

CUPE 2998



NEWSLETTER

DEC 2024

Issue #02

Welcome to the Second Issue of Our Newsletter!

In our last issue, we discussed the anatomy of negotiating a new contract. This time, we'll focus on the bargaining process and how everything unfolds.

For sure, many of you may have received or will receive a survey about job evaluations. In this issue, we'll explain what job evaluation is and its significance.

Also, you met our Local President Lainey Little in the last newsletter, this time you'll meet the three Vice Presidents of our local and learn more about who they are. =)

The executive committee is here for you—thank you for your continued support and engagement! Any comments and suggestions about the newsletter please email info@cupe2998.com

STEWARDS' NOTE

As the holidays approach, I want you to take a moment to think about the workers on strike, braving the cold while fighting for fair treatment and better working conditions—not just for themselves, but for all of us. This is a **cliché we MUST not ignore.** We are all one, and whatever happens to them can and will happen to us.

Reluctant to reiterate the obvious (my actual personality) but I will. Striking is big pain in the (you know where)... it's dent in personal budgets, piled up expenses etc., and **MOST DEFINITELY** the immense pressure on their loved ones who rely on them (lateral mental stress is real). It's a huge sacrifice just to stand on the picket line especially with the weather becoming unbearable. As part of the union we can't just sit idly, we need to show them our support to demonstrate solidarity. Here are some tips to gift our striking comrades.

Write a Letter: Take a minute to send and fill out letters to uncooperative management, letting them know that you support the striking workers. Templates for these letters are available online—check [CUPE Ontario website](#) for all striking workers.

Donate: If you can, consider giving to strike funds or bringing food and warm clothing to those in need. Even small contributions can make a big difference during tough times.

Get Involved: Join local efforts—whether it's attending rallies, participating in food drives, or simply volunteering your time. There's power in community!

Spread the Word: Share their stories on social media. Let's raise awareness and show that we stand with workers fighting for their rights.

David Halili
Lead steward

MEMBER AGENCIES

Applegrove Community Complex Ralph Thornton Community Centre

Cecil Street Community Centre Scadding Court Community Centre

Central Eglinton Community Centre Swansea Town Hall

Community Centre 55 The 519

Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre University Settlement

Egale Canada Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre

BARGAINING UPDATE

WHERE ARE WE AND WHAT'S THE PROCESS?

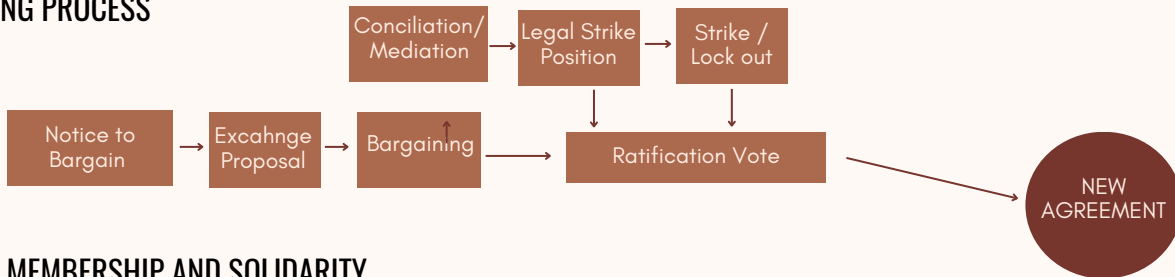
During the September 19 GMM, the following Bargaining Committee (BC) members were acclaimed to represent us at the bargaining table. The BC consists of five elected representatives and the President, as our collective agreement expires on December 31, 2024.

