



# NEWS@6

SPRING 2020

*Marty's Message*

## Staying Safe During COVID-19

### **Steelworkers, We're all in this together.**

First off, please stay healthy and safe during coronavirus (COVID-19). Stay at home as much as possible. Wash your hands properly and do it frequently. Find that 20-second song you like and sing it out while you wash your hands.

***Our union's pressure is working. The federal government heeded our call and increased its wage subsidy to employers to 75% from an initial 10%.***

Even though we can't gather together, please know that all District 6 staff are here for our union members – available by phone and email – working hard to keep members safe, ensuring workers' rights are protected and providing reliable information in a fast-changing and urgent situation.

Our union is updating and sharing information online at [www.usw.ca/covid19](http://www.usw.ca/covid19).

Thousands of our members have already been laid off or been issued layoff notices. This causes immediate financial hardship and understandable anxiety. Not only are we worried about our health with this virus, some of us don't know how we'll cover the rent or the mortgage and other bills.

The Steelworkers union has been calling on federal and provincial governments to act fast and deliver direct support for individuals. We've also called for dramatically increased wage subsidies to prevent layoffs in the first place.

Our union's pressure is working. The federal government heeded our call and increased its wage subsidy to employers to 75% from an initial 10%. As I write this, we haven't seen the details. We'll keep you posted.

For those laid off due to COVID-19 without access to EI, the government has announced a new benefit that those eligible can apply for in early April: the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). Please see our USW guide for your province, posted at [www.usw.ca/covid19](http://www.usw.ca/covid19).

I'm proud that our union's Steelworkers Humanity Fund acted fast and announced an immediate \$220,000 contribution to food banks and community food centres across Canada on March 17. This is one way we are helping community organizations that support some of the most vulnerable in our society.

A big shout out to all our members working in essential services – from health-care workers and personal support workers in long-term-care facilities, to those in manufacturing, security guards, screeners, shipping and more. You are our heroes.

We will get through this. Let's stand together in solidarity – with two metres between us.

In solidarity,

**Marty Warren**  
**USW District 6 Director**

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# Steelworkers Stay Strong in a Challenging New World

## District 6 Strong Together

**Steelworkers** are standing in solidarity, even if we're keeping two metres (six feet) apart.

The serious coronavirus spreading across Canada, which causes the infectious disease COVID-19 – has caused illness and death around the world, with a pandemic declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11.

**Even though we can't gather together, please know that all District 6 staff are here for our union members – available by phone and email.**

– Marty Warren, District 6 Director

First of all, we are striving to continue helping you and your families remain healthy and safe. Please know that your union is here for you in these uncertain times. Follow our online information and reach out to your union representatives.

At District 6 and throughout the USW, we are continually sending out and sharing information relevant to you and your workplace. Keep checking for updates at [www.usw.ca/covid19](https://www.usw.ca/covid19).

### Health and Safety First

As workers and union members, we take health and safety seriously.

Public health authorities and governments are implementing emergency measures to keep all of us safe. Please do not dismiss these measures as being inconvenient or overreactions. At this time, we must heed the advice of public health authorities – the agencies that have the best information and our best interests at heart. Erring on the side of caution will prevent illnesses and deaths.

That means physical distancing (staying two metres, or six feet apart), frequent and thorough hand washing and

staying home whenever possible.

Stay up to date with public health information at [www.canada.ca/public-health](https://www.canada.ca/public-health). Or call the toll-free information line: **1-833-784-4397**.

Whether your workplace has sent you home or you are still on the job: keep informed and demand safety.

### Actions for Employers to Protect Workers

Employers can take steps to improve the health and safety of workers during COVID-19:

- Ensure there is current COVID-19 information communicated to the entire workforce (those on the job and those working from home).
- Employers should follow all the protective protocols that have been proposed by public health agencies.
- Have everyone work from home who is not required to be at work due to being an essential-service worker.
- For essential-service workplaces, employers should adjust work schedules and other policies to reduce social contact and anxiety.
- Make sure all work areas are sanitized and safe by the standards needed during COVID-19.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as cell phones, desks, keyboards, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles on cupboards, appliances, faucets, sinks and toilets.
- Increase the distance between desks, workstations, employees and customers to a minimum of two metres (six feet).
- Provide access to handwashing areas and hand sanitizer throughout the workplace.
- Stagger work breaks and lunch breaks to allow a minimum number of employees in the break/lunch room at one time (apply principles of physical distancing). In the case of worksites with showers or common cleanup areas, shift

ending times should also be staggered to reduce the number of people in any one area.

- Make sure workers stay home when they are ill.
- If a worker develops COVID-19 symptoms, they should be immediately separated from others and sent home without using public transit.

### Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

While we are facing extraordinary circumstances during this outbreak, health and safety protections remain in place. This includes the right to refuse work that you believe is unsafe. If you find yourself in such a situation, you need to immediately inform your supervisor of your concerns and let your union representative know as well. Your staff representative can help you through the process.

