on U.S. President Donald Trump's terms, our union again fought back.

After relentless efforts by the USW, our American labour allies and U.S. Democrats, a revised Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) was reached, with improvements in areas including labour rights and environmental protections.

However, the new deal remains flawed, with the Canadian government failing to insist on stronger North American rules of origin for steel and particularly for aluminum used in the auto industry – an unacceptable betrayal.

Going forward, Steelworkers activists will continue to organize the unorganized. We will continue to negotiate the best-possible agreements for our members. And we will continue to push the Canadian government to join us in our commitment defend workers in steel, aluminum and all sectors affected by unfair trade.

In solidarity,

Ken Neumann
National Director

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Pushing the Federal Government in 2020



Lobbying for Steelworkers and the steel sector on Parliament Hill: USW representatives John Catto, USW Local 6571 (left) and Mark Rowlinson, Assistant to the USW National Director (second from right), along with Ben Zurbrigg, Alta Steel (second from left), Francois Perras, ArcelorMittal (centre) and Roger Paiva, Gerdau Canada (right).

BECAUSE OF THE ELECTION, the federal Liberals now have a minority government. While they don't have a majority of seats, they have any of three parties to support them on any issue or vote: Conservatives, New Democrats and the Bloc Québécois. No doubt they will use each of them to get results they want.

While not a big change, it is an opportunity for the USW to continue pushing for the many pro-worker issues needed at the federal level.

As National Director Ken Neumann says, "We cannot take anything for granted and we will be putting pressure on this government to do the right thing on a number of fronts."

Lobbying on bankruptcy laws will continue

Over the last year and a half, USW members from across Canada spent a total of six weeks on Parliament Hill seeking support for changes to the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) and the Bankruptcy Insolvency Act (BIA) to give workers and retirees priority in court proceedings to protect pensions and other benefits. Two bills were before the House of Commons, one introduced by the Bloc Québécois and the other by the NDP. The Liberal government refused to support either of them. Both bills were lost when Parliament dissolved prior to the October election.

"We will continue calling for this legislation, which also would make sure employers maintain group insurance programs that provide benefits to employees and former employees," Neumann said. "This government has at times claimed to want to work with labour and protect Canadians. Such a claim is

not tenable without real reform on this issue."

Forestry action needed from federal government

The outrageous and long-running softwood lumber dispute with the U.S. is still hurting union members, especially in Western Canada. U.S. charges on Canadian lumber mean mills are closing down in unprecedented numbers, including some that have operated for a century.

This government has at times claimed to want to work with labour and protect Canadians. Such a claim is not tenable without real reform on this issue.

"USW again will call on the trade minister to take action to get these tariffs removed and we call on the government to provide relief to forestry workers and communities that are threatened with extinction," Neumann said. "Forestry is a vital industry to a resource-based economy. The federal government must finally step up."

Steel fight not over

In 2019, U.S. tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum were lifted, thanks to efforts by our union and our members on both sides of the border. However, much needs to be done to support our steel jobs.

An Ottawa conference this spring for USW members in Canada's steel industry will include lobbying on improved trade remedies to protect

the domestic industry as well as the need to insist on procurement for infrastructure that uses Canadian-made steel. "We continue to see many construction projects that use foreign-made steel and we will continue to call on the Liberal government to change that," Neumann said. "We can show the 'win-win' opportunities available by prioritizing the purchase of lower-carbon construction materials, which means made-in-Canada products."

Our union knows the same principle applies to using Canadian-made aluminum, concrete, wood and glass.

'Stop the Killing' successes need extending

The long-running USW campaign for better enforcement of the Westray Law (Stop the Killing, Enforce the Law – enforcethelaw.ca) got a boost in 2019 with a collaboration with the RCMP, through funding from the Department of Justice, on developing online training for police officers across Canada. That effort is ongoing while provinces like B.C. develop more in-depth training and protocols. The Liberal government needs to play a leadership role in ensuring full and proper enforcement procedures in all provinces and territories.

2020 will be an active year for pressuring the federal government

Other federal issues that are emerging in 2020 include the need for universal pharmacare, protections for workers affected by changes in the economy and development of rights for precarious workers in the so-called "gig economy." Given all these areas the Liberal government needs to act on, there is a lot of work to do to make the most of the political process in 2020," Neumann said. ■

Urgent Action Needed

Government-commissioned review recommends strengthening workplace safety in B.C.

