



Executive
Committee
Local 229

Sending a Message to City Hall; Rebuild our Homes!

Below: Over 150 members CAW Local 229, other unions, and the public joined to march to City Hall May 3rd in support of rebuilding homes for the aged *information inside*.....

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Andy Savela

Vice President
Katha Fortier

Recording
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Marg Arnone

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Secretary
Josie Vickruck

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Nancy Taylor

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Outlying Regions
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Gary Muzyka

Director of
Women's Issues
Cherie McEvoy

CAW Council
Marg Arnone
Katha Fortier
Andy Savela
Amy Rubino
Jason Cummings



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VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.caw229.com

CAW CANADA LOCAL 229
101 N. Syndicate Ave. Suite 512
Thunder Bay, ON P7C 3V4
(807) 474-4229 ext. 5

EMAIL US AT:

caw229@tbaytel.net

Rebuild the City Homes for the Aged/ May 3rd, 2004

Over 150 people marched to City Hall May 3rd to send a message to Mayor and Council that we want the City homes for the Aged rebuilt at any cost.

Dawson Court and Grandview Lodge are both rated D-listed homes, and must be retrofitted or rebuilt by 2006. Construction was to begin this year.

CAW Local 229 is concerned about the possible repercussions of this decision. Local 229 President Andy Savela says, "This could result in public control of the homes being taken away from the city and introducing more for-profit operators into the system." He continues, "We have had extensive experience with both the profit and the not-for-profit systems, and we know that residents quite simply get better care when keeping shareholders happy isn't a motivating factor."

While this decision appears to be a financial one, it appears that the City is disregarding their own 1999 survey that found 62.9% of the respondents supported increasing taxes to maintain the homes. President of the CAW Ontario Health Care Council, Katha Fortier says Municipal and County homes are being rebuilt or retrofitted in other areas across the province. "Bruce County, Woodstock, St. Thomas; they've all found the resources to rebuild and maintain these important public services, so it just doesn't make sense that Thunder Bay is saying no." A request by the union to meet with the Mayor to discuss this situation finally got a response, only hours before the scheduled march. Fortier continues, "Our Union is prepared to do whatever we can, including a joint lobby to the Minister of Health and Long Term Care if the problem is provincial funding."

Funding formulas for rebuilding homes for the aged and nursing homes has undergone significant changes in the last several years. Previously homes for the aged and not-for-profit nursing homes were allowed to apply for

grants, which covered most of the building costs. The Ontario Tory government changed all that a few years ago, and allowed, for the first time ever in Ontario, for-profit operators to access tax dollars to build nursing homes, which are then owned as assets by the shareholders of the corporations. This system resulted in less money being available for the municipally-run and not-for-profit homes, as the pie was divided up that much further.

CAW Local 229 members were joined by Local 1075, CUPE, ONA, OPSEU, and PSAC, along with several concerned members of the public, including the President of the Grandview Lodge Resident Council, Allan Hughes and even a resident from Grandview Lodge.

CAW Local 229 union steward, Holly Rigby from the George Jeffrey Children's Treatment Centre brought her aunt, 76 year old Isabella Hamilton. (photo on page 4) Isabella now suffers from Alzheimers, and receives publicly administered care at Grandview Lodge, which is somehow fitting since she worked as a cook for many years at Dawson Court. Rigby agrees completely with the concept of maintaining our city-run homes. "By not rebuilding these aging facilities we are taking a risk that the homes will be operated by the for-profit sector."

Nursing home giants like Extencicare and Central Park Lodge Corporation are taking millions of dollars in profit out of the system. In a two year period CPL made 440 million dollars in profit, and in a November Toronto Star article Extencicare reported earning 13.8 million dollars in one three month period, and attributed the rise in part to funding from the government of Ontario.

Savela concludes that we have a real responsibility in seeing that the for-profits don't expand any further in our city. "This is all about accountability; do we want the people caring for our vulnerable and our elderly population accountable to the public, or accountable to the shareholders."

Representatives of CAW Local 229 will meet with the Mayor later this week.

Contact Your Elected Representatives and Tell them to Rebuild/ May 04

Directly contacting your elected representatives can be an effective method of lobbying. For your convenience, we have posted their information below.

