



United Nurses of Alberta • Local 115
NEWSLETTER

April / May 2013

UNA Local 115 Supports Public Services



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Published by the United Nurses of Alberta Local 115 for our members.

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By Kathleen Hamnett
Vice-President, United Nurses of Alberta • Local 115

Message from the Vice-President

Learning through Reflection

ONE of my first career union moral dilemmas came early in my Nursing career. I was a new grad with employment of 3 months in January 1988, about to give birth to my second son who was born March 15, 1988.

Yes, it was the Winter Olympic year in Calgary, the city was abuzz with the excitement of the athletes, venues, Hidy & Howdy-the Olympic mascots.

Calgary had its bust economy of the early 80's and many Nurses knew what it was like to not have work or be able to support ones family.

I reflect back and wonder were the Nursing labour issues similar or different in 1988?

If I was a new grad and faced the same type of dilemma, what would I do?

I did not know what Unions were about when I started my career. I

understood that I paid dues to the Union and if I was in trouble I could call the Union for help.

I quickly became aware from an active ward rep on my unit as to the issues facing Nurses. Mainly benefits and working conditions. The Employer was offering roll backs and cut backs to nursing staff.

Provincial Legislation imposed in 1984 made it illegal for Nurses to strike. This became a tipping point for Nurses as Nurses maintain they have a right to job action and only Nurses will decide whether to strike or not. UNA believes

any collective agreement it signs must be voluntarily accepted by members in a democratic vote, not imposed by arbitration, or any law or ruling.

The illegal strike legislation became a hot topic in part of the decision making process of many Nurses, as did the moral dilemma of what Nurses stand for which is the care of patients. A strike vote arises out of the bargaining process. The majority of the Nurses voted against the proposed offer which in turn led to the strike vote.

I attended one of my first Union meetings at the Carpenters Hall and was overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of people in attendance. What stood out was the solidarity and principles of what Nurses were standing up for at the time.

In January 1988 Nurses were asked "are you willing to go on strike for an improved offer"? Nurses D-Day, the lunch room debates were abound with various

points of view.

My own personal dilemma did not go away....

- Could I walk away from the patients?
- Could I risk losing maternity benefits?
- Could I live with the decision I make?
- Would my family & friends understand and support my decision?
- Would my colleagues understand and support my decision?
- Would my decision be the right one for me?

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THROUGH collective bargaining and membership solidarity, unions strive to improve the working conditions and wages of their members. Oftentimes, even non-unionized workers enjoy the spin-off effect of union agreements since companies will raise wages to keep unions out, thereby indirectly benefiting employees.

Increasingly, though, unions are being criticized for taking too narrow of a focus on their own membership and the prime mandate of enforcing agreements and collective bargaining. UNA has long been aware of the need to broaden its impact beyond its own membership. On a provincial level, for example, UNA supports organizations such as Friends of Medicare, Public Interest of Alberta, The Parkland Institute, and The Council of Canadians to name a few. These organizations support and lobby for the health and wellbeing of all citizens, as well as creating a framework for Canadians to prosper under fair and equitable conditions with strong public services.

Despite the excellent work of these organizations, we can always go a step further to support our communities. For that reason, Local 115 has begun to take the initiative to organize its members to take direct action by creating volunteer opportunities at Calgary area public services. Our first event was a volunteer session at the Calgary Food Bank.

Along with several other volunteer groups, Local 115 members filled hampers for those in need. It was a very rewarding, team building experience. In only two hours, our group filled 287 hampers with 15,000 pounds of food, that will help 721 people. It is amazing what a little bit of hard work and organization can achieve, and we were all proud to be a part of it. Based on the success of this evening, we will certainly be planning future group volunteer events. If you would like to get involved, please contact us and we will keep you informed.

403-670-9960
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Calgary Food Bank

Working together to create a hunger-free community

The logo consists of the word 'NEGS' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with '2013' below it. The text is set against a white background that is part of a larger graphic element resembling a stylized ribbon or banner.

Local 115 Update

UNA and AHS had planned to exchange ongoing proposals in mid February. Prior to the exchange, the lead negotiator for AHS tendered her resignation. As a result, the UNA negotiating team has agreed with AHS to delay the exchange until the first week of May. It is the assessment of the UNA negotiating committee that agreeing to the delay will not disadvantage UNA members.

Any rumours that you may hear surrounding the negotiating process are false, as the initial exchange has not occurred. To stay up to date with the negotiating process, you must sign up for a UNANet account on the secure FirstClass system at www.una.ab.ca/unanet. Periodic public updates will also be announced by email and

on the UNA website. If you have not been getting email from UNA, please contact the Local office to ensure we have your most recent personal email address and contact information, and add local115exec@una.ab.ca to your "safe" email list as messages may be directed to your spam folder.

Solidarity will be the key to a successful round of negotiations to achieve a fair contract for UNA members under the provincial collective agreement. Thank you for your continued interest and support.

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403-670-9960

Employees CAN carry over Stat banks

Employees who have accumulated Named Holiday days-in-lieu in a “stat bank” are normally able to choose when they take those days off. The Employer CANNOT unilaterally pay out a stat bank.

According to Article 18 (a) and (c) of UNA’s Provincial Collective Agreement, if the Employer and Employee cannot agree on the days to be taken off, the Employer can schedule the day off adjacent to a scheduled day of rest.