Eight years after two sawmill explosions in British Columbia claimed the lives of four workers and injured dozens more, the USW is calling for urgent implementation of recommendations from a critical review of workplace safety in the province.

B.C. lawyer Lisa Helps was tasked by B.C.'s NDP government to review the actions of provincial agency WorkSafeBC in relation to the deadly

sawmill explosions that occurred in early 2012. The review has produced 11 recommendations to strengthen worker safety, ensure that a criminal lens is applied to investigations of workplace deaths and put workers back at the centre of WorkSafeBC.

"The recommendations are long overdue and must be urgently implemented by the provincial government. This is an important step

in ensuring that WorkSafeBC's first mandate is to protect workers," said USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt.

"When implemented, these recommendations will increase B.C. workers' confidence that WorkSafeBC and other government agencies are fulfilling their responsibility to protect, promote and enhance the safety of all workers," Hunt said.



Too many workers in British Columbia have died on the job and too many employers have treated those deaths as the cost of doing business."

– Stephen Hunt
District 3 Director

Key recommendations of the report include:

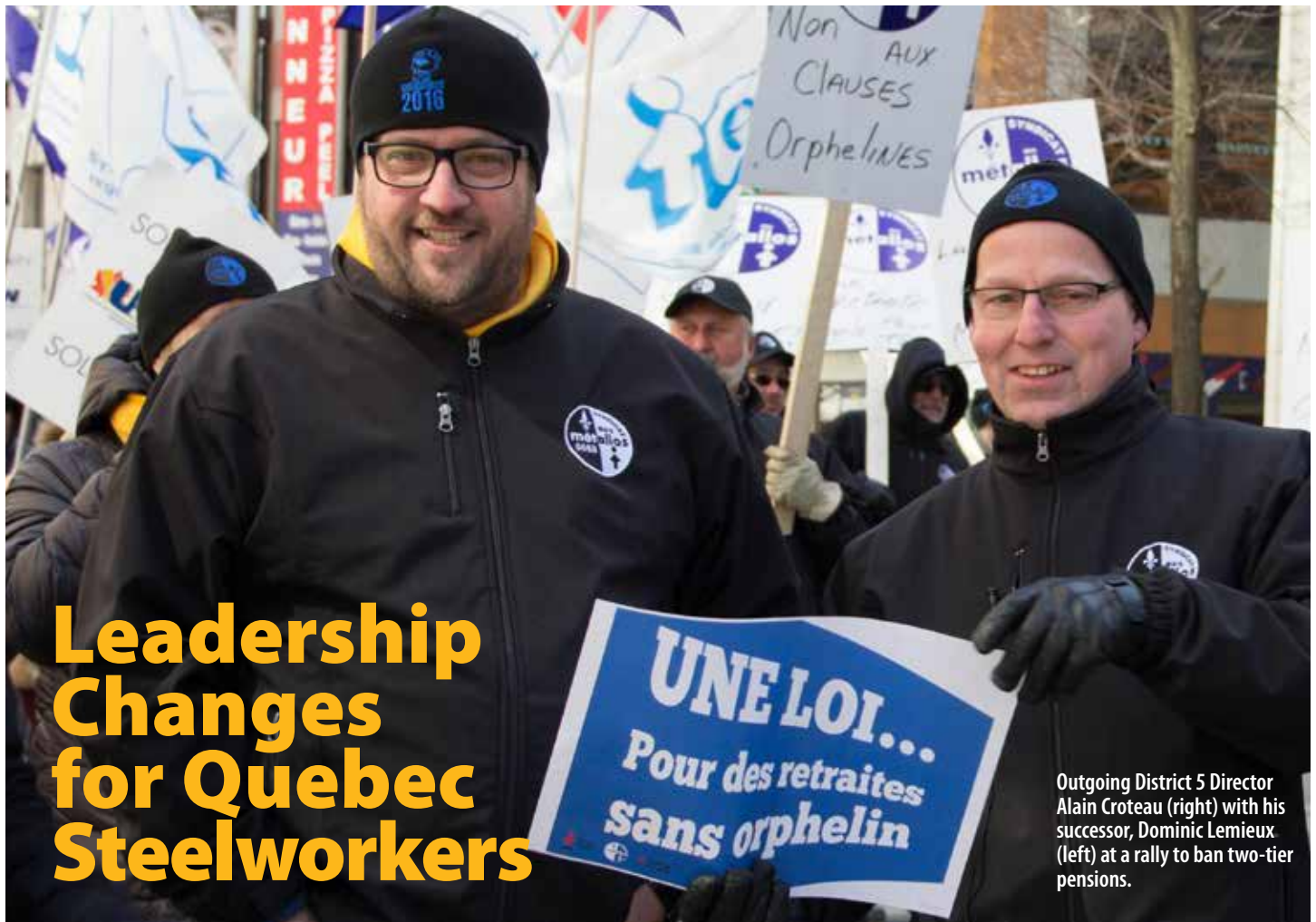
- ▶ Creating a Worker Ombudsman position.
- ▶ Amending regulations to strengthen the right to refuse unsafe work.
- ▶ Ongoing training for police officers and Crown counsel for workplace criminal investigations.
- ▶ Designated police contacts for criminal offences involving workplace death.