For AOCC:
Barbara Dos Santos
Onyewuchi Obi
Susan Gapka
Reenita Verma

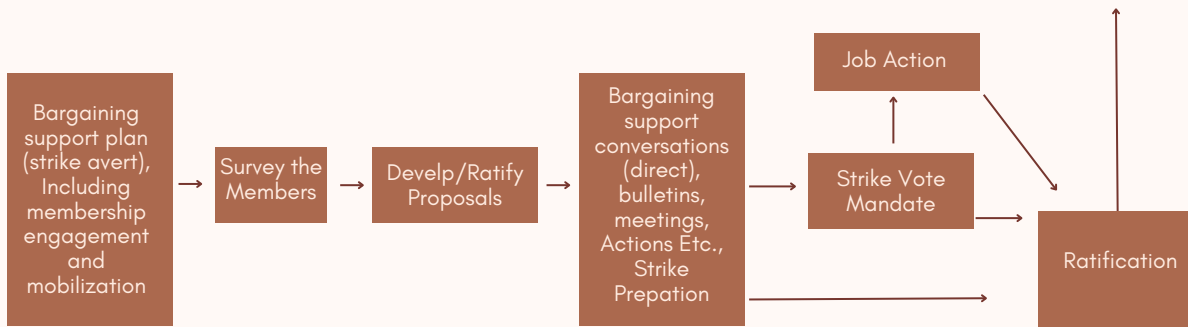
For Egale:
Dennis Quesnel
Tory Touma
Marco Piana
Hannah Shein
Joy Angelique Agres (alternate)
Kim Seida (alternate)

Let's rally behind our committee members and support them at every stages of bargaining! Together, we can empower them to secure the best CA. Your solidarity makes a difference—let's stand united this bargaining season!

BARGAINING PROCESS



BUILDING MEMBERSHIP AND SOLIDARITY



As we begin the bargaining process, key questions arise: How does the process start, what are our main demands, and could a strike occur? Let's all define the process.

NOTICE TO BARGAIN

Initiates collective bargaining between CUPE Local 2998 and the employer, starting discussions on wages, benefits, and working conditions

EXCHANGE PROPOSALS

Initiates collective bargaining between CUPE Local 2998 and the employer, starting discussions on wages, benefits, and working conditions

BARGAINING

Bargaining is the negotiation phase to establish a new collective agreement through the exchange of proposals, aiming for a mutually acceptable deal. Outcomes include:

Ratification Vote: The agreement is presented to members for approval.

Impasse: If no agreement is reached, conciliation or mediation may occur.

CONCILIATION /MEDIATION

Conciliation or mediation occurs when bargaining reaches an impasse, with an impartial third party facilitating discussions between CUPE Local 2998 and the employer. Recommendations are non-binding, allowing for continued negotiations. Successful mediation may result in a new collective agreement or lead to further actions, such as strike votes.

LEGAL STRIKE POSITION

A legal strike position is achieved when:

Impasse: Bargaining and mediation fail.

Strike Vote: Members vote in favor.

Notice: Legal notice is given to the employer.

Waiting Period: Required time before striking.

This enhances our leverage in negotiations.

STRIKE/LOCKOUT

A strike is a work stoppage by employees to assert demands during negotiations over wages, benefits, or conditions. A lockout is imposed by the employer, preventing employees from working to enforce their terms. Both are strategic tools in labor disputes.

RATIFICATION

A ratification vote is where union members vote to accept or reject a proposed collective agreement with the employer. It allows members to influence terms on wages, benefits, and working conditions. A majority vote is needed for approval; if rejected, the union may renegotiate.

JOB EVALUATION

WHAT IS IT, HOW DOES IT WORK & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

Job evaluation (JE) is a process aimed at establishing a fair and consistent wage structure for all AOCCs Developed collaboratively by CUPE 2998, the City of Toronto, and community centre management, JE takes into account changes in job descriptions and responsibilities over time. A job evaluation specialist from CUPE national is supporting our committee throughout this process.



JE ensures that each job is fairly recognized and compensated based on its requirements and duties. It evaluates various factors, including physical effort, experience, education, and judgment. Importantly, JE focuses on the job itself, not the individual's performance. We are committed to continuously negotiating the JE criteria to achieve more accurate job ratings over time.

JOB EVALUATION FAQs



Job Evaluation IS...

- About the job
- A measure of job value
- Used to set internal equity
- A process
- Participative and consultative
- An art

Job Evaluation IS NOT...

- About the person doing the job
- A measure of performance
- How other organizations value similar jobs
- A manual
- A small backroom committee
- An exact science

WE NEED HELP ON JE COMMITTEE. IF YOU FEEL THIS IS FOR YOU AND CAN VOLUNTEER, PLEASE EMAIL INFO@CUPE2998.COM.



