

USW@Work

*Time Is Up
Federal Government*

**Protect Workers
During Bankruptcies**



Practising Our

USW@Work
June 2019

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Printed on USW-certified paper.

On the cover: Steelworkers from across Canada were on Parliament Hill in May 2019 lobbying MPs to change bankruptcy and insolvency laws to put "Workers and Retirees First."
Cover photo: Andrew Meade



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EVERY DAY, I'm inspired by the solidarity of our members – for each other, for our communities and around the world.

Our Steelworkers' solidarity infuses everything we do.

Recently, I brought some Steelworkers solidarity to support the Canadian Football League Players' Association (CFLPA) at the bargaining table. I'm proud we've begun a strategic alliance with the CFLPA, based on our common commitment to dignity and respect for our members.

All people, regardless of their job, deserve solid representation, equity and fairness at work. Our union has a history of helping athletes in their struggle for respect and recognition. Our alliance with the CFLPA will further our common pursuit to protect the rights of employees across Canada.

Our union already has a connection with CFL players, through our support and collaboration on the Be More Than a Bystander program that trains Steelworkers and football players to be spokespeople on ending harassment and violence against women.

This program builds on the great work of our Women of Steel to make anti-violence initiatives a priority for our entire union.



Solidarity

USW activists across Canada and our North American leadership brought relentless pressure on the Canadian and American governments, leading to an agreement in May to lift the illegal tariffs on steel and aluminum. And we continue our fight to demand the Trudeau government impose critical measures needed to protect our industries from foreign dumping.

We are standing strong for retirees and worker pensions. Our members were on Parliament Hill in May, meeting with politicians to ask for a commitment to put retirees first by including protection for retired workers in bankruptcy situations in all the parties' platforms for the fall 2019 election.

Practising solidarity includes teaming up with other employee groups in the university sector in an innovative defined-benefit pension plan that will protect the future retirements of thousands of our members in locals 2010, 1998 and 4120.

I am awed and inspired by our members from Local 9700 in Bécancour, Que., who are showing us what solidarity looks like in their struggle against the greed and unfairness of ABI, owned by global giants Alcoa and Rio Tinto.

Because they are Steelworkers, they have the strength of workers from around the world behind them. It was an honour to join a Local 9700 delegation, led by president Clément Masse, at the Australian Workers' Union's (AWU) national conference to build international solidarity for these members.

Clément spoke passionately about his members' fight, as he did at our National Policy Conference in Vancouver, where locals and delegates pledged over \$100,000 to support Local 9700 families.

Coming together to make a difference for working people is second nature for Steelworkers. It's part of what makes me so proud of our union every day.

Steelworkers continue to build the bonds of solidarity – for workers' rights, for health and safety, for human rights and equality. For decent work. For corporate accountability. For fair trade. For our retirees and our Next Generation.

Thank you for all you do, today and every day.

Ken Neumann
National Director

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‘Alcoa Is Not God’

Locked-out Steelworkers at ABI smelter stand strong against multinationals.

LOCKED OUT of their jobs at the ABI aluminum smelter in Bécancour, Que., since January 2018, USW Local 9700 members are as united as ever, ramping up solidarity actions this spring that culminated with a massive community rally in May.

Thousands of supporters from across Quebec and beyond joined the 1,030 locked-out Steelworkers for the May 25 rally in Trois-Rivières, just across the St. Lawrence River from the ABI smelter.

The huge demonstration confirmed widespread

support for the locked-out workers against ABI and Quebec Premier François Legault’s right-wing government that has sided with multinationals Alcoa and Rio Tinto. Alcoa owns 75% of the ABI smelter, with Rio Tinto holding the remaining 25%.

‘A Lockout Is Not an Act of God’

At the May 25 solidarity rally, as well as a demonstration in March at the National Assembly of Quebec, Steelworkers and their supporters waved signs with messages including “A

lockout is not an Act of God” and “Alcoa is not God.”

The messages referred to a scandalous contract between ABI and the Quebec government’s public utility, Hydro-Québec. The contract allows ABI to classify its lockout of employees as an ‘Act of God’ that absolves the company of its electricity-purchasing commitments with Hydro-Québec.

The absurd Act of God clause not only makes it easier for Alcoa to lock out workers, it deprives Quebecers of massive hydro revenues – \$165 million in 2018 alone.

During last fall’s Quebec election campaign, François Legault and his Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) party were sympathetic with the locked-out Steelworkers at ABI.

In campaign mode, Legault criticized the governing Liberals for mishandling the labour dispute and suggested the irresponsible contract between ABI and Hydro-Québec could be “broken” and “renegotiated.”



After winning the election, however, Legault abandoned his sympathies for the workers and chose to support Alcoa and Rio Tinto.

Legault supports the multinationals even though they have rejected several compromise proposals from the union as well as the option of arbitration, instead prolonging the dispute by renegeing on earlier commitments made in bargaining and demanding more concessions.

Legault Channels Duplessis

Legault's craven about-face has drawn widespread public condemnation. Media commentators have compared his pro-corporate, anti-worker interference in the labour dispute to the "Great Darkness" regime of former authoritarian, anti-union Premier Maurice Duplessis.

USW Quebec Director Alain Croteau denounced Legault for ignoring the fact that the lockout continues strictly due to ABI's increasing demands for concessions.

Legault has attempted to distract from the real issues by publicly vilifying ABI workers for earning middle-class incomes, even though wages actually

are not at issue in the lockout, Croteau noted.

"The premier is silent on the salary of the CEO of a company that takes workers and an entire region hostage, that impoverishes Quebec and that has caused all Quebecers to lose \$165 million," Croteau said, referring to Alcoa CEO Roy Harvey, who enjoys a \$13-million annual salary following a 223% pay increase over the last two years.

Global Campaign Launched

At the USW National Policy Conference in Vancouver in April, delegates pledged more than \$100,000 from the floor to support the locked-out workers, while the union announced a global campaign to pressure Alcoa to end the lockout and negotiate a settlement.

"Wherever Alcoa has facilities, suppliers, customers – we'll be there," USW International President Leo W. Gerard told delegates.

"It will take as long as it takes, but we will show them that they have to negotiate a collective agreement with the ABI workers," Gerard said.

