

A MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STEELWORKERS

USW@Work

WINTER 2023

Remembering USW President Tom Conway 1952-2023

*Wab Kinew wins
the day in Manitoba*

*Working hard for sustainable
jobs for Steelworkers*

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USW@Work | Winter 2023

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United Steelworkers union in Canada

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ON THE COVER:

USW International President Tom Conway speaks at the union's National Policy Conference in Toronto in April.

Conway died at home on Sept. 25. He was 71.

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Tom Conway had members' best interests at heart

I want to start by talking about my friend and our late International President Tom Conway, who never forgot his time working in the steel mill. He was a person who carried with him the concerns of Steelworker members, whether he was in front of a membership meeting, sitting across the table from a CEO or talking to the President of the United States of America.

Tom was funny, hardworking and direct. He had a no-nonsense way about him, focused on getting the job done – whatever it was. He also had a vision for a bigger, broader union where anyone in nearly any job could find a home here and where Steelworkers on both sides of the border would benefit from a reinvigorated domestic supply chain and North American procurement.

On behalf of all of the Canadian directors and the USW International Executive Board, I also want to congratulate our new International President David McCall, former International Vice-President (Administration) since 2019.

McCall's career of fighting for fairness and justice began in Northwest Indiana with Local 6787 at Bethlehem Steel's sprawling Burns Harbor integrated steel facility. While working as a millwright, he was elected to various positions, including grievance chairman and Vice-President, before he joined the staff of the union in 1985.

Another exciting change is the appointment of Emil Ramirez as the new International Vice-President (Administration). Emil served as District 11 Director since 2014. Ramirez served as USW District 11 Director since

2014, representing workers in nine

Midwestern states. Adding

to this leadership renewal

is the appointment of the

union's first-ever female

District Director, Cathy

Drummond in District 11.

Cathy served as the

Assistant to the District

Director since 2019.

Congratulations to both

Emil and Cathy.



A strong union is the best strategy to take on inflation

Every day, we see how workers are feeling squeezed with the cost of living rising dramatically year over year, sometimes even month to month. For some of us, this means putting off big expenditures, cutting household budgets and/or making major life changes to keep up.

Workers are paying for corporate greed at the grocery store cash register when buying basic necessities and when it comes to housing, in particular. In a submission to the parliamentary inquiry into food inflation this past summer, the Centre for Future Work in Vancouver documented how food retail profits have roughly doubled since the pandemic, with corporate shareholders benefitting mightily from this price gouging. Working people and their families are also struggling with high rents and mortgages with a major shortage of affordable housing in a growing number of regions.

I am so proud of the way that our union and local union bargaining committees are pushing back at the negotiating table – this won't change the wrong-headed approach of the Bank of Canada, but it is helping people. USW bargaining committees, in some cases, are winning the best contracts anyone has seen in decades. A union card is still the best way to combat inflation and make sure workers share in the wealth that they help create – especially now when this is urgently necessary. Members are banding together to push for what they need – higher wages, improvements to benefits, pension increases, stronger health and safety language and more.

Across the board, unionized workers make on average \$5.14/hour more than non-union workers. Workers under age 25 earned an extra 26% from jobs covered by a collective agreement. I am proud of the work our union is doing not just to help workers and their families keep up, but also to have a sense of stability and hope for their own futures.

Together, we are stronger, so if you are not already involved in the union, please contact your shop steward or local union executive to find out how you can get involved. If you are involved, thank you for your efforts – you make our union better.

In solidarity,



Marty Warren
USW National Director

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On Sept. 25, USW International President Tom Conway passed away at 71 years old.

Elected as the union's president in 2019, Conway was known for his quick wit, formidable bargaining skills and unwavering devotion to workers and their families.

"Tom was a principled trade unionist, a pragmatic man who always had the best interests of workers at heart," said Marty Warren, USW National Director.

Over the course of his career, he became one of the union's most accomplished contract negotiators in steel, aluminum, oil and other major industries, often directing bargaining during crises.

"Tom guided our union with confidence," said Myles Sullivan, District 6 Director. "I admired his ability to steer through challenges with positivity and never forgetting that our priority as a union will always be to get the best results for our members."

As president, he spearheaded innovative initiatives to organize more workers into the labour movement.

Farewell **Tom Conway**

Under Conway's leadership, USW members gained some of the movement's most significant organizing victories.

"Tom was funny and down to earth, asked questions, listened and gave me some great advice that I still follow today," said Scott Lunny, District 3 Director. "He made a difference."

Conway relentlessly advocated for fair trade, demanding that the government enforce U.S. trade laws to prevent importation of illegally-subsidized and dumped products that damage domestic industries and destroy good-paying jobs.

"Tom was a steadfast leader that the USW needed, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Dominic Lemieux, District 5 Director. "Tom reassured us that the union would get through it and that we would get through it together. Before that, he showed up for District 5 members, during one of our most difficult conflicts – the 18-month lock-out at ABI in Bécancour, Que."