Any employee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a condition in the workplace is likely to endanger their health or safety can refuse to work under applicable occupational health and safety legislation. Bear in mind that the work refusal process is complicated and the legal issues raised by COVID-19 in the workplace are new and unusual. If an employee refuses to work, employers should handle the situation appropriately and the income of the employee should not be jeopardized.

Contact your USW steward, local president or staff rep for more guidance.

### Employment Insurance and Support Demands

Our union recognizes that the economic impact of the crisis will affect our members in very different ways, including some devastating ways. Many USW District 6 members are continuing to work on the job (often experiencing questionable risks), and some are able to work from home. Yet too many will be facing layoff, reduced income or job loss. While many of our members will be able to access Employment Insurance (EI), the payments are often not sufficient and may involve painful delays.

The federal government has announced a Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) to help expand access to income for those not eligible for EI and to ease pressure on the EI system. The CERB provides a maximum of \$2,000 (taxable) per month, for up to four months.

This benefit is for:

- Workers laid off but ineligible for EI.
- Those unable to work due to school closure.
- Those who are self-quarantined and ineligible for EI.





- Those who are employed but not currently paid because there is insufficient work and your employer has asked you not to come to work.

Look up what your collective agreement sets out around layoff and notice of layoff as this may affect when you can apply for EI or the new CERB. Contact your USW steward or staff representative with any questions.

Check out our province-by-province USW fact sheets on benefits: the Provincial Guides to Benefits During COVID-19 are posted at [usw.ca/covid19](https://usw.ca/covid19).

Learn more about federal government support measures at [Support for Individuals](https://www24.international.gc.ca/support-for-individuals).

### Stop Stigma and Harassment

In these challenging times, let's bear in mind that our members, and workers generally, who get sick or are perceived as originating from targeted backgrounds may well face stigma, harassment and racism.

Employers should take steps to guarantee that no employee is subject to discrimination as a result of a misconception that they are the carrier of a communicable disease. Intervene if you see or hear anyone linking COVID-19 with any racialized group. You can find information on being an anti-racist ally in the Ontario Federation of Labour info sheet [Standing Against Hate](https://www.ofl.ca/standing-against-hate).



### Demanding Governments Do Better SIGN THE PETITION FOR BETTER SUPPORTS

Our union is taking action to press all levels of government for additional supports. We succeeded with our call for a dramatic increase to the wage subsidy – the federal government is now promising subsidies to employers of 75%, though the details were still to come when this newsletter

was finalized. The USW is also calling for paid sick days, increases to EI rates and speeding up EI payments. We also join the call of many in the labour movement for governments to insist that banks, credit card companies, utilities and others must relax payment rules to allow people more time to pay their bills.

### District 6 Events Postponed

All education events are postponed until after May 31

- Organizing course, March 30-April 3, 2020 – postponed
- Arbitration course, April 27-May 1, 2020 – postponed
- Atlantic Conference, May 13-15 – postponed
- Women of Steel Conference in Hamilton, June 8-10 – postponed until 2021

More updates are on our website

You can add your voice to the call for more support for workers. Sign our USW petition Governments Must Support Workers During COVID-19 at [usw.ca/covid19](https://usw.ca/covid19).

Please stay safe and remember that we're all in this together. ■

### USW COVID-19 Resources at [usw.ca/covid19](https://usw.ca/covid19)

- Coronavirus Guide for USW Canadian Members:** A helpful guide with simple precautions that will reduce the likelihood of contracting the virus.
- Health and Safety During COVID-19:** Approaching the virus with the health and safety tools all workplaces should have.
- Workplace Issues During COVID-19:** Steps that employers can take to protect workers during the pandemic.

### Other Useful COVID-19 Resources

- Broadbent Institute COVID-19 Resources**
- Newfoundland & Labrador: COVID-19**
- Nova Scotia: COVID-19**
- WorksafeNB (New Brunswick)**
- Workers Compensation Board of PEI**
- Ontario Federation of Labour**
- Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers**
- Workers Health and Safety Centre (Ontario)**



# Building More-Inclusive Workplaces

The USW is actively involved in a progressive research project aimed at building LGBTQ2SIA+ inclusive workplaces.

The research project, which began two years ago, has to date included surveys and interviews documenting the experiences of hundreds of LGBTQ2SIA+ workers in Sudbury and Windsor, including Steelworkers, members of other unions and non-union workers.

Suzanne Mills, an associate professor at Hamilton's McMaster University, is the project's principal investigator, while Adriane Paavo, who leads the USW's national Education and Equality Department, is among a team of co-investigators. The USW is one of a handful of institutional partners supporting the project.

While unionized workplaces tend to fare a bit better, key findings of the research project indicate employers as well as unions must do more to build inclusive workplaces:

- Only 59.8% of participants felt comfortable at work all or most of the time, with even lower rates for Indigenous and racialized workers.