The campaign to build interna-

tional solidarity began the next day with a delegation led by Local 9700 President Clément Masse travelling to Australia. The ABI workers received the support of the Australian Workers' Union – representing thousands of Alcoa and Rio Tinto workers – to confront the multinationals' anti-labour practices.

Challenging Alcoa Shareholders

On May 8, hundreds of Steelworkers converged on Alcoa's annual general meeting in Pittsburgh, challenging Alcoa shareholders to issue a mandate to executives and demand a negotiated resolution to the lockout.

The ABI lockout has deprived Alcoa of significant revenues while the company's shares have lost half their value, Masse said at the meeting.

"This is a costly lockout that is depriving Alcoa of one of its largest production capacities at a plant with the lowest labour costs in North America," he said.

"Workers are eager to get back to manufacturing quality aluminum, but that process must include a negotiated agreement and mutual respect." ■

Support USW Local 9700 Families

USW locals and members are urged to support the families of Local 9700 members, locked out since Jan. 11, 2018. Cheques can be mailed to:

Syndicat des Métallos, SL 9700
8310, rue Desormeaux
Bécancour (Québec)
G9H 2X2

* Make cheques payable to:
Métallos SL 9700 F.D.P.

Donate online at:
www.metallos.org/lockout-abi



Be More Than a Bystander



Photo: Jason Franson / THE CANADIAN PRESS

STEELWORKERS are teaming up with football players and the Ending Violence Association of B.C. (EVA BC) to change our culture and speak out against violence against women through the District 3 program Be More Than a Bystander.

It's about talking tough about sexism, socialized masculinity and misogyny. It's about breaking the silence on violence against women. And it's about understanding the history of women's leadership in working to end violence against women.

It started in 2015 with a District 3 call for locals to sponsor a program with the BC Federation of Labour to train BC Lions football players to be anti-violence spokesmen at high school visits.

But the locals wanted more than sponsorship; they wanted to get active.

So in 2016, BC Lions football player Angus Reid presented Be More Than a Bystander to over 125 USW members at the

District 3 Summer School.

That led to a partnership with EVA BC to develop a training program for Steelworkers spokesmen.

Iain Thistlethwaite, a pipefitter with Highland Valley Copper (Teck) in Kamloops, B.C., and a member of USW Local 7619, didn't hesitate to apply. A union activist for more than 20 years, Iain experienced violence as a youth and is adamant about speaking up, including as an advocate for women's issues.

The training was intensive and emotionally taxing, but Iain appreciated it.

"I'm glad we get to be a part of that. To hopefully change the culture."

Today, over a dozen USW spokesmen are available to deliver Be More Than a Bystander training and most local leadership have attended a session, sparking more requests.

The model is proliferating. District 3 Education Co-ordi-

nator Dayna Sykes and Staff Representative Michelle Laurie have promoted the program in the U.S., the U.K. and at the USW's 2018 National/International Women's Conference and National Policy Conference.

Iain helped introduce the program to his local. Dayna is expanding the program throughout USW workplaces in District 3.

At the end of a session, participants usually hang out sharing reactions and personal experiences, Iain says.

"Members come forward and want to get involved. Someone always says 'It's about time.'"

Anti-violence work is not new to our union. Our women's committees work tirelessly in this area with great support from locals and members. Be More Than a Bystander amplifies this work.

For more information, contact District 3 Education Co-ordinator Dayna Sykes: dsykes@usw.ca. ■

Elections Matter

Jagmeet Singh's NDP Is On Our Side

AT THE CLOSE OF 2018,

Justin Trudeau's Liberals looked like a shoo-in for a second term. The NDP and Jagmeet Singh were low in the polls with Andrew Scheer's Conservatives struggling in second.

So much has changed. The SNC-Lavalin scandal has exposed a prime minister in the pockets of powerful interests. His self-proclaimed feminist credentials are in jeopardy with the resignations and caucus ejections of two top ministers, Jody Wilson-Raybould and Jane Philpott.

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh is now an elected Member of Parliament, winning the Burnaby South by-election by a wide margin.

Jagmeet is in the media more and earning favourable reviews from unlikely places. Globe and Mail columnist John Ibbitson wrote a glowing piece about Jagmeet's poignant personal

memoir, *Love and Courage: My Story of Family, Resilience and Overcoming the Unexpected*.

Without scary Stephen Harper, Liberals are whipping up fear of Scheer by connecting him to the cuts and attacks of Jason Kenney in Alberta and Doug Ford in Ontario.

It feels a bit fake. Much like the prime minister when he claims he cares about the middle class.

Liberals abandoned workers and retirees in the recent budget, calling on participants in bankruptcy proceedings to "act in good faith" without any significant changes to existing law.

Not all our members support the NDP. But we call on Steelworkers to do their homework and look at the policies and priorities of all the parties. The only party that is in our corner, on the side of workers, is the NDP.