Conway worked not just to save jobs but to create them, finding new ways to engage both companies and elected officials to expand manufacturing, secure domestic supply chains and invest in healthy, flourishing communities.

Conway first became an activist in USW Local 6787 in 1978 when he worked at the Burns Harbor Works of Bethlehem Steel, in Indiana. While working as a millwright in the coke plant, Conway served as a grievor for plant-wide maintenance and was a member of the safety and contracting-out committees. He was elected as USW International Vice-President in 2005.

Changes in our union: International President David McCall, Emil Ramirez and Cathy Drummond

Former USW International Vice-President of Administration David McCall was named International President on Sept. 26, 2023.

As Vice-President (Administration), McCall bargained contracts with some of the union's largest employers in steel, aluminum, rubber and other industries.

Before his election as Vice-President, he served as the director of USW District 1 (Ohio) for 21 years, where he represented 70,000 USW members and retirees and bargained some of the union's biggest contracts.

McCall began his career as a union activist with USW Local 6787 at the Burns Harbor integrated steel facility. He worked as a millwright and served the local union in various positions, including grievance chairman and vice-president. During his tenure with Local 6787, McCall established the local union's food bank and unemployment support committee.

Former District 11 Director Emil Ramirez replaces Dave McCall as International Vice-President of Administration. Ramirez served as USW District 11 Director since 2014, representing workers in nine Midwestern states. Ramirez began his union career in 1986 with USW Local 15162 at KPL/Gas Service's Topeka, Kan., facility, serving in various leadership roles, including local union president.

He currently leads the USW's bargaining with some of the union's largest employers. He chairs the USW's Cement Council and Arconic Bargaining Committee and serves as secretary of the union's Container Industry Conference.

Replacing Ramirez as District 11 Director is Cathy Drummond, the first-ever woman District Director. Drummond comes out of USW Local 9460 at what is now Essentia Health in Hibbing, Minn. She served as Assistant to the District Director since 2019.



David McCall was appointed USW International President following the death of Tom Conway.

**CLOSE THE GENDER
PAY GAP =**

**DON'T LEAVE \$
ON THE TABLE**



Let's take action to enforce pay equity!

Through decades of advocacy, the labour movement won important and long-overdue legislation on pay equity.

Now, it's time for workers in federal jurisdictions to get involved in implementing pay equity in their workplaces. We must educate ourselves and stay vigilant to make sure the pay equity plans that get developed are actually in the workers' interests, and not just what employers and consultants tell us is good for workers.

Pay equity plans must be posted in federal workplaces no later than July 3, 2024, for your review.

What is pay equity?

Pay equity is an employer's legal obligation to pay those who work in female-dominated jobs the same as those who work in male-dominated jobs of equal value.

For example, a female-dominated call centre representative job is compared to a male-dominated warehouse picker job if they are of equal value. If the female-dominated job is paid less, the employer must remedy this discrimination and increase the wages of this job.

This does not mean anyone gets paid less and it does not mean the employer will close or move jobs elsewhere to avoid pay equity.

No matter how you count it, a gender pay gap persists in Canada. On average, women face a gender pay gap of 32% less. Racialized and immigrant women face a deeper gender pay gap, as high as 55%.

Pay equity laws remedy undervalued and underpaid women's work and help close the gender pay gap.

Unions are important for addressing inequality. That's why the federal Pay Equity Act requires the bargaining agent – the union – to have a seat on the Pay Equity Committee in a workplace.

The USW has resources to help you!

Ask your Local Union President about enforcing pay equity in your workplace.

Our new Pay Equity Administrator, Jan Borowy – a renowned lawyer and pay equity expert – has written a USW pay equity toolkit for USW Staff Representatives and Pay Equity Committee members.

The USW's pay equity campaign says: Close the gender pay gap – Don't leave money on the table!

usw.ca/payequity



Saving the planet AND creating good union jobs

Relative to the rest of the world, products like steel, aluminum, cement and timber produced proudly by USW members in Canada emit some of the lowest levels of emission on the planet. The USW has long fought for workers to be at the centre of any plan to fight climate change.

The consequences of this year's historically high temperatures, record-breaking wildfires and widespread droughts across Canada prove that climate change is a threat we can't afford to ignore, but when governments act as if workers are the problem, they force families to choose between supporting carbon reductions or supporting their families.

By advocating on Parliament Hill and building on common goals with industry, environmental groups and workers with coalitions like the USW-cofounded Blue Green Canada, Steelworkers have been building the case for a worker-centred plan that includes strong manufacturing and resource sectors, all while reducing carbon emissions.

In June, after the NDP pushed for it in the supply and confidence agreement with the government, the Liberals finally tabled Sustainable Jobs legislation (Bill C-50).