*The goal is to “bring awareness to workplaces and provide tools for employers and for unions to be able to make workplaces more inclusive.”*

– Suzanne Mills

Associate Professor, McMaster University

- Participants reported high rates of discrimination from other employees, with greater discrimination faced by racialized as well as non-binary and transgender workers.
- 22% of racialized participants and 27% of transgender respondents reported leaving a job due to racist and unsupportive environments.
- Nearly half of workers in the private sector and over a quarter of workers in the public sector reported changing their appearance, dress, mannerisms or behaviour at work to “fit in.”
- Among union members who responded, 59.8% said the union mostly or completely protected them from discrimination,

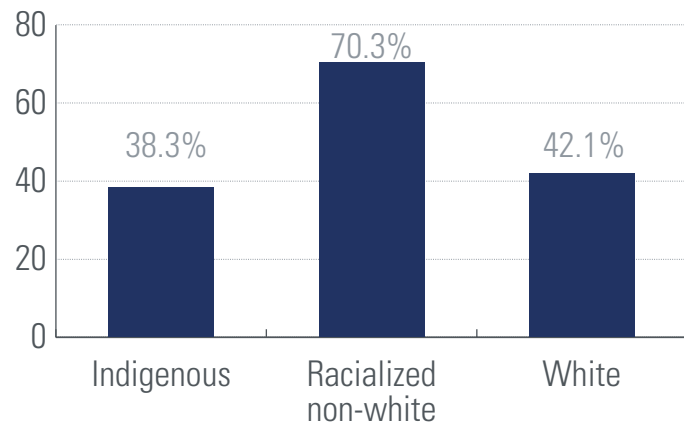
although only 47% said they would go to their union if they were experiencing discrimination at work.

- Nearly three-quarters of participants had experienced a work-related mental health issue during the past year.
- Nearly half of participants used drugs or alcohol specifically to cope with work.

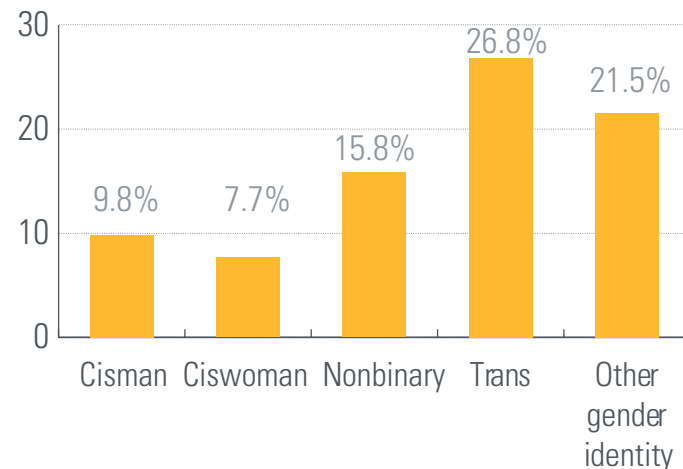
The next phase of the research project includes pursuing solutions and measures to address the issues that have been identified to date, Mills said.

The goal is to “bring awareness to workplaces and provide tools for employers and for unions to be able to make workplaces more inclusive,” she said. ■

## Rates of Discrimination by Co-Workers



## Rates of Job-Leaving Due to Negative Workplace for LGBTQ2SIA+ Workers



## New Course Builds Bridges

# Unionism on Turtle Island

It's not every day there's a teepee in the parking lot of your USW hall.

Gathering inside the teepee became a daily routine for 18 participants in the USW's Unionism on Turtle Island course, held in Sault Ste. Marie earlier this year.

Elder Clifford Waboose from nearby Batchewana First Nation opened the course by sharing local teachings and cultural protocols and lighting a sacred fire that burned inside the teepee for the entire five days.

The course is designed for non-Indigenous Steelworkers to learn more about Indigenous peoples and our history and to identify ways local unions can support Indigenous members, from representing members in grievances and collective bargaining, to supporting the struggles of Indigenous communities for a better life.

Participants gain an overview of key events in our country's history that can be painful to learn; lessons that were trivialized or missing entirely in our classrooms growing up.

Sault Ste. Marie has a significant Indigenous population and Indigenous Steelworkers are among our membership there. USW Area Co-ordinator Marc Ayotte serves on the USW Aboriginal Committee and worked with Joe Krmpotich, Union Co-ordinator for local 2251, and the Education Department to bring the

course to the Soo, with the support of District 6 Director Marty Warren.

Participating in the course was a deeply emotional experience for Cody Alexander, President of USW Local 9548 (Tenaris).

“Each morning, the class would meet at the sacred fire and receive prayers and blessings from the Elder. He would smudge and sing to prepare us for the day. Many of us would return each night, some of us with our family, to seek his help to alleviate the sadness and pain many of us felt from the course material,” Cody said.

“Even though I still feel a great sadness with what I learned, I also feel highly motivated to take this knowledge and enact changes to better support and assist our Indigenous members, as well as those in the community.”

The Unionism on Turtle Island course is another step in strengthening relationships between our union and Indigenous communities.