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What I have learned;

The empowerment of Nurses standing together is what makes social change therefore we must always stand together in solidarity. Nurses need to be mindful of when they are being used as pawns between hospital administration and government.

Always believe in yourself and stand up for what you believe in the right way. Be open to change, listen with a kind heart, be supportive. Most of all respect each others opinions and decisions.

I encourage you to stay informed via UNA NET via www.una.ab.ca Negotiation updates via UNA fanouts, the UNA internal First Class - Negs conference (available to UNA members). Attend Local meetings - FMC meets every second Wed of the month (FMC Auditorium @ 4PM) or Call the Local Office at 403-670-9960

In Solidarity,

Kathleen Hamnett
Vice-President, UNA Local 115
local115exec@una.ab.ca
403-670-9960



By Ruth Duffy
Secretary, United Nurses of Alberta • Local 115

An Update from the OH&S Committee

ALL workers, regardless of the work being done, are entitled to a safe working environment. Unfortunately in many parts of the world and also here in Alberta, this is not the case. In many areas the workers have no voice in matters of workplace safety. UNA members are very fortunate in that as part of our Collective Agreement we have a mandated OH&S Committee. It is a joint UNA/ Employer committee.

Our Collective Agreement provides a vehicle for members to identify and rectify workplace hazards. Our Collective Agreement is strengthened by our ability to escalate unresolved issues to the Employer Board level

Awareness is the key. Firstly we must be vigilant in identifying workplace hazards. Secondly we need to be aware of the process needed to report those hazards.

Once a hazard is identified, it is necessary to report it to management, call the WHS call line at (403) 234-7799, then complete a WHS Incident and Investigation Report Form (available at <http://insite.albertahealths->

ervoces.ca/2935.asp). Submit the completed form to management promptly. If an injury has occurred it is also necessary to complete a WCB form. It is very important to also complete a UNA OH&S Report form and submit it to the Local 115 office or place in the UNA mailbox on the Ground Floor. The form can be obtained from the UNA binder on your unit or by calling Local 115 at 403-670-9960.

A safe secure work environment is the right of every worker, though along with that right, comes the responsibility to remain vigilant and to report unsafe work environments and to work within known safety standards.

Please call the Local 115 office if you have any questions or concerns.

Ruth Duffy
Secretary, UNA Local 115
local115exec@una.ab.ca
403-670-9960

Employers cannot just pay out named holidays

An Employee working on a Named Holiday is entitled to an alternate day off at "a mutually agreed time." The "day in lieu" can be added to the Employee's vacation, or the Employee can ask to take it at any time, with the Employer's agreement. The day can also be "paid out" but ONLY if the Employee agrees.

A full-time Employee changing to part-time retains her alternate days off until there is an agreed time off or until she agrees to take payment in lieu of a day off.



United Nurses of Alberta

Focus on Local 115's Labour Advocacy Stipend and Social Action Committee

IN order to support and encourage members to become active in the labour movement and become involved in social causes, Local 115 has created a Labour Advocacy Stipend and a Social Action Committee. Members can apply to receive a \$400 Labour Advocacy Stipend to support attendance and involvement at events that support the labour movement or enrich the social fabric. Each application is assessed individually by the Local Executive. The stipend helps to remove financial barriers to event attendance that are not otherwise funded. Examples of events that are likely to receive support are attending advocacy conferences such as the Parkland Institute, Public Interest Alberta, or attending the UNA Annual General Meeting as an unfunded observer.

The Local 115 Social Solidarity Committee meets on an ad hoc basis as determined by members' expression of interest. Consistent with the objective of UNA to promote nurses' knowledge of all things related to their social and economic welfare, any Local 115 member can request a meeting of the Social Solidarity Committee to spearhead an initiative in support of this goal. Examples of initiatives include organizing and leading a bottle drive in support of the Calgary Foodbank, or Women's shelter, or leading a volunteer initiative with Volunteer Calgary. To learn more about these opportunities, please contact the Local Executive.

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Congratulations Frankie Wong! Recipient of the 2013 CARNA Award for Excellence in Education

LOCAL 115 would like to congratulate Frankie Wong, educator for Foothills Medical Centre PCU 112 for receiving the 2013 CARNA award for Excellence in Education.

Congratulations also go to these Local 115 members who were nominated for CARNA Awards: Clayton Ryan, Patricia Russell, Meera Bai, Verdeen Bueckert, and Stacey Karalash.

The CARNA Awards of Nursing Excellence recognize several RNs and NPs for their contributions to nursing practice, from recent graduate nurses to those who have inspired through decades of dedication.

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UNITED NURSES OF ALBERTA - LOCAL 115

Notice of Monthly Meetings:

April 10

May 8

4pm to 6pm

FMC Auditorium



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS!

- ★FREE admission for Local 115 members to Public Interest Alberta's Keynote Event "*Fighting For Our Future: People Power vs. Corporate Control*", April 10th @ 7pm, Parkdale United Church. Submit your receipt to be reimbursed. Purchase advance tickets by calling 403-270-8002
- ★UNA President *Heather Smith* will be our guest speaker for Nurses' week at the May 8th Local meeting, and will attend the Ward Rep appreciation event following the meeting. RSVP to attend.

(403) 670-9960 local115exec@una.ab.ca www.local115.wordpress.com



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