In response, USW National Director Marty Warren said; "Overall, there's a lot for workers to celebrate, but too many questions still need to be answered. We have to make sure this goes beyond a decent framework and truly results in the creation and maintenance of good, family-supporting union jobs in a sustainable economy where we protect the water we drink and the air we breathe."

Warren said there's still time for the bill to be improved, while it goes through the process of being passed.

The USW is working hard to ensure that amendments to this bill will entrench organized labour's place in planning for a cleaner economy, that good industrial jobs will be maintained and workers will have access to material supports and meaningful training where necessary as we shift towards a lower-carbon economy.

This bill won't be enough: we need rules that mandate lower-carbon industrial materials made by Steelworkers are used in public infrastructure projects. We need a full supply-chain approach with targeted sectoral and geographical investments to ensure that Canada's mining and manufacturing sectors continue to provide good, community-sustaining jobs.



Across Canada, in all economic sectors, Steelworkers are standing strong at bargaining tables and on picket lines to improve their working and living standards. Recent bargaining successes include:



Local 7135 • Rail car workers win strike against employer's woeful track record

The 1,475 members at National Steel Car in Hamilton waged a six-week strike to win key improvements at their rail car manufacturing plant, where three workers were killed on the job in a 21-month span. Improved safety provisions include an additional health and safety representative in the workplace. The three-year agreement includes total wage increases of 13%, a \$1,000 signing bonus, additional increases for skilled trades workers and gains on pensions, shift premiums, benefits and safety boot allowances.



Local 206G • Glassmakers shatter employer's hardline bargaining pattern

Having long endured attempts by their employer to erode working conditions, members at the Owens Illinois glass factory in Pointe-Saint-Charles, Que., took a stand and won significant contract gains following a nearly eight-week strike. Wage increases range from 14% to 20% over three years and members won substantial improvements to their pension and benefits plans. The workers manufacture beer bottles and other glass containers at the century-old plant, the only facility of its kind in Quebec.



Local 1-423 • Insulation workers secure protection from over-heated inflation

Following a nearly eight-week strike, members at Rockwool Industries in Grand Forks, B.C., secured economic gains to counter cost-of-living increases. A three-year contract provides total wage increases of 13%, including 6% in the first year, as well as a \$4,000 signing bonus. The employer-funded group RRSP is being increased and vacation entitlement has been expanded to include seven weeks of vacation after 25 years' service. The workers produce insulation for residential, commercial and industrial uses.



Local 1998 • University members give employer lesson on work-life balance

Some 5,800 administrative and technical staff members at the University of Toronto reached a three-year agreement to recover lost ground from Ontario's unconstitutional Bill 124 which previously restricted collective bargaining. The deal provides total wage increases of 12.8%, with 9% in the first year. Members addressed work-life balance issues with improved language on alternative work arrangements, overtime and workloads and secured a fifth personal leave day each year.



Local 7531 • Bleach factory workers brighten their future with five-year deal

Steelworkers at the Nouryon factory in Magog, Que., who manufacture paper-bleaching products, negotiated a five-year contract with total wage hikes of 27%, including 16% in the first year. The significant increases also apply to all premiums and bonuses. The new contract officially defines the role of union health and safety representatives and improves the terms of a phased retirement program.



Local 1-207 • Grocery workers' persistence bears fruit

Persistence paid off for workers at the Direct Charge Co-op grocery store in Yellowknife, N.W.T., who rejected two contract offers from the employer before reaching a fair deal on a third offer. The five-year agreement includes 9% wage increases, signing bonuses and the addition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a paid holiday.



Locals 5795, 6731 • Mine workers won't be taken for granite; extract rock-solid contract

Some 1,500 workers at Iron Ore Company of Canada operations in Labrador City, N.L., negotiated total wage increases of 18.25% over five years, which will be boosted further by cost-of-living provisions and an increased northern living allowance. Members also made gains on pensions and benefits, including a long-sought elimination of a lifetime cap on prescription drug coverage.



Local 7065 • Aluminum smelter workers prove their mettle with big wage gains

Some 140 employees of Métallurgie Brasco Entretien, a subcontractor to the Alouette aluminum smelter in Sept-Îles, Que., ratified a three-year contract with first-year wage hikes of 17% to 20% and total increases ranging from 24.25% up to 27.25%. The agreement increases various premiums as well as employer contributions to the benefits plan and the workers' pension interests through the Quebec Federation of Labour's Fonds de solidarité.



Local 2009 • Respect your elders – and your workers – retirement home staff say

Contract language on respectful workplaces was among the improvements in a deal reached by Compass – AgeCare employees working at five retirement homes in Victoria, Vancouver and Maple Ridge, B.C. Members also achieved improved provisions on scheduling, discipline and discharge, seniority and the grievance process. Language allowing lower wages for probationary employees was eliminated.