If your local or area council is interested in offering the course, talk to your staff representative or District Education Co-ordinator. ■

*Even though I still feel a great sadness with what I learned, I also feel highly motivated to take this knowledge and enact changes to better support and assist our Indigenous members, as well as those in the community.*

Cody Alexander  
USW Local 9548 President



# Union-Seeking Workers Turn to USW



In January, 500 employees at the Toronto operations of manufacturing giant **KIK Custom Products** voted to join the USW to seek the better working conditions, dignity and rights provided by a union job.

The new KIK employees joined the Steelworkers to address issues including pay packages, benefits, temporary employment and health and safety.

KIK is one of North America's largest independent manufacturers of consumer packaged goods, including personal care products, laundry detergent, fabric softener, bleach and cleaning products. The USW also represents employees at a KIK facility in Vaughan, north of Toronto.

Employees at workplaces across District 6 have voted to join the Steelworkers in recent months, including:

## Leeds & Grenville Interval House – Brockville

In Brockville, Ont., employees at Leeds & Grenville Interval House, a shelter for abused women and children, joined the USW in January. The employees, all of whom are women, include social workers, child witness workers and outreach workers. They provide emergency and transitional services and support to women and children in distress, including accommodations, counselling and a 24-hour crisis and support line.

## Aramark – Labrador City

Labrador City employees of Aramark, the multinational food services and facilities provider, joined the Steelworkers last October. The employees include cooks, cleaners, maintenance and front-desk workers. Aramark has a contract with mining company IOC to provide services at a fly-in camp and about 30 residences. The workers joined the USW after experiencing wage cuts and other regressive measures after Aramark secured the IOC contract.

## Transcare Logistics – Hamilton

Employees of Transcare Logistics, a Hamilton subsidiary of CP Rail, joined the Steelworkers to address issues including workplace health and safety concerns. Transcare Logistics bills itself as "Canada's first automated distribution hub" and the country's "largest and the fastest steel transload facility." The facility transfers steel products such as coil, pipe and plate from rail cars to trucks and into storage.

## Municipal Firefighters – Kirkland Lake

Members of the part-time firefighting brigade in the Town of Kirkland Lake, Ont., joined the USW to seek respect and a real voice on the job. "Our goal is to provide safe fire suppression service by ensuring that our members have all the tools and equipment to be successful," the firefighters said in a statement.

## Permacon Group – Mississauga

Permacon Group employees in Mississauga, Ont., voted to become Steelworkers, following other Permacon workers in Ontario who are USW members. The company manufactures concrete masonry and landscaping products. The new Steelworkers turned to the USW to address issues including wages, health and safety, benefits, scheduling and respect and dignity in the workplace.

## A.S.P. Security Services – Sudbury

Security and customer service workers at the Greater Sudbury Airport joined the USW to address concerns including being required to pay for health and safety training, uniforms and licensing costs – costs that are commonly covered by employers in unionized workplaces. The workers are employed by A.S.P. Security Services.



Myles Sullivan, Assistant to District 6 Director Marty Warren, speaking at a press conference on the Bill 124 court challenge at Queen's Park.

## Fighting for Union Rights – In Court

The United Steelworkers District 6 is a member of a growing coalition of Ontario unions in a court challenge against the government's Bill 124, which violates the right to free and fair collective bargaining that is protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The coalition, now numbering more than 40 unions representing 270,000 Ontario employees, is challenging the law that limits compensation increases, including salaries, pensions and benefits, for millions of unionized workers in Ontario's broader public sector to 1% annually for three years, a rate even lower than increases to the cost of living.

"Families in our province have relied on negotiations for decades to secure their working conditions. This has resulted in the establishment of the middle class. Middle-class families are the backbone of our province and country, and it is fundamentally wrong to strip them of their collective bargaining rights," said Marty Warren, USW District 6 Director (Ontario and Atlantic Canada).

*Middle-class families are the backbone of our province and country, and it is fundamentally wrong to strip them of their collective bargaining rights.*

– Marty Warren, District 6 Director

"The USW and its engaged membership are aggressively pushing back on this one-sided legislation. Justice must be upheld for Ontario's working families," said Warren.

Workers affected by Bill 124 include those employed by the provincial government, Crown agencies, school boards, universities and colleges, hospitals, non-profit long-term care homes, children's aid societies, social service agencies and the electricity and energy sectors.

For the USW, being part of the coalition is about defending thousands of our members in the post-secondary sector – in USW Locals 1998, 4120 and 2010 – administrative staff at the University of Toronto, University of Guelph and Queen's University. Our

union also represents hundreds of members working at long-term care facilities across Ontario, legal clinics and occupational health clinics.

For the Steelworkers, being a member of the coalition is also about taking a solidarity stance with the public-sector workers under attack by this law.

In recent years, unions have successfully challenged legislation that violates workers' rights, such as the Ontario Liberals' Bill 115 which interfered with collective bargaining in the education sector. The courts ruled that Bill 115 violated workers' Charter rights. In the face of legal challenges, a co-ordinated resistance campaign and public opposition, that bill was repealed. ■



# 2020 USW SCHOLARSHIPS

Summer placement and scholarship deadlines are coming soon. Take advantage of these opportunities for you, your children or grandchildren.