The recommendations must be implemented to reverse the previous B.C. Liberal government's deregulation and dismantling of workplace safety provisions – an agenda that came at a heavy cost, Hunt said.

"Too many workers in British Columbia have died on the job and too many employers have treated those deaths as the cost of doing business."

The review confirmed that the 2012 sawmill explosions remain "a heartbreaking, but familiar story of incompetence, mismanagement, deceit, apathy and cover-up from the agencies that are responsible for keeping workers safe," Hunt added.

"The review makes important recommendations that previous government-commissioned reports failed to do. It should never require the tragic loss of life to do the right thing." ■



Leadership Changes for Québec Steelworkers

Outgoing District 5 Director Alain Croteau (right) with his successor, Dominic Lemieux (left) at a rally to ban two-tier pensions.

AFTER FOUR YEARS as United Steelworkers Quebec Director and 37 years as a 'Métallo' activist – including 17 years as a staff representative – Alain Croteau is taking on a new USW challenge.

Croteau, District 5 Director since December 2015, has accepted a position as Special Assistant to USW International President Tom Conway, effective April 1.

"It will be my pleasure to work on any special files or mandates that the International President entrusts to me," said Croteau, who became a Steelworker in 1983 while working at Mitchell Aerospace, where he led his colleagues to join the USW.

"It's an honour to bring a Canadian and Quebec presence south of the border. I'm proud that the Interna-

tional President thought of me for this position," he said.

Croteau leaves a strong and healthy district to the leadership team succeeding him in Quebec.

"There were eight labour disputes during my tenure, which resulted in huge waves of solidarity in our ranks. We worked hard to support our members in these disputes and to build growing solidarity movements. If we can continue to build this solidarity and hopefully avoid so many labour disputes, so much the better," he said.

Dominic Lemieux, Croteau's assistant for the last four years, will succeed him as District 5 Director.

Lemieux's activism began as a member of USW Local 6951 at ArcelorMittal's Contrecoeur-Ouest

steel plant near Montreal. He became a staff representative in 2008 and played key roles in bargaining with multinationals including Arcelor-Mittal, Lafarge, Rio Tinto, Alcoa and the former Stelco. Lemieux also was a leader in the successful campaign for a legislative ban on two-tier pension and benefit plans in Quebec.

Veteran USW activist Donald Noël will become assistant to the District 5 Director as of April 1. Noël was hired as a staff representative in 2001 and has served as the USW area co-ordinator for the North-Northwest region of Quebec since 2008. He comes from Local 9238 at General Dynamics in Repentigny, where workers joined the USW in 1992, with Noël becoming the local's first president. ■

Funding Available for Community Projects

USW **FAMILY & COMMUNITY EDUCATION FUND**



GREAT NEWS! Until June 30, the Family and Community Education Fund is open to all Steelworkers locals to apply for special projects.

This means local unions can apply for project funding until June 30. After that, locals will need to join the fund in order to apply.

Last year, many local unions received funding to do good work in their locals and communities.

In Norway House, Man., Local 9074 offered a free six-week Cree language course, where the union was able

to increase its visibility in the community and contribute to local reconciliation efforts.