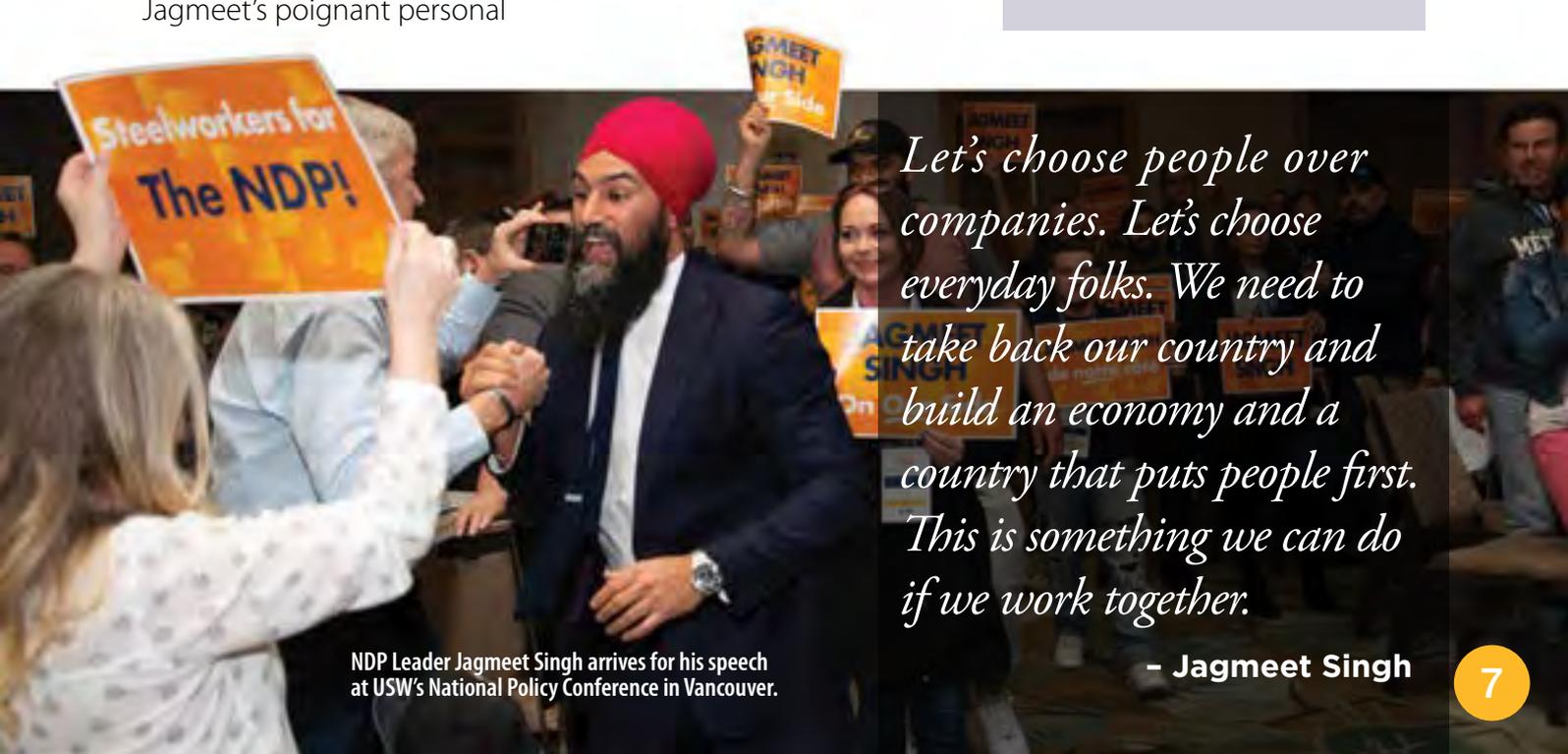
At our recent National Policy Conference, Jagmeet acknowledged our work at the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT). "Steelworkers are the foundation of our fight for a progressive Canada," he said.

The NDP is the only party that refused to ratify the new USMCA unless steel and aluminum tariffs are lifted.

When the election comes, get active with Steelworkers Vote and volunteer for local NDP candidates so we can elect a government that's on the side of working people. ■

Broken Liberal Promises

- Abandoned electoral reform
- Signed bad trade agreements
- No action to end pension theft
- Bungled Indigenous rights recognition
- No national housing strategy (until after the 2019 election)

A photograph of Jagmeet Singh, NDP leader, wearing a red turban and a dark suit, shaking hands with a woman at a campaign event. In the background, other people are holding signs, including one that says "Steelworkers for The NDP!".

Let's choose people over companies. Let's choose everyday folks. We need to take back our country and build an economy and a country that puts people first. This is something we can do if we work together.

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh arrives for his speech at USW's National Policy Conference in Vancouver.

– Jagmeet Singh



Canada is the only G8 country without a national suicide prevention strategy.

Tanya Talaga

Taking Action for Children

Tanya Talaga and Paul Henczel inspire social change at USW

Tanya Talaga

AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST

and author Tanya Talaga didn't expect to be a public speaker.

As the Atkinson fellow in public policy, Talaga was on sabbatical, researching and writing about youth suicide in Indigenous communities.

When asked to deliver the CBC Massey Lectures, five radio broadcasts in front of a live audience, she felt reluctant. But she realized it would provide her an opportunity to share what she'd found more widely and make a louder call for action.

Talaga brought her story to our USW National Policy Conference because "Steelworkers have a history of fighting for those less fortunate than themselves."

"Suicide is preventable. Every life gone is an opportunity lost," she said.

Looking into youth suicide, Talaga found not much was working. So she looked deeper, discovering that colonized nations have failed collectively to uphold the basic rights of Indigenous children, such as the right to clean water, to safe homes, to a high school education and health care.

From Australia to America and northern Norway, "the Indigenous experience in all of these colonized nations are so, so familiar" – the violent removal from land, separating families from children, suppressing traditional languages and ways of life and the residential school experience, she said.

Talaga told the painful story of the suicides of seven girls from Wapekeka First Nation and Poplar Hill First Nation.

Wapekeka Chief Brennan Sainnawap sent an urgent letter

to Ottawa in the summer of 2016 asking for immediate assistance when the community learned that several girls were planning to take their own lives. The chief called for \$376,000 for four emergency health workers.

But Ottawa denied the funding because "it was an awkward time in the budget cycle."

Tackling youth suicide requires alliances, resistance and unity, Talaga said, calling on Steelworkers to join this struggle.

"We are more similar than different. We all want the same things for all of our children. We should be working together to get there," she said.

"The fight for the right to raise all of our children to the best we can is for us all. It is all of our fight ... Wouldn't it be a better Canada if we all worked together to achieve that?"

We need to tear down the barriers of stigma that block access to services and recovery.

Paul Henczel



en and for Mental Health

National Policy Conference.

Crushed Alive

Paul Henczel worked in a sawmill. He didn't expect to be crushed alive.

In 2010, working to release a jammed log, he was crushed when the machine was restarted. Somehow he survived. He credits his colleagues who performed CPR until help arrived, and his wife for giving him hope.

He continues to live with invisible injuries – cognitive disorder, permanent brain injury, spine, lung, shoulder and nerve damage and severe post-traumatic stress disorder.

While he looks fine, he's suffering. He came to USW's National Policy Conference to talk about the stigma of invisible injuries.

Losing his identity, his sense of control, suffering from the financial strain on his family,

Henczel felt like giving up, which made it hard to get the help he needed.

Incredibly, sharing his story is what helped. "Stories make the invisible visible," he said.

Telling his story of injury, recovery and overcoming the stigma of invisible injuries has given Henczel back his voice, identity and self-worth.

His remarkable story is full of emotion. It's wrenching to hear him tell it. Seeing him alive, walking on a stage after having gone through such a harrowing workplace incident is inspiring.

Henczel's lesson is relatable to Steelworkers who are champions for health and safety, including mental health and battling stigma.