**How USW Scholarships are Affected by COVID-19**  
Scholarship deadlines are not extended. However, the timing of delivery of scholarships cheques may be delayed if students' letters of acceptance or admission to post-secondary institutions get delayed.

**Norma Berti Education Scholarship**  
\$1,000 June 30

**Pat Hinchey Health and Safety Scholarship**  
\$1,000 June 30 (Atlantic Provinces)

**Peter Leibovitch Education Scholarship**  
\$1,000 June 30

**USW Post-Secondary Scholarship**  
\$1,000 June 30

**David Ellis Scholarship**  
\$500 June 30

**Westray Post-Secondary Scholarship**  
\$2,500 June 30 (Stellarton area)

**USW Lifelong Learning Scholarship**  
\$1,000 June 30

**Rudychuk Scholarship Placement Program**  
One-to-two-month placement  
No deadline

More information, eligibility criteria and application forms:

- Download at [www.usw.ca/scholarships](http://www.usw.ca/scholarships)
- Call 416-487-1571
- Email [scholarships@usw.ca](mailto:scholarships@usw.ca)

## Woman of Steel Recognized for Lifetime Achievement

**Lena Sutton** continues to lead and inspire. "Be mentors to other women, whether younger or older, so we can make a difference in our community and the world," she said, concluding her acceptance speech by encouraging others.

Before a crowd of over 1,000 guests at the Hamilton Convention Centre, Lena was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the YWCA Hamilton Women of Distinction Awards on March 5.

A feminist, trade unionist and community builder, Lena is the first Canadian woman appointed to the International Executive Board of SOAR (Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees).

Many of us have worked with Lena – in our union work, volunteer work, or through activism with the New Democratic Party. Many of us have donated to worthy initiatives or volunteered for the NDP because Lena asked.

"For almost 50 years, she has transformed male-dominated labour organizations, raised thousands of dollars for local food banks and helped thousands of local low-income people file their taxes and get out to vote. She educates and encourages the next generation of women to take leadership roles and still volunteers more than 30 hours a week," noted YWCA Hamilton in its profile of Lena.

"When I became a member of the United Steelworkers and became active in my local union, I saw and experienced in my workplace the inequality of women in pay and promotion," Lena said, in her acceptance speech.

"It was through my union courses that I saw I could make a difference in fighting for those who have less and deserve more."

Lena began her union career in 1974 when she was hired into the office of ERCO Industries, a phosphorus plant in her hometown of Long Harbour, N.L., and became an active member of USW Local 7711.

Today, Lena is the District 6 SOAR Co-ordinator and President of SOAR Chapter 10 in Hamilton. She has served on the executive of the Ontario Federation of Union Retirees (OFUR) and currently serves on the executive of the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC). She is the recipient of a prestigious Jefferson Award and the Lynn Williams Award for Service.

Congratulations, Lena, from all of us at USW District 6! ■

*Lena Sutton*

**Lena Sutton**  
2020 YWCA Hamilton  
Woman of Distinction



Photo: Mike Hnatjuk



# BARGAINING SUCCESSES



## New contracts benefit Steelworkers and entire community

An entire community will benefit from five-year agreements ratified by 400 members of Locals 7940 and 8794 at steelmaker Ivaco Rolling Mills, by far the largest employer in the town of L'Orignal, Ont. Annual wage increases of 2% will raise top rates to \$35.98 for production workers and \$40.83 for tradespeople by the end of the agreements. The contracts also improve language, premiums and benefits.



## Long-term-care workers break new ground in arbitration

Long-term-care workers at Country Village Homes in Windsor, Ont., secured new language including a 17-week EI top-up to 75% for pregnancy and parental leave. The three-year agreement, reached through interest arbitration, also provides 1.5% annual wage increases and improvements in pensions and vision care.



## Voisey's Bay members reach long-term deal with Vale

Following prolonged bargaining with mining giant Vale, production and maintenance workers at the company's Voisey's Bay operations reached a five-year collective agreement providing total wage increases of 11.25% as well as improvements to premiums and benefits including vision care, safety footwear allowance, AD&D coverage and life insurance.



## Casino employees win wage, pension improvements

Local 8748-18 members in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., recently ratified a five-year collective agreement with Gateway Casinos. The agreement calls for total wage increases of 12.5% over the contract's term, as well as improvements to pensions and several language clauses. The contract covers more than 100 workers in the casino's food and beverage, cage and cash, customer service, slots and table games departments.



## Ventilation workers achieve strong language on DV leave

Members employed at Schauenburg Industries in North Bay, Ont., negotiated a five-year agreement with strong language on domestic and family violence leave and support. The contract provides total wage increases of 10%, a ratification bonus and benefits improvements including paramedical services and an employee and family assistance program. Members include machine operators and fabricators of ventilation products for mining and tunnelling.



## Security guards obtain new housing clause for snow days

A two-year contract negotiated by security guards employed by ASAP Secured in Goderich, Ont., includes a unique clause addressing members' needs – paid accommodations when driving home after work becomes unsafe due to snow squalls in the Lake Huron community. The agreement also provides a \$1 hourly wage increase, improvements in vacation entitlement, sick leave and benefits, and reimbursement for licensing and first-aid training costs.