Lynn Peterson, Mayor

Office 807 625-3600

Fax 807 623-1164

Cellular 807 628-5316

Email: lpeterson@thunderbay.ca

CURRENT RIVER WARD Dick Waddington

Residence 807 683-8652

Fax 807 683-8603

Email: dwaddington@thunderbay.ca

Iain Angus

Residence/Office 807 474-0926

Fax 807 474-0881

Email: iangus@thunderbay.ca

MCINTYRE WARD Trevor Giertuga

Residence 807 683-8041 (1st)

Cellular 807 628-4790 (2nd)

Fax 683-8113

Email: tgiertuga@thunderbay.ca

Rebecca Johnson

Residence 807 577-2807

Fax 807 623-7250

Email: rjohnson@thunderbay.ca

MCKELLAR WARD Robert Tuchenhagen

Residence/Business 807 622-0002

Lawrence Timko

Residence 807 622-4962

Fax 807 623-0445

Email: ltimko@thunderbay.ca

NEEBING WARD Linda Rydholm

Residence 807 577-9260

Business 807 623-4033

Fax 807 475-7668

Email: lrydholm@thunderbay.ca

Joe Vander Wees

Residence 807 767-7033

Business 807 767-3666

Fax 807 767-9004

Cellular 807 626-3316

Email: jvanderwees@thunderbay.ca

NORTHWOOD WARD Mark Bentz

Residence 807 577-8226

Cellular: 807 628-6910

Fax 807 577-2174

Email: mbentz@thunderbay.ca

Bill Scollie

Residence 807 475-7913

Business 807 622-4444

Fax 807 623-8365

Email: bscollie@thunderbay.ca

RED RIVER WARD Allan Laakkonen

Residence 807 345-6744

Fax 807 344-1881

Email: alaakkonen@thunderbay.ca

WESTFORT WARD Joe Virdiramo

Residence 807 625-5547

Fax 807 625-5573

Email: jvirdiramo@thunderbay.ca

CAW Third Annual Executive Council a Success! /May 04

Over 75 delegates attended the third annual Local 229 Executive Council, held April 30 and May 1st at the Prince Arthur Hotel in Thunder Bay.

Assistant to the President, Bob Chernecki addressed the participants at dinner Friday evening, giving an overview of all sectors of the union and praising Local 229 for their efforts in establishing themselves in the CAW structure and adding to the dynamics and expertise of the National Union. Thunder Bay and District Labour Council President Evelina Pan also addressed the dinner crowd and credited the Local union members for their activism in community issues.

National Executive Board (health care representative) and President of Local 302, Nancy McMurphy, along with National Rep Marilyn Lesperance presented a well-received workshop on worker/patient abuse that they had developed in response to problems in this area.

Local 1075 President, Paul Pugh and National Rep Tom Murphy presented a grievance investigation workshop. Following this workshop, Local 229 will be re-examining the grievance policy to ensure that the Local Union receives enough information on grievances to properly proceed with them. Local 229 President Andy Savela believes that in many cases we may be in a hurry to get the paperwork in, but then nothing happens. "As workplace leaders, we need to examine our issues ensure we are proceeding in a way that will get results for the membership."

Local 229 Discussion Leader, Lori McAlpin gave a workshop on building our power in the workplace.

Education Committee Chair, Amy Rubino reported that by all the evaluations, the event was a success. "The large majority of the participants were pleased with the guest speakers, the workshops, and the facilities."

The following day, over 20 members attended a Collective Bargaining Workshop. Local 229 will have over 20 units in negotiations this year, and the many new committee members that were able to participate enjoyed the opportunity for the education.

Local 229 March to City Hall



George Jeffrey Children’s Treatment Centre Steward, Holly Rigby and Grandview Lodge Resident, Isabella Hamilton were active participants in the march.



Local 229 Activist Debbie Agnew leads the crowd in a chant the Mayor and Council could hear upstairs!



This was truly an “all ages” march!

Local 229 Third Annual Executive Council



Versa Care Committee Members Enjoy Dinner on Friday evening.



Ontario Health Coalition Coordinator, Natalie Mehra addresses the crowd on the dangers of creeping privatization and P-3 hospitals expanding throughout Ontario



Participants listen thoughtfully to reports of Officers, Unit, and Committee Chairs