Local 7580-04 • Magris workers talc the talk, walk the walk to achieve good agreement

Members working at the Penhorwood and Foley operations of Magris Talc in northeastern Ontario ratified four-year agreements providing total wage increases ranging from 16.5% to 20.5%. First-year increases ranged from 7% to 11%. Improvements also were made on shift premiums, stat holidays and sick leave. Magris is North America's largest talc producer.



Local 9599 • Iron foundry workers mould excellent first contract

In their first contract since joining the Steelworkers, members at the Soucy-Belgen iron foundry in Sainte-Claire, near Quebec City, won 22% wage increases over five years, including 10% in the first year. The agreement also calls for additional cost-of-living wage adjustments, increases in employer pension contributions and introduces paid leave for union representation.



Local 1976 • In it for the long haul, truckers deliver stronger contract and wages

Members working at Trima's transportation operations in Golden, B.C., made widespread improvements to modernize language throughout their collective agreement. The three-year contract provides total wage increases of 11%, including 5% in the first year and features a land acknowledgment.

District 6 Director Myles Sullivan joined USW Local 7135 members (National Steel Car) at the picket line during their six-week strike.



Federal anti-scab legislation introduced, Steelworkers pushing for stronger law

Long-awaited federal anti-scab legislation, introduced in Parliament on Nov. 9, marks another victory for workers stemming from the New Democrats' supply and confidence agreement with the government.

"Steelworkers have been part of the fight for anti-scab legislation for decades," said USW National Director Marty Warren. "This bill is not perfect, but it's a big step in the right direction and proves the work we've been doing is delivering results."

Steelworkers are pushing the government to strengthen the new bill by eliminating loopholes that would allow scabs and to ensure quick passage and implementation of the legislation. The plan announced by the Liberals in November called for a lengthy, 18-month delay for the legislation to come into effect following Royal Assent.

"Our work is not over," Warren said. "Now that the bill has been tabled, we're not going to let up. We need changes to this legislation to scrap unnecessary delays in implementing it and to close big Liberal loopholes. Steelworkers should contact their MPs and call for these changes."

usw.ca/antiscab



USW shows up for trans and gender-diverse youth

As one of the largest private-sector unions in North America, we condemn the attacks that are happening on human rights across the country, targeting gender-diverse and queer youth, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, education workers and allies.

Over the last number of months, hate groups have been staging events across the country. The labour movement has been showing up at counter-protests, in defence of trans and 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and other community members who have been targeted with regressive policies, harassment and violence.

We will not tolerate this attack on human rights and our collective progress. Trans and gender-diverse youth deserve our support and protection. In our movement, there is no space for hate.

If you have questions about what it means to be a trans person, gender-diverse or 2SLGBTQIA+-identified or about the protections enshrined by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, visit usw.ca/issues/human-rights.



Steelworkers help deliver big change on the prairies

After years of conservative cuts, empty promises and disrespect for hard-working people, workers across the prairie provinces have been looking for change. With the help of the United Steelworkers union, they've been achieving it.

This summer, in Saskatchewan, by-elections were held in three provincial ridings previously held by the conservative Saskatchewan Party. Thanks to Steelworkers Vote training schools in Regina, where both urban by-elections were held, USW members helped flip both of those seats to the NDP. Saskatchewan New Democrat Party Leader Carla Beck now leads the largest caucus the party has elected in more than a decade.

In Manitoba, the change was even bigger. The failing PC government went to the polls in October. Showing no shame for their record cuts and anti-worker policies, the PCs ran a particularly negative campaign, undermining the rights of gender-diverse kids and dehumanizing missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Manitoba NDP Leader Wab Kinew ran an uplifting campaign that promised a fundamental change in the way the government delivers for people. Leading his party to victory, Kinew became the first First Nations premier of a Canadian province.

The positive, people-first approach is how Kinew has always led the party.

"The Manitoba NDP has always prioritized Manitoba workers by supporting unions and fighting back against the PCs' cuts and anti-worker agenda," said USW District 3 Director Scott Lunny. "Under the leadership of Wab Kinew, the Manitoba NDP has blocked anti-union legislation like Bill 16 and opposed the Pallister-Stefanson wage freeze bill."

The USW and the Manitoba NDP have a long history of solidarity when it comes to delivering for workers and building a better Manitoba. While still early days, it looks like workers will have a government in Manitoba that has their backs.



Leo Gerard appointed Companion of the Order of Canada

Leo W. Gerard, who as USW International President became one of the world's most indomitable labour leaders, has received his country's highest civilian honour – Companion of the Order of Canada.