## KL Power employees make wide-ranging gains

Kirkland Lake Power employees negotiated a three-year deal providing total wage increases of 7.9%, a \$2,000 ratification bonus, increases in shift premiums and group RRSP improvements. Wide-ranging gains were made in areas throughout the contract, including sick pay, boot and clothing allowances, vacations, scheduling, overtime posting and medical certificates.

# BARGAINING SUCCESSES



## Care workers negotiate anti-violence/harassment training

Local 6709-11 members who provide nursing care and other services to residents of Riverwood Senior Living in Alliston, Ont., negotiated a three-year agreement that calls for third-party anti-violence and anti-harassment training. The contract provides 2% annual wage increases and improvements to union representation, staffing and shift premiums, uniform allowance, overtime provisions and a ratification bonus.



## Auto glass workers overcome concessions, strengthen contract

The 220 members of Local 252-G, who manufacture auto windshields at Pilkington Glass of Canada in Collingwood, Ont., overcame concession demands and negotiated an improved collective agreement providing wage and pension increases, a \$400 ratification bonus and improvements in benefits, life insurance, vacation, tool allowances and probation language.



## Seniors' home employees improve pay, conditions in second CBA

Employees at Chartwell Hollandview Trail Retirement Residence in Aurora, Ont., made new gains in their second collective agreement since joining the USW. The three-year contract provides 2% annual wage increases, improvements in pensions, vision care, shift premiums and sick leave, as well as domestic violence language.



## TMS International members boost wages, benefits

Members at TMS International Canada in L'Orignal, Ont., negotiated total wage hikes of \$1.50 an hour, as well as cost-of-living increases, that will raise hourly rates to a range of \$33 to \$36 over three years. The agreement improves pensions and benefits and includes early-retirement provisions. The workers provide industrial services to the Ivaco Rolling Mills steelmaking operations also located in L'Orignal.



## Pemco Steel members secure economic gains

Members at Pemco Steel, a division of Russell Metals in Pembroke, Ont., made economic gains in a three-year contract that took effect Jan. 1. General wage increases will be 40 cents per hour per year, while material handlers received a \$1 hourly increase in the first year. The agreement provided a \$600 lump-sum payment to all members and improves shift premiums and vacation entitlement.



## Three security guard units reach agreements in N.L.

Local 9342 members working at three different security companies in Newfoundland and Labrador successfully negotiated separate agreements recently. Members working at Securitas in St. John's ratified a three-year contract with language improvements and wage increases totalling 5.5% and workers at Shannahan's Investigation and Security in Mount Pearl negotiated a three-year deal with 1.5% annual wage hikes and improved language. Members working at GardaWorld in several communities reached a five-year agreement with total wage increases of 13.9% as well as higher premiums and improved vacation entitlement.

**Locals and Staff Reps:** Let us know about your bargaining successes for future issues of **News@6**. Send details and contact information to [communications@usw.ca](mailto:communications@usw.ca), as well as informing your district.

# Defending Injured Steelworkers



After a USW member working in the forestry sector in Northern Ontario suffered a serious injury that ultimately required knee-replacement surgery, he sought workers' compensation benefits. The heavy equipment operator's claim was rejected by the province's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

A non-union worker in such a predicament would face the daunting and potentially costly prospect of fighting the WSIB ruling.

In this case however, the Steelworker had the USW District 6 Injured Workers Assistance Program (IWAP) on his side. An IWAP representative appealed the case at Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Tribunal – and won. The USW member received \$168,000 in lost income.

"That's why we're here, to represent our members – free of charge – who have been unfairly denied compensation and benefits," says Jim Pasel, Co-ordinator of the IWAP.

"Our representatives are all local USW activists who are trained for this work, to help their fellow members," Pasel says. "They're not lawyers, but they have a great track record – our success rate in appeals is 91.3%."

The IWAP was established in 2007 to represent USW members fighting a complex system that often makes it

difficult to obtain compensation and other benefits. The program has 20 trained representatives – 10 men and 10 women – who argue appeals of rejected compensation claims.

Pasel is proud that the program has helped so many USW members and retirees. Recent successes range from securing benefits for women suffering from occupational asthma; winning pension benefits, home renovations and assisted care for a worker disabled on the job; and winning cases for former rubber workers suffering from occupational disease.

***That's why we're here, to represent our members – free of charge – who have been unfairly denied compensation and benefits.***

– Jim Pasel, IWAP Co-ordinator

To qualify for IWAP representation, USW locals must officially join the program and contribute payments of 50 cents per member, per month. However, payments don't increase a local's costs, as they're drawn from the local's existing per-capita payments to the USW and re-directed by the union to the program. Currently, 105 USW locals participate in the IWAP.