In Sept-Îles, Que., six local unions across the Côte-Nord region joined together to organize a community sledding day, creating a fun event for local union and community members alike, building community ties and educating the public about the union.

Across District 6 in Ontario and the Atlantic provinces, new activists have been matched with mentors who are helping them to learn more about being a leader in the union and the many ways to contribute. Everyone is learning from this experience.

Requests for projects under \$5,000 can be submitted any time.

We look forward to many more exciting local union initiatives this year, made possible by local union efforts and support from the Family and Community Education Fund.

To learn more about how your local union can reach out to the community and build up our union via the Family and Community Education Fund, visit usw.ca/fcef. If you have any questions about the fund, please contact Co-ordinator Eric Delparte at fcef@usw.ca. ■

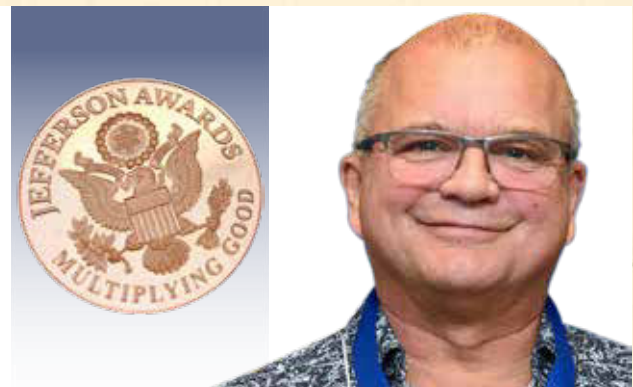
Multiplying Good: The Jefferson Awards

SINCE 2015, the USW has partnered with the Jefferson Awards Foundation, recently renamed Multiplying Good, to celebrate Steelworkers who do amazing works of community service.

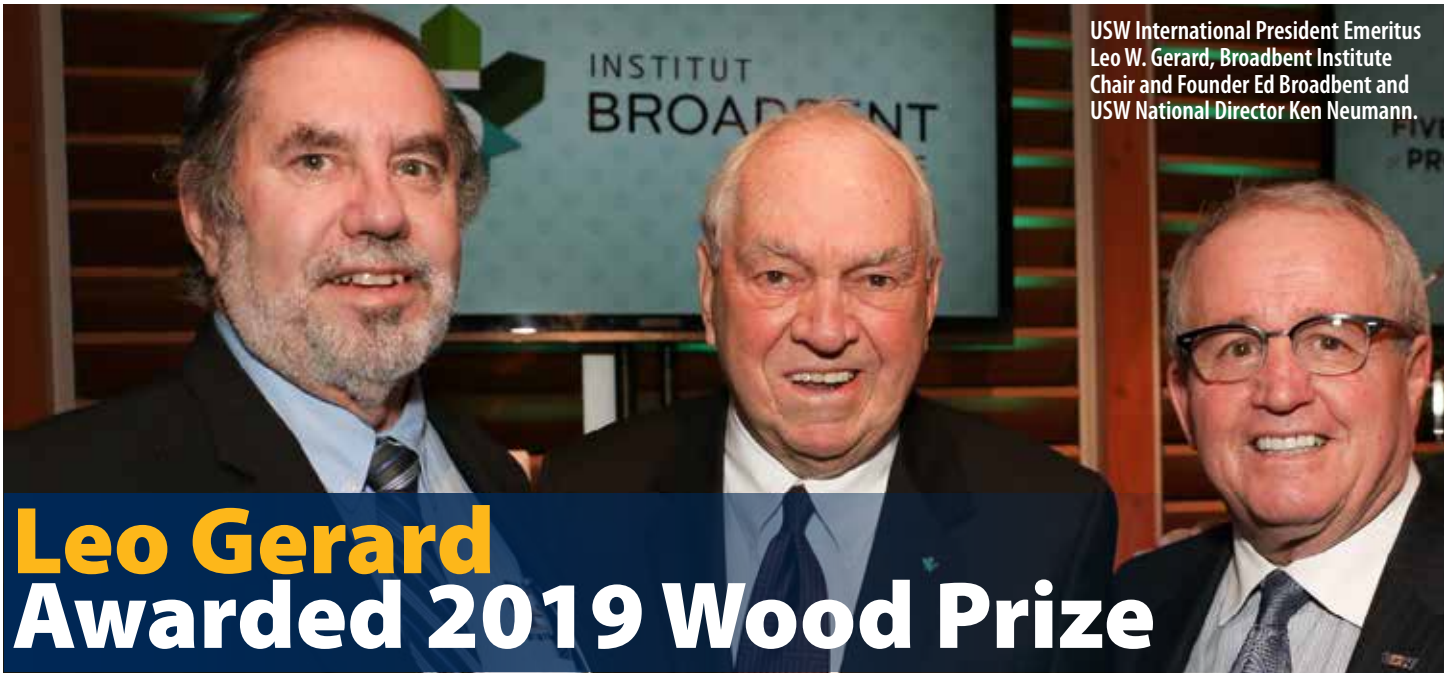
The 2019 Canadian recipients are:



DISTRICT 3 – BRIAN ARNOLD, Local 7619 (retired): During nearly 30 years working in a mine and continuing in retirement, Brian is devoted to the service and care of those around him. He visits hospitals to check on friends and co-workers, volunteers as a pastor to those in need and participates in community fundraisers.



DISTRICT 5 – GILLES BORDELEAU, Local 6887 (retired): Gilles is active on his local's Retirement Committee, helping workers and families understand pensions and other benefits. He helped start a children's breakfast program, organizes Christmas baskets for the disadvantaged and created a soccer league for people with trisomy, a genetic disorder.



USW International President Emeritus Leo W. Gerard, Broadbent Institute Chair and Founder Ed Broadbent and USW National Director Ken Neumann.

Leo Gerard Awarded 2019 Wood Prize

CONGRATULATIONS to USW International President Emeritus Leo W. Gerard for receiving the 2019 Ellen Meiksins Wood Prize from the Broadbent Institute. The annual Wood Prize recognizes the outstanding contributions of an academic, labour activist or writer. As part of the award, Gerard will present the Ellen Meiksins Wood Lecture in Toronto in April.

Ellen Meiksins Wood was an internationally renowned scholar, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and author of eight books published in a dozen languages. One of the most influential political theorists of her

generation, Wood was passionately committed to making progress in the here and now. Wood died in January 2016.

“The institute could not be prouder to award this prize to Leo Gerard, a tireless advocate for all Canadians and a visionary leader in the international labour movement,” said Ed Broadbent, Chair and Founder of the Broadbent Institute.

Gerard’s Wood Prize lecture will be broadcast on CBC radio’s program, Ideas. ■



DISTRICT 6 – ALEX PATTERSON, Local 6500: Alex is on the board of the Health Sciences North Foundation in Sudbury which funds a variety of hospital projects, from purchasing much-needed equipment such as MRI machines to donating to causes to better serve patient needs.



SOAR – ELEANOR GATTAFONI-ROBINSON, District 3: Eleanor organizes the annual Terry Fox Run, fundraises for Relay for Life, is involved with her church’s philanthropy, cooks and serves food for junior hockey teams and fans at Cominco Arena, volunteers at Trail Association for Community Living and is serving her fourth term as a city councillor. ■



OUR UNION held our first ever International NextGen Conference on November 18-22, 2019, in the heart of Pittsburgh, PA. The conference brought together Steelworkers from Canada, the United States and the Caribbean as well as international guests and comrades.

generation can move our union forward. International Vice-President-at-Large Roxanne Brown summarized, "All of you in this room are the reason we fight. Everything we do affects your contracts, affects you!"



The organizers had a strong desire to give young workers an understanding of the union's function and structure, and give them the skills to get involved. With the help of NextGen district co-ordinators, the organizers were aided by a survey of NextGen Steelworkers of ideas on workshops, speakers, panels, actions, projects, etc. The result was nothing short of exciting.

Themes such as "Telling Your Story" and "Building Power" were built into the general conference sessions. They were presented so our young workers can take action and mobilize their local unions. The workshops were proudly delivered by the NextGen district co-ordinators, members and USW staff and developed their focus directly from participants.

Pittsburgh welcomed an amazing 900 NextGen members. From day one, the conference's energy was tangible and filled the rooms with excitement and power.