1. How do I get my job evaluated?

Job evaluations at most centres have not occurred in over 20 years, and some jobs have never been evaluated. All jobs at each community centre will be evaluated.

2. What's the JE process?

Our local's job evaluation committee has work with the City of Toronto for 16 months to finalize the evaluation process, categorize jobs, and create new profiles. Each member will receive an email with a questionnaire, job description, and new profile. Due to the review of over 100 job descriptions, no specific timeline for the email can be provided. Approved profiles will then be sent to your centre's management for review.

3. Who can I talk to for help?

CUPE representatives on the JE committee are available to assist with questions regarding the questionnaire or process. Contact them at jobevaluation@cupe2998.com. Note that management's involvement is limited at this stage.

4. How do I complete the questionnaire?

complete the questionnaire accurately and in detail, focusing on your regular job duties—not one-time or emergency tasks, including those during the COVID pandemic.

5. What happens in the interview?

Committee members will ask questions to clarify your submission. Preparation with examples of your typical duties in advance can be helpful.

6. How are decisions made?

The committee uses consensus decision-making to finalize ratings, following a gender-neutral comparison system (GNCS). If consensus cannot be reached, a third party may be consulted for difficult ratings.

7. What supports does CUPE provide?

Members can discuss issues related to the JE process with site stewards or their local's executive Committee.



LOCAL EXECUTIVE TRAINING

Recently, the President, AOCC VP, Egale VP, and lead steward participated in a six-day training at CUPE Fall School to enhance Local 2998's effectiveness.

They covered effective bylaws, improved meeting efficiency with parliamentary procedures, and explored leadership identities in the Leading as a Team workshop. The Conflict Ready Executives session provided conflict resolution strategies, while the Essentials for Inclusive Unions workshop focused on participation barriers and unconscious biases. Finally, the Good Meetings workshop offered tools for better inclusivity and effectiveness.

This training energized our leaders, equipping them to better serve members and strengthen Local 2998.

Side note from the lead steward: Their costumes were featured on CUPE National's Instagram! <3

INCLUSIVE UNIONS AND ANTI-HARASSMENT & BYSTANDER TRAINING

BY WENXING

In Fall School 2024, I participated in the Inclusive Unions and Anti-Harassment & Bystander training, which deepened my understanding of how we can create more inclusive, equitable workplaces within our union.

One of the most valuable insights I learned was the significance of understanding the demographics within CUPE – such as race, gender, work security, and language spoken at home. These statistics are important because they drove us to reflect on our outreach work, which often unintentionally focus on those who are more like us, reinforcing and reproducing the existing structures and excluding voices that may be less visible.

This raised a further question: how do we represent people who don't exist to our knowledge? For instance, some participants shared that they had not encountered any Queer members in their locals, but that doesn't mean that Queer members don't exist. It's a reminder that the absence of representation doesn't equate to the absence of those identities. As leaders, it's crucial to recognize these biases and work to create a constructive measure and spaces where members feel more comfortable and welcome to share their identities and experiences.

One of the core principles of building union power is the understanding that without our members, there is no union. Strengthening the collective power of our members is key. Union leadership should not only be a service provider but also a facilitator of self-empowerment. Rather than solely resolving individual work-related issues, the union should create a space where members are supported in leading their own cases, identifying challenges, and taking initiative in seeking solutions. When members are empowered, they can recognize that the power to make change is in their hands. By coming together, they have the collective power to reshape and strengthen the union in meaningful ways.



WEXING IS A COORDINATOR OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE (CASE WORK AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT) AT THE 519.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN SIGNING UP FOR ANY TRAINING SESSIONS OR CONVENTIONS, JOIN US AT THE GMM FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO PARTICIPATE. WE'D LOVE TO SEE OUR MEMBERS EMPOWERED!



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

BY HANNAH

PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICER AT EGALE CANADA

The Mental Health First Aid training provided me with vital skills to recognize and respond to mental health challenges with empathy and support. I learned practical techniques for approaching members in need, ensuring they feel heard and respected. A key takeaway was the importance of reducing stigma, aligning with our union's commitment to inclusivity and support. I aim to use these skills to foster a safer space for open conversations and mental health awareness, advocating for an environment where members feel empowered to seek help without fear of judgment, ultimately contributing to a healthier, more supportive environment.