"We need to tear down the barriers of stigma that block access to services and recovery,"

he said. "As a society, there is an increased need for creating awareness and changing attitudes around invisible injuries."

The Power of Story

Through telling stories, Tanya Talaga and Paul Henczel made emotional connections with Steelworkers at the policy conference.

Talaga's message is for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians to find a path forward to health and respect for all.

Henczel seeks to silence stigma.

Both speakers seek societal change. Both inspire through the power of storytelling. ■

Watch Tanya Talaga's presentation to the National Policy Conference on our Facebook page under videos.

 [uswmetallos](#)

After leading the campaign to eliminate tariffs, Steelworkers continue the fight against dumping and predatory trade.

AFTER A YEAR-LONG roller-coaster ride, there was a collective sigh of relief among Canadian Steelworkers with the announcement in May of an agreement between Canada and the United States to end illegal U.S. tariffs on our aluminum and steel exports.

Since June 2018, thousands of Steelworkers families had endured the anxiety, uncertainty – and in hundreds of cases, lost jobs – caused by a saga that was drawn out by federal government inaction, misinformation and failure to tackle challenges head-on.

Throughout this ordeal, it was Steelworkers – more than any other group – that led the campaign to end the baseless U.S. ‘national security’ tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum.

From our local activists, to our district, national and international leadership, we pushed relentlessly in Canada and the U.S. to compel governments to accept that these tariffs were harmful and made no sense.

Pushing the Agenda on Both Sides of the Border

“Our union pushed as hard as we could – in Canada and in the U.S. – for these tariffs to be lifted. We finally achieved that goal, but it should have been resolved long ago,” USW National Director Ken Neumann said in May.

“These absurd tariffs were particularly harmful because Canada and the U.S. have highly integrated markets in steel and aluminum. The tariffs had a significant effect on our members in Canada, with more than 600 layoffs in the steel sector,” Neumann said.

“We also heard from Canadian producers in the aluminum and steel sectors that new investments were being put on hold or threatened due to the instability caused by the tariffs.”

From the beginning, Steelworkers on both sides of the border were unequivocal in our opposition to the tariffs of 25% on Canadian steel and 10% on Canadian aluminum.

In May 2018, the USW International Executive Board unanimously and publicly condemned the tariffs and U.S. President Donald Trump’s approach to the Canada-U.S. trading relationship.

Throughout the following year, the USW’s international strength and political alliances exerted mounting pressure on governments in both countries to resolve the issue.

“From day one, we made it clear that the real problem wasn’t Canada, but those countries that are undermining the trading system through predatory trade practices and non-market policies that

have created massive overcapacity and trade imbalance,” USW International President Leo W. Gerard said when the agreement was reached in May.

Forcing the Liberals’ Hand

Initially, the federal Liberal government appeared more interested in trying to placate the Trump administration rather than standing up for Canadian steel and aluminum workers.

Canadians were shocked to learn the Liberals signed on to a renegotiated North American Free Trade Agreement making massive concessions to the U.S., without insisting that Trump make good on a promise to lift the illegal tariffs in return.

The Liberals attempted to portray the tariffs and the trade negotiations as separate, unrelated issues – an argument that was swiftly exposed as false by the USW and national news media. Revelations on the new NAFTA showed the Liberals had agreed to a trade deal that validated and made accommodations on U.S. tariffs.

More and more, with pressure from the USW and widespread support from the public, community leaders across the country, and steel and aluminum producers, the Liberals were forced to act.

Our Campaign Continues

While the U.S. tariffs have been lifted, the USW continues to urge the Canadian government to impose critical measures needed to defend our steel sector against foreign dumping and unfair trade practices.

Canada remains virtually alone in the world in failing to protect our steel markets, while the U.S., Mexico and Europe have taken strong action to defend their industries from import surges from countries including China, Turkey and India. It is crucial that the federal government impose strong measures to defend Canada's steel sector.

The USW also remains concerned that the tariffs deal reached in May still contains language suggesting the U.S., in rare circumstances, could establish tariffs – 25% on Canadian steel and 10% on aluminum – while limiting Canada's ability to impose counter-measures.

The language states retaliatory action could only be taken on the specific product targeted by tariffs, suggesting Canada could do little to counter any new aluminum tariffs, given the relatively small

volume of U.S. aluminum imported into Canada.

"Steelworkers will continue to stand up for all Canadian steel and aluminum workers and to demand stronger action from our government to strengthen our key industrial and manufacturing sectors," Neumann said. ■



STEEL AND ALUMINUM: USW STANDS STRONG

Photo: Steve Dietz



Local Activism for Global Rights

Lori McDonald at her local Day of Mourning ceremony with materials she shared with Mark's about the treatment of workers in its supply chain.

LORI McDONALD was at the 2018 USW National/International Women's Conference when National Director Ken Neumann told of being in Bangladesh for the one-year anniversary of the Rana Plaza factory collapse.

His voice wavered with emotion as he recalled being with the victims' families on their first chance to walk through the rubble to try to find identifying remains of those who had been so horrifically taken from them.

Hearing Ken, and learning of the women garment workers' struggle for basic rights and decency, Lori signed up to take action.

In March, when the Steelworkers Humanity Fund called for volunteers to take action for worker rights in the global supply chain, Lori responded.

A member of USW Local 2918, Lori is a CNC machine operator

at Ingersoll Machine and Tool (IMT), near London, Ont.

Using materials from the Humanity Fund, she arranged meetings with the manager at her local Mark's store and with her Member of Parliament.

Intentionally wearing a sweater and jeans she'd bought at Mark's, Lori talked with the manager over a pile of folded jeans.

Lori noted how both of them, as women, can count on safe workplaces, decent wages and respect on the job.

"We need to know that the people who are making these clothes for us, that they would have the same privileges – to go to work in good conditions, that they are going to go home safe to their families," Lori said.

Lori shared the materials asking Mark's six questions about the treatment of workers in its supply chain and the manager agreed

to talk with her general manager and speak again with Lori.

Later that day, Lori met with her local MP Dave MacKenzie and asked him to bring her concerns to Parliament and report back.

While activism is new to Lori, she had a positive experience at both meetings and plans to follow up, stay involved and invite others from her workplace to join in.