The week capped off with one of the biggest community service projects we have ever delivered. The 900 delegates joined numerous organizations across the city to lend a hand in community projects. For our NextGen members, it showed the kind of difference we can make by getting involved and getting active in our union.

Leaders of our union kicked off the conference by honestly sharing with our future leaders their stories, why they got involved with the union and how the next

usw.ca/nextgen ■

Forest Workers Stand Strong in B.C.

MORE THAN 3,000 FOREST WORKERS at Western Forest Products on Vancouver Island continue to stand strong in a strike that began last July 1.

Despite the involvement of well-known mediator Vince Ready, the company continues to seek concessions that would roll back important rights for members of USW Local 1-1937.

Although it is a difficult time for Steelworkers, their

families and coastal communities, Local 1-1937 members are strong in their resolve to get a fair contract without concessions. We will continue to fight for a collective agreement that ensures members have safe shifts, secure jobs and are treated with dignity and respect.

Stay up-to-date on the strike and send your messages of support by visiting the Local 1-1937 Facebook page at facebook.com/usw1937. ■

National Gathering of Indigenous Steelworkers April 15-16

INDIGENOUS STEELWORKERS are invited to attend the Third National Gathering of Indigenous Steelworkers in Toronto, April 15-16, 2020.

The Toronto gathering will be a place for Indigenous Steelworkers to share their experiences and to contribute to our union's ongoing strategy for advancing the

rights of Indigenous workers and Indigenous communities.

Who should attend:

- ▶ USW members of Indigenous ancestry
- ▶ USW leadership of locals with Indigenous members

usw.ca/IndigenousUSW ■

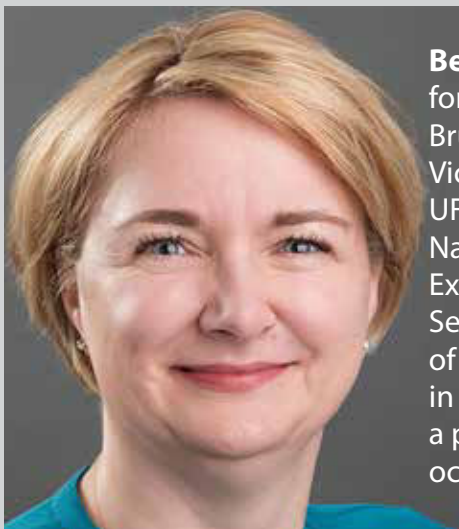
Revitalizing the Canadian Labour Congress – Convention 2020

USW IS LOOKING FORWARD to a strong Steelworkers delegation at the CLC convention in Vancouver, May 4-8.

Though we have had our differences with the CLC over the last few years, our union values the strength and

solidarity of a strong central labour body.

The USW Canadian leadership is excited to support two candidates for CLC Executive:



Beatrice Bruske
for CLC President:
Bruske is a National Vice-President on UFCW Canada's National Council Executive Board, Secretary-Treasurer of UFCW Local 832 in Manitoba and is a proud New Democrat.



Siobhan Vipond
for CLC Executive Vice-President:
Vipond is Secretary-Treasurer of the Alberta Federation of Labour, a member of IATSE Local 210 in Edmonton and Treasurer of Alberta's NDP. ■



USW Local 9700 dropped by the Centre du Plateau Laval in Bécancour to deliver the Steelworkers Humanity Fund contribution.
Des membres de la SL 9700 ont fait un saut au Centre du Plateau Laval à Bécancour afin de lui présenter un don du Fonds humanitaire des Métallos.



The Steelworkers Peel-Halton Area Council visited the Mississauga Food Bank to present the Steelworkers Humanity Fund contribution.

Des Métallos du conseil régional de Peel-Halton se sont rendus à la banque alimentaire de Mississauga afin de remettre un don du Fonds humanitaire des Métallos.



Steelworkers in District 5 stopped by La Cuisine collective Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in Montreal to deliver the contribution from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

Des Métallos du District 5 se sont arrêtés à la Cuisine collective Hochelaga-Maisonneuve à Montréal afin de lui présenter un don du Fonds humanitaire des Métallos.



USW Local 1-207 presented the Steelworkers Humanity Fund contribution to the Edmonton Food Bank.