It's easy for your local to join the USW District 6 IWAP! Request a registration form from the IWAP office at 1-877-836-9291, or from the District 6 office at 416-243-8792, or download the form online at [www.usw.ca/iwap](http://www.usw.ca/iwap). ■

## District 6 Injured Workers Assistance Program

- Providing expert representation for all compensation claims
- Representation at all levels of the compensation process, including return-to-work meetings, mediation, appeals and tribunals
- 20 representatives trained to provide assistance to USW members
- Proven track record – 91.3% success rate in appeals
- Available to all USW District 6 Locals, for only 50 cents per member, per month
- Enrol your Local today!

[www.usw.ca/iwap](http://www.usw.ca/iwap)

## DISTRICT 6 News from the Locals



### • Benefit Fund In Effect for Scully Mine Retirees

A new fund came into effect on April 1, to help provide crucial health benefits to Scully Mine retirees in Wabush, N.L.

The Community Fund for Scully Mine Retirees, which will help pensioners with medication and vision care costs, was created after more than a year of work and planning by USW officials. The retirees' benefits were eliminated when Cliffs Natural Resources idled its Canadian operations and filed for creditor protection in 2015.

The benefit program was financed with a USW Local 6285 fund as well as through a funding commitment negotiated between the union and Tacora Resources, which purchased Scully Mine and restarted the operations last year, bringing badly needed jobs to the community.



Scully Mine retiree Ron Matthews, displaying his new benefit card.

As of April 1, 2020, retirees had new benefits cards in their possession and were able to use them for prescription medication and vision care.

"It's a positive development for retirees who had faced significant hardship and who are now receiving assistance for the benefits they need," said District 6 Director Marty Warren.

### • Personal Support Workers Collaborate with Employers for Training

Steelworkers in Prescott-Russell, in Eastern Ontario, have been working with a local employment agency on issues faced by personal support workers (PSWs) in the chronically underfunded long-term care system. Common problems include short-staffing that undermines patient care and safety.

The USW represents almost 600 members working in health care in the area, 400 of whom work in long-term care.

USW Area Co-ordinator Richard Leblanc serves on the USW Health Care Workers Council representing District 6. Leblanc reached out to the local Employment Services Centre (ESCP) in Hawkesbury, which responded by organizing a roundtable with the USW, local health-care and long-term care providers and the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

From there, the group succeeded in securing provincial funding for the employment agency for a pilot project for

enhanced PSW training and recruitment. The project will train 30 new PSWs as well as offer a tuition-free training program for PSWs in Prescott-Russell.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the training planned for March was postponed. But the project is addressing a need that's even more obvious now: recruiting and supporting PSWs in the critically understaffed long-term care sector.

"On behalf of the entire USW organization, I thank each and every one of you and your members for all the incredible work and sacrifices you're making to assist some of the most vulnerable members of your respective communities," said Leblanc in an email to the members of the USW Health Care Workers Council in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Steelworkers everywhere echo that statement of appreciation. For those on the front lines during this crisis: Thank You!



### • #NoCutstoEducation!

Steelworkers have been bringing solidarity to teachers and educators during one-day walkouts and protests to defend our children and stop the Ford government's cuts to education.





**Waterfront Park Wins Design Award**

At the 2018 District 6 Power Up Conference, we spent the day outside doing work at Harbourview Park in Collingwood. The park, that includes an Indigenous gathering circle – Awen

Gathering Place – has been recognized with a 2020 Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) Award of Excellence for park facility design. Thanks to everyone who helped out!

**Gerard's Legacy Honoured**

He may be retired, but he's not fading away. Leo W. Gerard, USW International President Emeritus, has been awarded the Ellen Meikins Wood Prize from the Broadbent Institute. The award recognizes Gerard's outstanding contributions to social and economic justice and decades of service to progressive movements. In addition, Gerard was honoured in Sudbury with the creation of the Leo Gerard Legacy Fund, a new student scholarship program and lecture series at Laurentian University. Congrats, Leo!



**International Women's Day Celebrations**

Steelworkers gathered to celebrate March 8, International Women's Day, with women's breakfasts in Cambridge, Toronto (Mary Spratt Breakfast) and Hamilton. This photo is from the Hamilton Steelworkers' Norma Berti Breakfast.

**New Training Space in Sault Ste. Marie**

A new training facility in Sault Ste. Marie means more educational and leadership opportunities for USW members in the region. Opened in January 2020, the labour-oriented classroom has already held courses such as Stewards, Unionism on Turtle Island and Mental Health First Aid. Thanks to Area Coordinator Marc Ayotte and Maureen Grawbarger for making this happen. The local classroom and meeting space will reduce the costs to USW locals of training activists, who previously had to travel to Southern

Ontario for courses. "We are so pleased with the new training and meeting room at our main hall. Normally, we would all crowd into an office for meetings, but with the addition of USW's training room, we have been able to use it for training sessions, monthly membership meetings and unit meetings. We have already noticed an increase in members attending our monthly meetings," said Jacquie Godin, USW Local 8748 President.

**USW 6500 Contributes to United Way**

The USW's United Way campaign in Sudbury was a great success. Members of USW Local 6500 and employer Vale donated \$473,278 to the United Way Centraide North

East Ontario as part of the annual campaign. The funds go towards tackling local issues such as homelessness and mental health, amongst others in the Greater Sudbury Area.