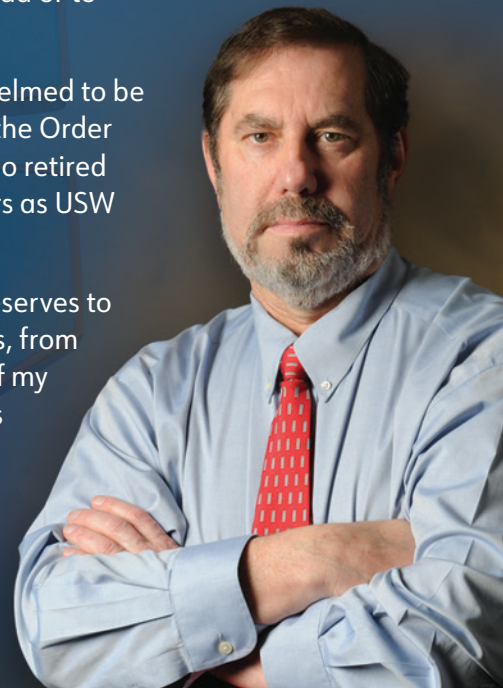
Gerard's appointment was announced in June by Governor General Mary Simon, who bestows the Order of Canada. Gerard has been recognized "for his vast and influential work in labour advocacy, notably as the seventh International President of the United Steelworkers union," the Governor General stated.

Companion of the Order of Canada is the highest of the three levels of the Order of Canada. It is awarded for "outstanding achievement and merit of the highest degree,

especially in service to Canada or to humanity at large."

"I am honoured and overwhelmed to be appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada," said Gerard, who retired in 2019 after serving 18 years as USW International President.

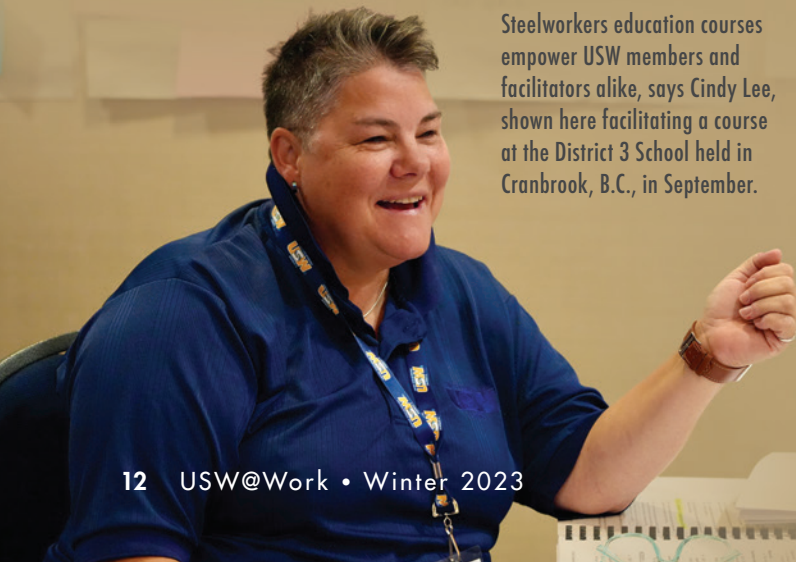
"This tremendous honour deserves to be shared by so many others, from my family to the members of my great union, to the countless other labour, social justice and political activists whom I was privileged to work alongside for five decades," he said.



USW education: a key source of our union's strength

Since the USW's first course was offered in the 1970s, our union's member-to-member education program has grown dramatically, allowing Steelworkers to build their skills and expertise in areas including health and safety, collective bargaining, workers' compensation, stewards' training and Indigenous engagement and reconciliation.

Steelworkers education courses empower USW members and facilitators alike, says Cindy Lee, shown here facilitating a course at the District 3 School held in Cranbrook, B.C., in September.



The USW education program continually develops the skilled and confident activists our members need to stand up for their rights in their workplaces, at their bargaining tables and in the halls of power.

Any member can get involved in the union's education program, and with sufficient training, also become a course facilitator, notes Cindy Lee, a Local 2009 member in B.C. who rose to become a District 3 staff representative and a facilitator of multiple education courses.

"I enjoy facilitating courses because of the engagement with members, learning about their work environments, understanding some of their struggles and working together. I find it empowering," says Lee.

To get involved in the USW education program, reach out to your local leadership, staff representative or district office.

usw.ca/education-training

USW Cares

The United Steelworkers (USW) is more than just a union; it's a pillar of support for the communities in which its members live and work. The union's commitment to making a positive impact on society is demonstrated through various initiatives that showcase its dedication to the progress and prosperity of its members' communities.

Earlier this year, Steelworkers in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., organized the fourth annual Steelworkers Charity Golf Tournament. The event raised over \$11,000 in support of The Twinkie Foundation, a local charity that assists families in the area with travel costs associated with their child's medical treatments and appointments. The success of this event was made possible by the generosity of sponsors and the dedication of USW volunteers.

In Hamilton, the USW, in collaboration with football players from the union's strategic alliance partner the Canadian Football League Players' Association (CFLPA), local businesses, and community volunteers, made a significant impact on the lives of 1,500 kids through Operation Backpack. This initiative, launched by the Hamilton-area Steelworkers in 2010, raises funds to provide backpacks filled with essential school

supplies. This support ensures that students can begin their school year with the right tools and resources, setting them up for success in the classroom.