"Often we don't see outside this box (of our workplace). We need to reach out and hear the stories of our sisters and brothers. The trials and successes. We have to lift each other up. But it has to start at home," Lori said.

Learn more and take action at cleanclothes.org and usw.ca/humanity. ■



Bringing Jobs Back to Quebec and Labrador

Steelworkers agreements will help restart iron ore operations

HUNDREDS of good union jobs will return soon to the iron ore range of northeastern Quebec and western Labrador as a result of new collective agreements negotiated by Steelworkers.

USW Local 6254 in Sept-Îles, Que., recently reached an agreement-in-principle with Bedrock Industries on a collective agreement related to the restart of the Pointe-Noire pellet plant that has been closed for six years.

The deal in Quebec follows the negotiation of a collective agreement between Steelworkers in Labrador and Tacora Resources as part of Tacora's plan to reopen the Scully Mine in Wabush that closed in 2014.

Combined, the two projects are expected to create several hundred new jobs. Steelworkers previously represented workers at both sites, owned by Cliffs Natural Resources before it filed for bankruptcy protection.

In Sept-Îles, the agreement between Steelworkers Local 6254 and Bedrock Industries calls for a new contract to be ratified by workers at the Pointe-Noire pellet plant once it is back in operation.

"This agreement-in-principle is one more step towards restarting the plant," said Local 6254 President Robert Roy.

"The collective agreement features competitive provisions that are in line with what exists in this sector. It will also allow some flexibility in the organization of work to facilitate the restart of production," Roy said.

Scully Mine Restart

In Wabush, Steelworkers and Tacora Resources negotiated a five-year collective agreement for workers at the Scully Mine, where work to restart operations has already begun. The company says more than 300

The USW worked tirelessly to find a buyer and bring good jobs back.

jobs will be created when full production is reached.

"It's been a long time since the Scully Mine was closed and many people were concerned it would be permanently abandoned," USW District 6 Director Marty Warren said.

"The USW worked tirelessly to find a buyer and bring good jobs back to Wabush and Labrador West. Now we're starting to see the community benefits and jobs return," Warren said.

The USW also has established a Community Fund to provide OPEBS (Other Post Employment Benefits) for current retirees of the union at the Scully Mine, with benefit payments scheduled to begin in July this year. ■



Woman of Steel Who Stared Down The Bay

BETH SHYMKO is being remembered by Steelworkers in District 3 and beyond as a pioneering Woman of Steel and labour leader.

Beth, who recently lost her battle with cancer, has left a legacy as a USW Local president, Woman of Steel, organizer, summer school instructor, supporter of numerous USW programs, activist, ally and most importantly, friend and mentor to so many Steelworkers.

Beth served as Local 898 President in Kamloops, B.C., for many years. She earned a reputation for tenacious and courageous leadership in staring down The Bay in the 1990s, when 100 members of a newly unionized department store went on strike for a first contract.

Local 898 strikers employed new tactics and approaches that have now become common in many labour disputes. They embarked on a province-wide tour of Bay stores, picketing, leafleting and convincing customers to cut up their charge cards and return them to the store. They even provided supporters with "Bay, No Way" T-shirts in exchange for their help.

All members of United Steelworkers District 3 extend our deepest condolences to Beth's family and many friends and recognize her legacy of achievement for our union and all working people. ■

NDP Improves Workers' Rights

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S NDP government is modernizing Employment Standards legislation and the Labour Relations Code to advance workers' rights after 16 years of attacks from the previous Liberal government.

"It's been 27 years since legislation on workers' rights has been updated and during that time we saw a viciously anti-worker Liberal government that tore up legal collective agreements and took direct aim at unions," says Stephen Hunt, USW Western Canada Director.

"Now we are starting to undo some of that damage, with more to do in the future."

Hunt says that includes expanding proposed changes to successorship rights to include all sectors, including forestry where loggers face constant contract flipping.

Reviewing Sawmill Tragedies

STEELWORKERS are welcoming the B.C. government's hiring of Vancouver lawyer Lisa Helps to assess WorkSafeBC's actions related to the deadly sawmill explosions at the USW-represented Babine Forest Products and Lakeland Mills.

The explosions in 2012 killed four workers and injured dozens more in the communities of Burns Lake and Prince George in northern B.C. Since that time, the USW has fought for answers and justice for the victims and families who continue to be affected by the tragedies.

"For seven years, we have been standing with victims, families and community members who have been desperate for answers," says USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt. "Through the coroners' inquests, the Dyble Report and the



B.C. NDP Premier John Horgan with USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt and USW National Director Ken Neumann.

“Every B.C. worker deserves to have their successorship rights fully protected, no matter where they work.”

The union will also continue to push for one-step, card check union certification.

“The right to join, to organize and bargain collectively is fundamental and should be available to all workers without undue interference from

employers,” says Hunt.

“I’m pleased that Labour Minister Harry Bains and the NDP government are addressing some of the most egregious and draconian practices that the previous Liberal government inflicted on working people. We look forward to continuing to work with the government on other equally important workplace issues that must be addressed.” ■



Photo: Prince George Citizen

Community members called for a public inquiry following deadly B.C. sawmill explosions in 2012.

Macatee Report, we learned that WorkSafeBC failed to live up to its responsibility to protect the health and safety of workers.”

Hunt cites the revelation, emanating from a USW freedom-of-information request, that WorkSafeBC

circulated an internal document following the explosion at Babine Forest Products and prior to the explosion at Lakeland Mills.

The document stated WorkSafeBC was concerned an enforcement strategy to address wood dust in sawmills would lead to industry pushback. It continues to be a damning indictment of the agency’s culture and must be addressed, Hunt says.

“I’m grateful the British Columbia government is taking this important step to address the many concerns that remain regarding the actions of WorkSafeBC, with the intention of providing recommendations to ensure similar tragedies are prevented. The United Steelworkers looks forward to participating fully in this process.”

A report will be delivered by mid-July 2019. After review, the B.C. attorney general will make public any recommendations related to improving processes or legislation. ■

From manufacturing plants to ski resorts, cheese-making to airport security, health-care providers to education workers and everything in between, USW members across the country negotiate hundreds of good contracts every year. Below is a small sample of our recent bargaining successes.

970%

Ski Resort Employees Achieve 9% Wage Hike Over 3 Years

Employees of the Red Mountain Ski Resort in Rossland, B.C., negotiated a three-year collective agreement providing 3% wage increases each year, additional premiums of \$1.50/hour for ski patrol certifications, domestic/family violence leave and language adding members to the District 3 Union Assistance Plan.