**Tampon Tuesday Helps Women in Poverty**

In Sault Ste. Marie, Steelworkers took part in Tampon Tuesday, a United Way event to collect menstruation products for women in poverty. Tampon Tuesday received support from USW locals 9548, 2724 and USW District 6 along with donations from businesses, unions and labour

allies. The campaign collected 13,000 products, enough for 56 women for a full year. Tampon Tuesday reduces the stigma around menstruation and celebrates women in the leadup to International Women's Day.





# DISTRICT 6 News from the Locals



## • Women's Committee Active in Chalk River

Women from USW locals 4096 and 1568, members of the Chalk River Women of Steel Committee, handed out cards on March 5, wishing everyone a happy International Women's Day. Members were also able to represent USW

at the Deep River International Women's Day dinner, raising funds for the local Bernadette McCann House and for a new fund at the Deep River Community Foundation that will support women's issues.



## • Black History Month Celebrated

The District 6 Human Rights Committee celebrated Black History Month with a dinner-dance at the Leo Gerard Centre in Peel-Halton on Feb. 22. Billed as "An Empowering Celebration," the committee organized inspiring speakers, music and entertainment. Proceeds support the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists' (CBTU) Youth HUB Camp for families that would otherwise not be able to afford to send their kids to camp. The camp is free and no children are turned away.

## • Jason Card Wins Health and Safety Award

Congrats to Jason Card, health and safety activist of the year in northwestern Ontario! Long-serving USW Local 9422 president and member of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and the District 6 Health and Safety Committee, Jason has been a health and safety activist throughout his working life at the remote Impala mine, north of Thunder Bay. Jason was instrumental in bargaining for an employer-paid full-time elected health and safety representative.



# DISTRICT 6 News from the Locals



## • Saving Lives on the Job

Three recently unionized members at Casino Flamboro in Dundas, Ont., members of USW Local 2000, responded to an urgent medical emergency when a casino patron suffered a heart attack. The three security officers used their advanced first aid training to resuscitate the patron who had been without oxygen and was non-responsive. Darrell Todoroff, Ashley Bubovich and Cristiano Da Silva received a Sapphire Life Saving Award from the employer on Nov. 4, 2019.



## • Ottawa Local Initiates Support for Philippines

Members from USW Local 8327 in Ottawa approached the Steelworkers Humanity Fund after the eruption of the Taal Volcano in the Philippines. Many members of the local, who work at Park Place Retirement Home, have Filipino heritage. The volcano's eruption required the immediate evacuation of thousands of families from the surrounding areas. The Humanity Fund was able to

contribute \$7,000 to support those affected. Thanks to their initiative, Unit Chair Jarmaine Canares-Aguilando and Staff Representative Dave Lipton presented a cheque to Oxfam Canada, in charge of channeling the relief funds. The support will be used to provide clean water, sanitation and health care supplies to those displaced until they can safely return home.





## Local USW Activists Key to Trade Victory

**Local Steelworkers** activists have once again played a key role in a trade dispute victory that protects USW members and other Canadian workers from illegal dumping and unfair trade practices of foreign steel producers.

In March, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT) ruled in favour of renewing a previous order that had determined unfair dumping of hot-rolled steel plate by numerous foreign producers threatened Canadian jobs and steelmakers. The ruling upholds duties against foreign exporters engaging in unfair trade practices, including those in Brazil, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Denmark and Italy.

A Steelworkers delegation provided key evidence at a hearing conducted by the CITT. Steelworkers witnesses included John Kallio, Recording Secretary of USW Local 2251, and Rebecca McCracken, President of USW Local 2724, as well

*The testimony of the USW's witnesses was useful and important ....*

**Canadian International Trade Tribunal**

as Mark Rowlinson, Assistant to the National Director.

Locals 2251 and 2724 represent USW members working at Sault Ste. Marie steelmaker Algoma. The CITT agreed with the USW's evidence that unfair dumping of foreign steel exports would threaten the viability of Canadian producers such as Algoma and the jobs of Canadian workers.

"The testimony of the USW's witnesses was useful and important in illustrating how falling prices in the steel sector can affect employment at Algoma and other domestic producers," the CITT stated in its ruling.

The USW members provided convincing evidence that failure to maintain anti-dumping duties would "likely impact employment and the employees directly and indirectly involved in the production

of plate in Canada," and "likely result in material injury to the domestic industry," the ruling added.

The CITT ruled that anti-dumping measures will be renewed on the prescribed steel plate exporters for another five years.

Since it secured the right to participate in such cases before the CITT, USW has won the majority of those cases, based on legal arguments and testimony by union members.

"These are important victories for our members and their communities," said USW District 6 Director Mary Warren. "Steelworkers leaders and particularly our local activists are standing up for good jobs, before trade tribunals, in our legislatures, in our workplaces, in collective bargaining and in our communities." ■

Find useful and up-to-date information for USW members on COVID-19:

[usw.ca/covid19](https://usw.ca/covid19)