The USW's commitment extends to addressing natural crises and emergencies. Last summer, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund (SHF) donated \$105,000 to the Canadian Red Cross in response to the devastating wildfires that affected parts of British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec. The donations, intended to provide urgent assistance, including shelter, basic necessities and emotional support to those impacted by fire, were made possible through the generous contributions of USW members who understand the importance of standing together in times of crisis.

USW members' involvement and connection with the communities where they live and work demonstrate a commitment that goes beyond the workplace, showcasing a dedication to making the world a better place for everyone.

Share your union's community contributions on social media with the hashtag **#USWCares**.



Steelworkers and other volunteers gathered at the ArcelorMittal Hamilton East facilities to stuff the 1,500 backpacks in preparation for delivery to area school kids.



Marty Gibbons from USW Local 1-417 presents a \$10,000 cheque to Shuswap Community Foundation for wildfire relief on behalf of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

NATIONAL ANTI-RACISM COMMITTEE JOINS SHF DELEGATION TO SOUTH AFRICA

"I'm so grateful for the opportunity to have the first-hand experience of witnessing the struggles of workers in South Africa, and the need for collaboration and global solidarity," said Reah Arora, USW Local 2009 member. Arora is one of the members of the newly formed USW National Anti-Racism Committee (NAC) and participated in a delegation to South Africa with support from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund (SHF).

As part of its mandate, the SHF promotes opportunities for Steelworkers to participate in worker-to-worker exchanges with partner organizations around the world. The SHF delegation was made up of NAC members and other racialized USW staff in Canada. They seized the opportunity to immerse in South African society, learn more about its history and draw parallels to Canadian society and the legacy of colonization.

While known for its natural beauty and cultural diversity, South Africa is also known for the apartheid regime and the fight that took place to end it. For the vast majority of non-white South Africans who did not benefit from this system, the fall of apartheid was a watershed moment that brought high hopes for change in their daily living conditions. However, SHF delegation members heard many personal accounts of the current struggles endured by South Africans due to neoliberal policies, in what is often referred to as "economic apartheid" that still overwhelmingly affects most non-white South Africans.

For over a decade, the SHF has been supporting the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG), which has been instrumental in strengthening the capacity of individuals and organizations representing the unemployed and poor communities. They build from the lived experience of communities, providing them with tools to gain a critical



USW delegation members at Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 18 years.



USW delegation members with ILRIG staff, at the ILRIG Political School.



USW delegation members at Community House, a hub for progressive organizations in Cape Town.

understanding and an analysis of power structures in South African society and globally, and providing training on organizing to change the system that exploits them.

Through ILRIG's network, the delegation met trade unionists and a wide range of human rights activists, representing some of South Africa's most-marginalized populations.

They met members of the grassroots organization Intlungu Yase Matyotyombeni (IYM), in one of the largest impoverished communities in the outskirts of Cape Town. IYM organizes Black populations living in informal settlements that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people were forced out of their homes.

At Cissie Gool House, delegates met with members of Reclaim the City (RTC), who have occupied the former Woodstock Hospital. Amidst a critical housing crisis in Cape Town, RTC has turned the old hospital into homes for people who have been evicted or displaced.

In stark contrast, amidst the lush vineyards of Wellington, Western Cape, the group met with the Commercial Stevedoring Agricultural & Allied Workers' Union (CSAAWU) to learn about the many challenges of agricultural workers, the sector with the lowest unionization rate in the country.

On the last leg of the trip, the delegation attended ILRIG's 20th Political School. This annual event provides a unique opportunity for activists from grassroots social movements all over South Africa to meet, learn and exchange on their experiences and build a movement for greater social justice. It is in this context that the delegation shared their own lived experiences with issues of racism in Canada, as Mark Austin of USW Local 1998 did.

In Mark's words, "My interactions with the people in post-apartheid South Africa both stirred my soul and lifted my spirits. It was eye opening to see how participants could relate to our stories and a sombre reminder that anti-Black racism is alive and well in both societies."

Beyond their individual experiences, delegates have committed to bring important reflections back to Canada to benefit the union, through a series of initiatives to advance a national anti-racism strategy – in particular, anti-Black racism in our union and Canadian civil society.

Amandla awethu!*

*Power to the People! – a rallying cry in Xhosa and Zulu languages, often heard during activist meetings in South Africa.