959%

Award-Winning Cheese Makers Get First Contract

New USW members who produce award-winning cheeses at the Fromagerie de l'Île-aux-Grues, located on an island in the St. Lawrence River east of Quebec City, recently negotiated their first collective agreement. The three-year contract includes 5.5% total wage hikes, a compression of the wage grid that provides additional increases of 4% to 12% and increased employer contributions to the pension plan.

946%

Hotel Workers Achieve Best Deal in Recent Memory

Steelworkers at the Westin Toronto Airport Hotel negotiated one of the best contracts in recent memory, a four-year agreement providing total wage increases of 14.5% including an up-front 6% hike. Gains include a new retirement allowance ranging from \$3,000 to \$15,000, domestic violence leave and improved language for housekeeping staff.

951%

Nunavik Mine Workers Strengthen Contract, Boost Wages by 13.75%

A five-year agreement provides total wage increases of 13.75% and much stronger contract provisions for 280 members working for Canadian Royalties at a fly-in, fly-out mining operation in Nunavik. Numerous improvements include new premiums for on-call workers and Nunavik residents working at the site, overtime rates for Saturday and Sunday work, shorter periods to achieve permanent status and improved contracting-out language.

948%

Power Workers Boost Wages, Terms for Out-of-Country Work

About 200 Steelworkers at ABB Varennes, a company near Montreal that manufactures power transformers, will receive 2.5% annual wage increases in a four-year contract that also improves shift bonuses as well as expenses and premiums for members while working in other countries. Other gains include an increased employer contribution to the pension plan, improved time bank for sick days and additional vacation for long-term employees.

140%

Credit Union Employees Ratify Two New Agreements

Employees of two British Columbia credit unions reached three-year agreements that increase wages and improve benefits and contract language. Members at Heritage Credit Union and HG Insurance in Castlegar and Slocan Park, B.C., negotiated a contract with benefit improvements, severance and merger language, domestic violence leave provisions and paid "sick bank" access. Members working at Columbia Valley Credit Union in Golden, B.C., ratified an agreement with improved benefits, paid sick bank access and participation in the Credit Union Central 1 pension plan.

6946 

Retirement Home Workers Improve Wages, Benefits, Contract Language

Members of separate bargaining units of Local 6946, working at two retirement homes in Pembroke, Ont., made gains in recent contract settlements. Workers at Carefor Health and Community Services reached a three-year agreement with 2% annual wage hikes, an increase in starting wage rates, mental health and domestic violence leave and an increase in the employer’s share of benefit premiums. Employees of Chartwell Heritage Manor reached a two-year deal with 2% annual wage increases, improved vision care, vacation entitlement and uniform allowance, mental health and domestic violence leave, integration of the Steelworkers Pension Plan and the addition of receptionists and drivers to coverage by the collective agreement.

9338-05 

Vacation and Sick Pay Banking for Sask. Education Workers

Local 9338-05 members working at the Creighton School Division in northern Saskatchewan ratified an agreement with new provisions including the ability to bank one week per year of special vacation, a retirement bonus from banked sick pay and the inclusion into the collective agreement of an employee family assistance program.

9400 

First Contract Improves Pay, Conditions for Airport Duty-Free Workers

A first contract has brought improvements in wages and conditions for 275 members working for Aer Rianta in the duty-free shop and related areas at Montreal’s Pierre Elliot Trudeau International Airport. The three-year agreement includes 2% annual wage increases and a retroactive 1.5% hike for the first year of bargaining, improved sick leave and employer-paid personal protective equipment and uniforms.

9074-16 

Linen/Uniform Workers Make Wage and Pension Gains

Workers at Canadian Linen & Uniform Services in Winnipeg made gains in wages and retirement plan funding, as well as a \$1,500 ratification bonus, to be followed by a second bonus of \$950 on Oct. 1 of this year. Delivery drivers will receive variable pay increases based on volume, comparable to other members who will receive total increases of 8% between April 2019 and Oct. 1, 2020. Employer contributions to the retirement savings plan increase from 4.5% to 5.5%.

7580 

Strong First Contract for Operating Engineers, Maintenance Workers

Newly organized Steelworkers employed at INEOS Calabrian Corporation in Timmins, Ont., made numerous gains in a first contract that will see hourly wages rise to \$43.51 for operating engineers and \$44.78 for maintenance workers. The two-year agreement includes numerous improvements to benefits and insurance, premiums, statutory holiday pay and provisions on overtime and professional licensing and exams. The company produces sulfur dioxide used in mining and other industrial applications.

9597-2020
8748-1500 

Airport Security Screeners Make Headway on Tech Change, Wages, Benefits

Security screeners at regional airports in Ontario (Kingston, Mount Hope, Sarnia, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Waterloo, Windsor), employed by GardaWorld, negotiated a four-year agreement with total wage increases of 7.25% and an immediate bonus of \$1,200 for full-time workers and \$600 for part-timers. The agreement improves benefits and contract language on issues including gender expression and identity, technological change and domestic violence language and mental health leave.

Ombudsperson Sell-Out

Liberals break human rights promise.

JUSTIN TRUDEAU recently added to his long list of broken “sunny ways” promises, abandoning a commitment to meaningfully address human rights abuses related to Canadian corporate behaviour overseas.

After years of campaigning by Steelworkers and our progressive allies, the Liberals pledged to create an independent ombudsperson’s office with real power to investigate and correct abuses linked to Canadian companies operating in developing countries, particularly in mining and natural resources.

However, the Trudeau government announced in April it was simply appointing a toothless “special advisor” without the powers needed for an effective ombudsperson. Media reported the Liberals succumbed to relentless corporate lobbying.

The USW and many other groups condemned this cynical announcement, which threatens to perpetuate human rights and environmental abuses in developing countries where hundreds of Canadian extractive companies operate.

“This government has betrayed



Mexico: Canadian companies’ mining operations affect workers and communities.

Canadians and vulnerable people in developing countries who expected serious action on human rights,” said USW National Director Ken Neumann.

“The USW and our allies around the world will continue the fight for a strong, truly independent ombudsperson.” ■

USW Family and Community Education Fund

Get Involved

UNION EDUCATION is power. It is at the heart of our work and is the spark for our activists’ deeper union involvement.