Des membres de la SL 1-207 ont remis un don du Fonds humanitaire des Métallos à la banque alimentaire d'Edmonton.

Live well Laugh often Love always



USW Local 2020 at the Kirkland Lake Food Bank (Salvation Army Family Services) on behalf of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.
Des membres de la SL 2020 à la banque alimentaire de Kirkland Lake (Services d'aide à la famille de l'Armée du Salut) présente un don au nom du Fonds humanitaire des Métallos.

Building Community by Giving Back

Representatives from USW locals across Canada visited food banks in December to deliver contributions from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund. In 2019, the fund contributed \$229,750 to 112 food banks and community organizations across the country.

"At this time every year, we are reminded that social inequalities are growing in Canada," said Ken Neumann, Steelworkers Humanity Fund President. "The face of poverty in Canada is changing. Increasingly younger and diverse people have to rely on food banks to make ends meet."

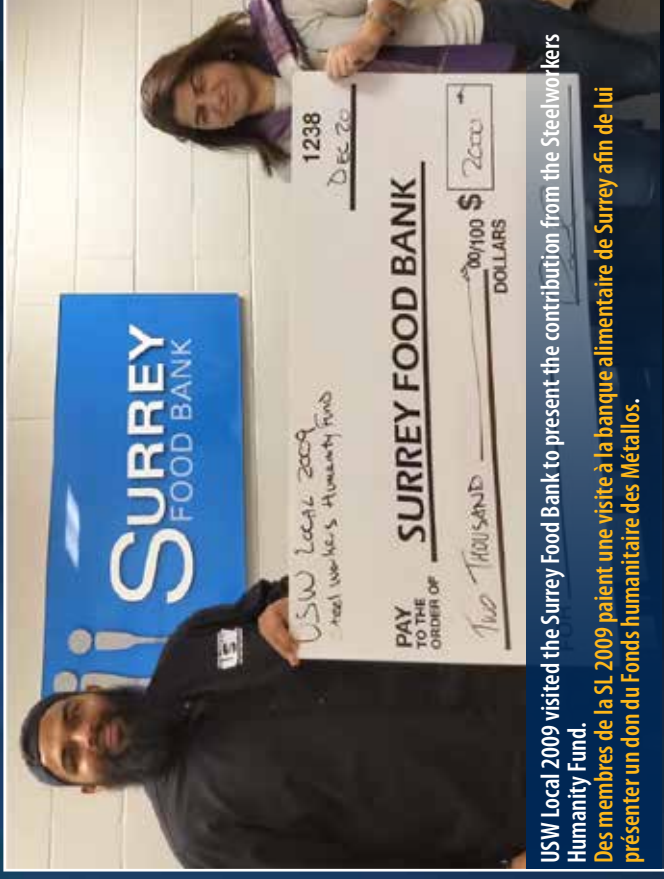
We know there are long-term solutions to food insecurity – a fair minimum wage, reinvesting massively in social programs, and of course, unionizing.

While Steelworkers continue to fight for lasting change, we will be there to support those who are being left behind.

usw.ca/humanity
#USWCares



metallos.ca/fondshumanitaire
#MétallosSontLà



USW Local 2009 visited the Surrey Food Bank to present the contribution from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

Des membres de la SL 2009 paient une visite à la banque alimentaire de Surrey afin de lui présenter un don du Fonds humanitaire des Métallos.

Développer l'esprit communautaire en retour

Des représentants des sections locales du syndicat partout au pays ont visité des banques alimentaires en décembre et remis des dons du Fonds humanitaire des Métallos, lequel a versé 229 750 \$ à 112 organismes communautaires au Canada en 2019.

«Cette période de l'année nous rappelle que les inégalités sociales au pays s'aggravent, a indiqué Ken Neumann, président du Fonds humanitaire. Le visage de la pauvreté au Canada change. Un nombre croissant de jeunes et de citoyens divers doivent compter sur les banques alimentaires pour joindre les deux bouts.»

Nous savons qu'il existe des solutions à long terme à l'insécurité alimentaire : un salaire minimum équitable, d'importants investissements dans les programmes sociaux, et la syndicalisation.

Alors que les Métallos continuent de réclamer des changements durables, nous serons-là afin d'appuyer les personnes laissées pour compte. ■