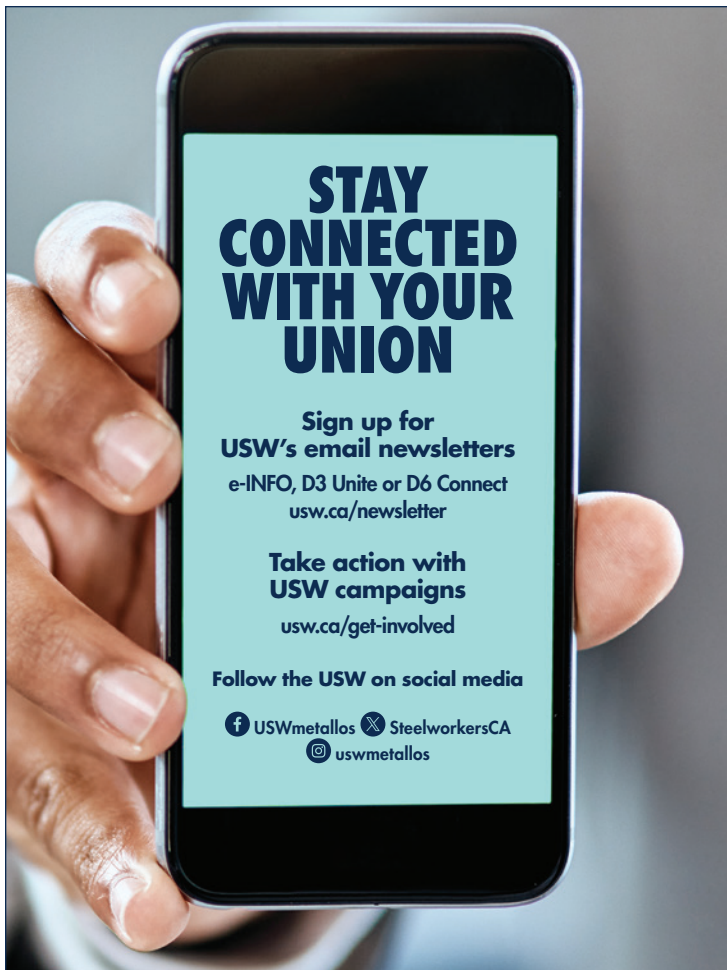
USW delegation members with ILRIG staff and participants of the Political School.



USW delegation members with ILRIG staff and participants of the Political School.



USW delegation members with participants of the Political School.



Get money towards your union local's community initiatives!

The USW Family and Community Education Fund (FCEF) can help pay for member and community events in your area.

Bring Steelworkers together, support your community and build local union strength.

Contact FCEF Co-ordinator
Gabriele Simmons at fcef@usw.ca

usw.ca/fcef

USW FAMILY & COMMUNITY
EDUCATION FUND



Mark your calendar!

Find out more about attending these union events with the USW.

2024 USW International NextGen Conference
March 3-8 • Pittsburgh, Penn.

Justice 2024 Conference
Sept. 30-Oct. 4 • Gatineau, Que.

usw.ca/events



Season's greetings STEELWORKERS!

SEASON'S GREETINGS AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU
AND YOUR LOVED ONES.

LET'S CONTINUE OUR WORK
TOGETHER IN 2024.

Marty Warr
Scotty DL L + Myko Sutte

Inaugural health and safety forum re-energizes Quebec activists

More than 130 Steelworkers from across Quebec met in Trois-Rivières in early October for the first USW District 5 Health and Safety Forum.

“The future of health and safety in our workplaces is in our hands,” Julie Hébert, USW District 5 Health, Safety and Environment Co-ordinator, told delegates at the outset of the two-day forum.

Hébert stressed the importance of negotiating strong health and safety provisions in collective agreements, particularly given recent legislative changes by the Quebec government. For example, while new legislation requires all workplaces to ensure worker participation on health and safety, the amount of time employers must commit to prevention programs is very low.

Delegates participated in workshops to discuss how union strategies for health and safety activism, ensuring employers meet their obligations, maintaining prevention program in priority sectors and recruiting new health and safety representatives.

During a round table discussion by local union activists, a consensus emerged that healthy and

safety activism at the grassroots level must always be a top priority.

“It’s all good and well to negotiate decent wages and good pensions, but being able to retire in good health makes all the difference,” said Pier-Alain Larivière of USW Local 9153.

The forum’s second day included discussions on the union’s Emergency Response Team (ERT) program for workplace deaths and injuries, as well as changes to Quebec’s health and safety legislation affecting issues such as injury claims and temporary work re-assignments.

Nicolas Lapierre, Assistant to the USW District 5 Director, told delegates they are contributing the Steelworkers’ legacy as the leading union on workplace health and safety.

“You are part of that history. You play a very important role. The bosses may have more money than us, but there are more of us and we have the heart and passion. That makes all the difference,” Lapierre said.



Steelworkers activists from across Quebec turned out in large numbers for the first USW District 5 Health and Safety Forum, held in October in Trois-Rivières.

District 3 Update



The transition from summer to fall has been an exciting time

Members were out in force throughout the summer at Pride and Labour Day events in every corner of Western and Northern Canada. September brought a motivating week-long district school at St. Eugene in Cranbrook, B.C. The venue, now owned and operated by local First Nations, was once a residential school. Over 100 USW participants and facilitators got the opportunity to learn about that terrible legacy as well as the history and culture of the Ktunaxa Nation. It was a powerful experience that moved me, and I believe contributed to moving our union forward.