Now we are extending the power of education to Steelworker families, our communities and to engage new activists.

The USW Family and Community Education Fund has supported projects such as Steelworker Summer, Family Education Days and NextGen subsidies. Now the fund is expanding in four areas:

- Supporting Steelworker Families



The USW Southern Saskatchewan Area Council and Locals 5890, 5917 and 6717 organized a Family Education Day in 2017.

- Promoting USW in the Community
- Supporting and Engaging Young Activists
- Supporting and Engaging New Activists

Join the fund! If your USW local is not already a contributor, mobilize your members to approve joining.

Develop a project. Your local,

women’s committee, human rights committee, district, area or regional council could develop a project. Work with your District Education Co-ordinator on the details for seeking financial support from the fund.

Get ideas for projects and learn more at www.usw.ca/FCEF, or contact fund co-ordinator Eric Delparte at fcef@usw.ca. ■

Steelworkers Look Politicians in the Eye and Demand Retirement Security

THE WAY WORKERS are treated when companies go bankrupt is disgraceful. For years, Liberal and Conservative governments have avoided, opposed and back-pedalled when it came to prioritizing the security of workers' hard-earned pensions and benefits when employers go bankrupt.

The Steelworkers decided to actively take our demands and arguments to the politicians.

For six weeks over the last year, and hundreds of kilometres of walking around Ottawa, USW members from across Canada have met with a majority of federal politicians to urge changes in bankruptcy and insolvency laws to protect pensions and benefits.

Starting in May 2018, revolving teams of 30 USW members each have spent three intensive two-week periods lobbying. Each time they called, set up meetings and delivered

the message of "Workers and Retirees First."

The lobby effort supported two very strong bills that would give priority to workers' pensions and benefit plans upon insolvency – one sponsored by Steelworkers NDP MP Scott Duvall, and another by Bloc Québécois MP Marilène Gill.

"Many millions of dollars were paid out to Nortel, Sears and Stelco executives because the current laws allow that to happen while workers and retirees had their benefits cut off and lost vacation, severance and termination pay," said USW National Director Ken Neumann.

"All MPs and all political parties should support laws that protect workers and retirees, but that is not the case," said Neumann, adding that the 2019 federal budget was silent on any commitment to protect workers and retirees by treating them as secured creditors. ■

Many of the Steelworkers Found the Lobbying Experience Rewarding

"I am more confident now in my ability to advocate on issues important to the union and all working people. And, in my case, that includes advocating on behalf of my disabled daughter and her rights."

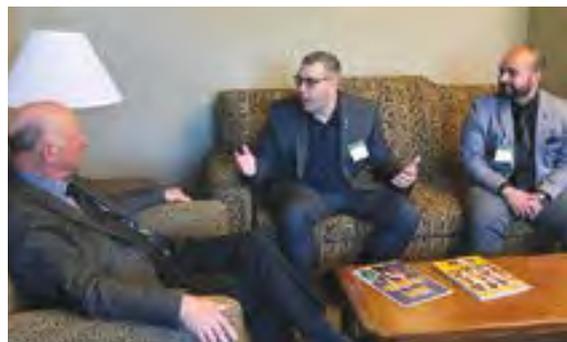
– Shannon Horner
Local 8782

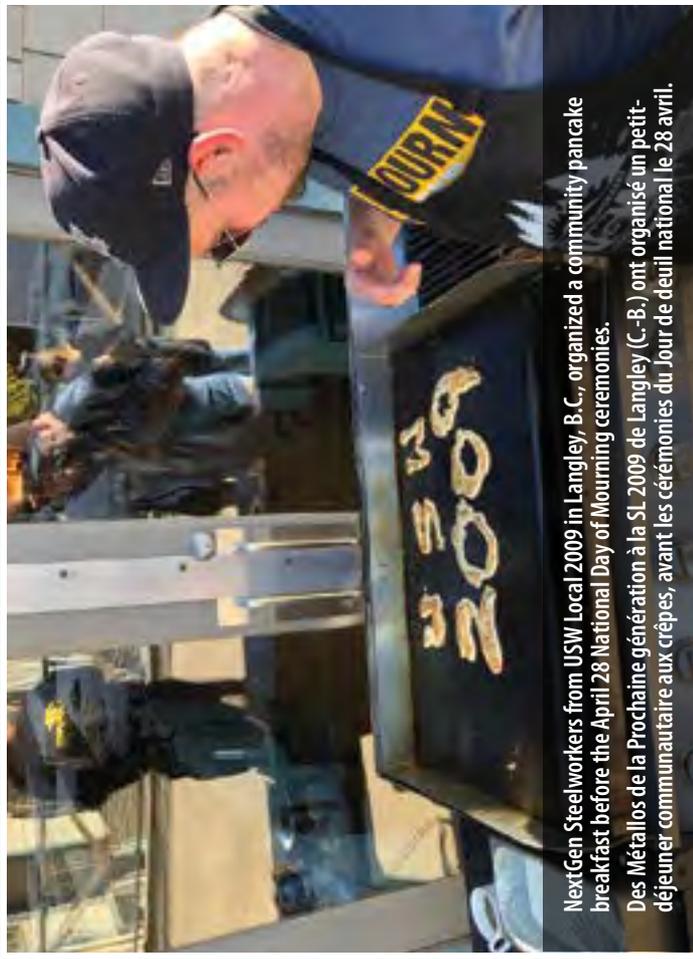
"Workers lobbying is democracy at work. We have the privilege to represent our members to parliamentarians."

– Denis Tanguay
Local 8664

"I want to bring the experience back to my members. I have knowledge now that I wouldn't have if it wasn't for the opportunity made possible by my union."

– Diane Uffelman
Local 5220





NextGen Steelworkers from USW Local 2009 in Langley, B.C., organized a community pancake breakfast before the April 28 National Day of Mourning ceremonies.

Des Métallos de la Prochaine génération à la SL 2009 de Langley (C.-B.) ont organisé un petit-déjeuner communautaire aux crêpes, avant les cérémonies du Jour de deuil national le 28 avril.



USW Local 14241 donated 16 new microwaves to St. Patrick Parish for St. Vincent de Paul in Niagara Falls, Ont., for families living in local motel rooms with no way of heating their food.