FINANCIAL ESSENTIALS AND FINANCIAL OFFICERS

BY MARCO

SENIOR BILINGUAL INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER AT EGALE CANADA

Attending CUPE's Fall School was a game-changer! I now have a clear grasp of auditing and budgeting, both for our union and my personal finances. I'm eager to apply this knowledge to support future budget audits and to better manage my own personal expenses. The instructors were fantastic, and the in-class activities were excellent."

WHAT IS CUPE SCHOOL

The CUPE Ontario Education Committee offers members seminars and schools twice a year, in spring and fall, focusing on CUPE Ontario's fight for fairness. Courses aim to enhance union engagement and include topics like Contracting Out, Bargaining Preparation, Stewarding, Workers' Compensation, and Labour Law. For more information on how to sign up Please join the next GMM and reach out at info@cupe2998.com.

MEMBER SHOUTOUTS

NIÑA CABAGUIO SHE/HER

At our local, we celebrate the successes of our members, and we're excited to recognize Niña, Coordinator of The 519's Glitterbug: 2SLGBTQ+ EarlyON Mobile Program, for her recent graduation with a Master's in Curriculum & Pedagogy. She achieved this remarkable milestone while working full-time at The 519! Congratulations, Niña!



NICOLE TANGUAY THEY/THEM

They recently attended the CUPE Women's Conference last November at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, where they were voted in as the Pink Triangle's representative for the Women's Caucus. This experience facilitated valuable networking with social services professionals. They also participated in a workshop on labor and Palestinian issues and showed support for postal workers by attending their rally. Overall, the conference strengthened their commitment to social justice.

Well done Nicole we will surely see more you!

Do you know someone who needs to be recognized for their hard work and dedication? Give them a shout out! Please email us at info@cupe2998.com



Susan Gapka (She/Her/Elle)

1st Vice President representing Association of Community Centres. A Casual Labour - Education and Training Facilitator/Special Projects at The 519. She has been involved with the Local since her first meeting in Spring 2018 and has since served on the Trustee, Bargaining, and Bylaw Committees at Local 2998..

What made you initially get involved with the union?

I worked as an activist with CUPE Pink Triangle for a couple of decades before my employment at The 519. During that time, I also accessed The 519's programs as a community member. So, when I was interviewed for a position at The 519, I had an important question: Is this a CUPE position? I accepted the offer; however, it took a couple of years before I was invited to a local meeting.

What do you enjoy most about your role/involvement in the Local?

As the past Ontario Pink Triangle Chair and National Pink Triangle representative, I believe it is important to stay connected with fellow workers in the workplace and our members in the local. I have been fortunate to serve as one of your trustees and look forward to supporting the president and the executive in my new role as your Vice President.

What is one of the biggest challenges you've faced in your role?

Bringing gender diversity, enhanced by pronoun usage has been a challenge since few have travelled this path within labour previously. Over time, and through education, advocacy and legal rights we now have trans, nonbinary and gender diverse folks taking on positions within labour both locally, nationally, and internationally. This pleases me and I look forward to continuing this leadership within 2998 in bargaining to gain gender affirming care benefits for our members.

What's do you like most in the work that you do in your agency?

519 has a culture of supporting each other as part of our programs and as an out trans person I have many queer, trans, and gender diverse co workers I can work with and relate to. Our agency is centred in the heart of the 2SLGBTQ Village and as staff we experience all the joys, sorrows, and pressures of being Toronto's hub. During one meeting a participant called us, 'Queer Royalty' which landed well for me. I am so blessed to be able to come to work as my authentic self; a trans woman, with a history of surviving mental health, addiction and homelessness as part of my life experience.

Lastly, What advice would you give to other members who are interested but shy to be involved?