We also offered the new “Unionism on Turtle Island” course, which goes in depth into the truth of our colonial legacy and how the USW can advance reconciliation. The school brought many new activists together and it was great to hear from energetic members who are embracing union education on health and safety, collective bargaining and leadership, and using it to take on roles in their locals. We can all be proud of our commitment to member education and the quality programs that we provide.

September also brought the general election in Manitoba. I’m proud that our Steelworkers Vote classes and co-ordinators worked hard to inform our members about the election, what was at stake and the importance of getting out to vote. The USW endorsed Wab Kinew and the Manitoba NDP, and we are excited to see the new Premier and his team get to work on affordability, fixing the health-care system and putting his ambitious jobs plan for the province into action.

District 3 also mourns the loss of our International President, Tom Conway. His commitment to the members, his strategic vision and his call for us to organize and be “Everybody’s Union” will live on in our work. Rest in Power, Tom.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott".

Scott Lunny
USW District 3 Director



Our Steelworkers Vote crew knocking on doors in Winnipeg to elect Wab Kinew’s Manitoba NDP.

District 5 Update



Collective agreement decrees: raising standards for all

Quebec Steelworkers recently won a major victory – convincing the provincial government to enact a new collective agreement decree covering all traffic control workers employed at road construction sites. This is the first such decree to be enacted in 40 years.

Quebec’s decree system provides for the extension of certain collective agreement provisions to cover workers in an entire sector, regardless of whether they are unionized, thereby boosting wages and standards for all.

Crucially, the decree system defends workers by thwarting employers who attempt to win contracts in the bidding process by undercutting wages and working conditions. A sector-wide decree prevents such contract-stealing practices.

The new decree for traffic control workers at construction sites will increase wages by 26.3% over two years. We congratulate Steelworkers Local 8922 for leading the campaign for this new decree.

Local 8922 members are well-aware of the benefits of the decree system. The local represents more than 16,000 workers in Quebec’s private security sector, where a decree has existed since the early 1980s. Local 8922 negotiates contracts with an employers’ association, and the terms of these agreements apply to all workers in the sector.

Over the years, Local 8922 has substantially improved working conditions for security workers, including higher wages, bonuses, pension contributions to the Quebec Federation of Labour’s Solidarity Fund, and more.

Unfortunately, employer associations want to abolish the decree system that has raised the working and living standards of so many workers and families. In the name of their sacred cow of “flexibility,” employers dearly want to be able to pay workers less.

Not only must existing collective agreement decrees be preserved, it is clear that more decrees are needed to cover workers in other sectors where there are large numbers of small workplaces, including retirement homes and school transportation.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. Lemieux".

Dominic Lemieux
USW District 5 Director

District 5 Director Dominic Lemieux, speaking at a huge rally last June in support of striking Steelworkers at the Owens Illinois glass plant in Montreal.



District 6 Update



USW solidarity is stronger than ever

Right now, across our provinces, the biggest buzz on the street is that our solidarity is stronger than ever. Our local unions are taking courageous positions with big demands at bargaining tables, with strong backing from members and have been winning. Contract negotiations across our district continue to make significant gains for our members – that’s what solidarity looks like.

USW Local 7135’s 1,475 members in Hamilton, hit the picket lines for six weeks when the company wouldn’t budge on health and safety protections and solid wages. Together they stood strong and won the strike, where they got more than what they initially asked for across the board.

Local 1998’s Staff Appointed Unit with 5,800 members at the University of Toronto hit the bargaining table with a clear mandate from the membership. As part of the bargaining process, a strike vote took place and garnered a 95.4% vote in favour of a strike. This strong backing from the membership sent a powerful message to the employer, leading to major victories in the new contract.

Locals 5795 and 6731, two mining locals at IOC Rio Tinto in Labrador City, N.L., won a big boost for 1,500 members in wages and cost-of-living allowances in the midst of soaring inflation. These very strong agreements will now set the mining pattern across District 6.

These are just some examples of the successes in contract negotiations that our local unions continue to churn out. I want to encourage all our local unions to continue engaging with their members; and urge our members to increase their involvement in their respective local unions. Continuing to build our grassroots is essential for our union’s ongoing success. Our member-to-member education system is helping to keep our local unions active with engaged members.

Finally, I’d like to share that the District 6 Conference is happening **July 8 to 12, 2024**, in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador. I am hoping to see you there!

It will be a week filled with activities, learning, networking and much more. Registration details will be released soon so please look out for it on the USW website, in your local union mailing and social media.

In solidarity,

Myles Sullivan
USW District 6 Director

District 6 Director Myles Sullivan and Assistant to the Director Kevon Stewart during a workplace visit at the Iron Ore Company of Canada in Labrador City, N.L., where members of USW local 5795 and 6731 work.