La SL 14241 a fait don de 16 micro-ondes neufs à la Paroisse de St. Patrick, qui va les remettre à la Société Saint-Vincent de Paul de Niagara Falls (Ont.) pour les familles qui vivent dans des chambres de motels locaux et qui n'ont aucun moyen de réchauffer leurs aliments.



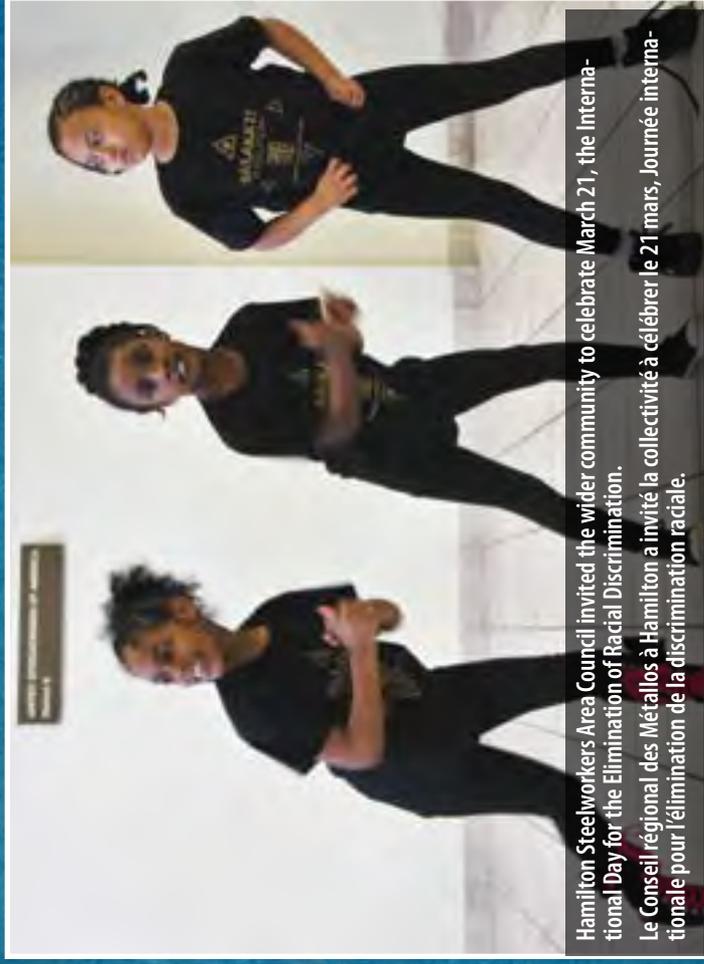
Sudbury Steelworkers took part in the Coldest Night of the Year walk, raising funds for the Elgin St. Mission that serves Sudbury's most-vulnerable citizens.

Des Métallos de Sudbury ont participé à la Marche de la nuit la plus froide de l'année afin de recueillir des fonds pour la mission de la rue Elgin, laquelle vient en aide aux citoyens les plus vulnérables de Sudbury.



USW Local 6185 hosted the In Her Name vigil at the local union hall to raise awareness, honour and remember missing and murdered Indigenous women from across Newfoundland and Labrador.

La SL 6185 a tenu une veille sur le thème In Her Name/En son nom au bureau syndical afin d'accroître la sensibilisation aux femmes autochtones disparues et assassinées à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, de les commémorer et de s'en souvenir.



Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council invited the wider community to celebrate March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

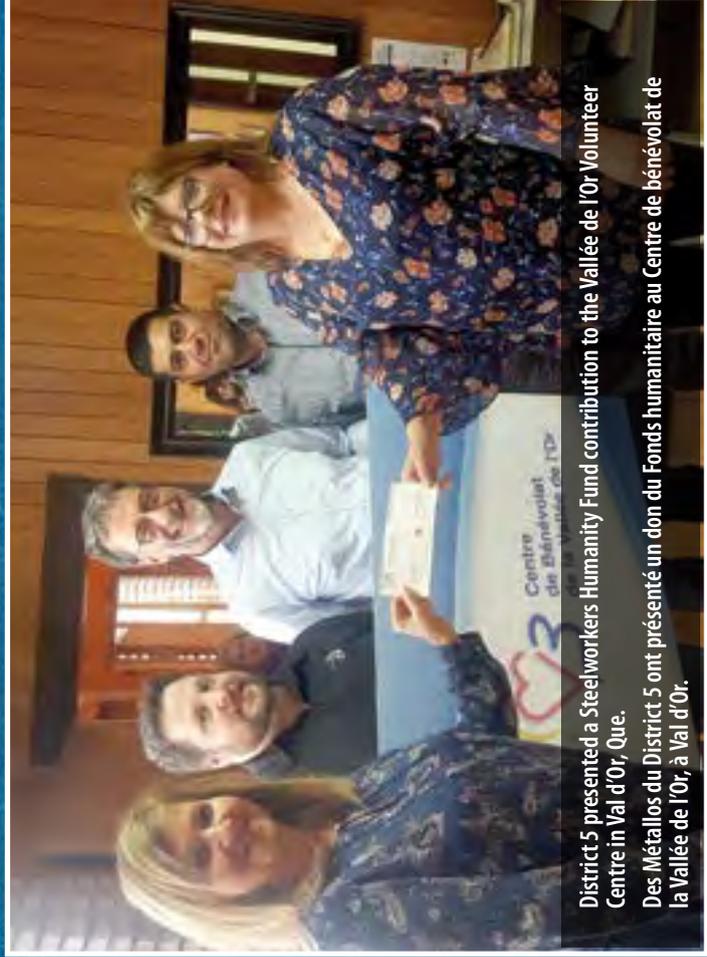
Le Conseil régional des Métallos à Hamilton a invité la collectivité à célébrer le 21 mars, Journée internationale pour l'élimination de la discrimination raciale.

Steelworkers Are Making a Difference in our Communities

Share your USW community work on Facebook or Twitter using #USWCares.

Les Métallos font une différence dans nos milieux

Faites connaître votre travail communautaire sur Facebook ou Twitter en utilisant #MétallosSontLà.



District 5 presented a Steelworkers Humanity Fund contribution to the Vallée de l'Or-Volunteer Centre in Val d'Or, Que.

Des Métallos du District 5 ont présenté un don du Fonds humanitaire au Centre de bénévolat de la Vallée de l'Or, à Val d'Or.