The I is silent in Union because it is the U and I together. We are part of our union as members, and we both deserve to be included, we also can call in those who are excluded. Your contributions will enhance our work, and you will be welcomed because an injury to one, is an injury to all.



fast talk:

1. Favourite area/neighborhood in Toronto?
Church Wellesley Neighbourhood
2. Most beautiful place in Toronto?
Toronto Island/High Park
3. Tight hug? flowers or Chocolate?
Chocolate
4. What makes you angry?
Injustice
5. Best ALL YOU CAN EAT spot?
Locally
6. Guilty or not guilty have been cut off in a bar?
No Comment
7. Favourite season?
Spring
8. What's your go-to karaoke song?
None
9. Torontonians should discover?
High Park
10. 1 Secret expertise
Chess Player

MEET THE VPS

DENNIS QUESNEL (THEY / HE)



Egale Vice-President of Local 2998 and a Learning Officer at Egale. They also serves as Head Coach for Team Canada Dodgeball. Dennis has been involved with our local since its unionization three years ago.

What motivated you to get involved with the union initially?

I knew my workplace could be better, if we just fought for it. Many hands make light work, so I wanted to get my hands "dirty" and support others.

What do you enjoy most about your role/involvement in the Local?

Meeting others who are just as determined and focused on protecting workers' rights - and they just so happen to be pretty cool too! :)

What is one of the biggest challenges you've faced in your role?

Nothing too challenging in my role in the Local, but my biggest challenge in the union is when I was on the bargaining committee negotiating our first collective agreement. Although I think we ratified an incredible agreement, it was challenging to bargain, very nerve-wracking at points when you knew you had to sometimes stand up to your employer and fight for your members' values and rights.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments or moments related to your work and with the Local?

Securing a "trans fund" for trans, nonbinary, intersex, and gender diverse staff at Egale. This \$15,000/year fund is meant to be an accessible pool of money, generously supported by our Local and by our employer.

What's do you like most in the work that you do in your agency?

I really enjoy creating accessible and eye-opening learning opportunities for folks who are interested in creating an inclusive world for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Lastly, What advice would you give to other members who are interested but shy to be involved?

If you know you want to help, just go for it. You might not have all the answers or know exactly what must be done, but just offering help, a listening ear, and some ideas - it can truly go a long way! My advice, just try it out. You never know how it might change your life.

FAST TALK:

Favourite area/neighborhood in Toronto?
St Clair West!

Most beautiful place in Toronto?
Toronto Island!

Tight hug, flowers, or chocolate?
Tight hug <3

What makes you angry?
Sounds so generic, but seeing unfairness or injustice.

Best ALL YOU CAN EAT spot?
Not sure!

Guilty or not guilty: have you been cut off in a bar?
Yes - and thrown out!

Favourite season?
Summer!

What's your go-to karaoke song?
Man, I Feel Like a Woman by Shania or Born This Way by Lady Gaga; OR Mr. Brightside by The Killers (sorry, I couldn't pick just one)

What should Torontonians discover?
Allan Gardens Conservatory

One secret expertise?
Balancing multiple roles! - work duties, union duties, and dodgeball - keeps me quite busy!

MEET THE VPS

JUNZHANG (SHE/HER)

UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT VICE PRESIDENT FOR LOCAL 2998 AND A SETTLEMENT COUNSELLOR AT UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT. SHE HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH OUR LOCAL SINCE 2012, BRINGING VALUABLE EXPERIENCE AND COMMITMENT TO OUR COMMUNITY.

What made you initially get involved with the union?

Union was there for me when I stood up for my rights. The trust and encouragement from my co-workers motivated me to be a steward.

What do you enjoy most about your role/involvement in the Local?

To support members in protecting their rights and seeking fairness at work

What is one of the biggest challenges you've faced in your role?

How to get members involved in union activities.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments or moments related to your work and with the Local?

One of the proudest moments is the positive change in the work environment due to union's fight.

What's do you like most in the work that you do in your agency?

It's very rewarding to see newcomers adapt to life in Canada more smoothly because of our help

Lastly, What advice would you give to other members who are interested but shy to be involved?

My advice is to step up and get involved. There are trainings and you will be empowered with all the support from the local and CUPE.

F A S T T A L K

Favourite area/neighborhood in Toronto?
My neighborhood in Stouffville :)

Most beautiful place in Toronto?
High Park.

Tight hug? flowers or Chocolate?
Flowers.

What makes you angry?
At work, injustice and unfairness; At home, not enough sleep.

Best ALL YOU CAN EAT spot?
Dragon Pearl Buffet (told by friends).

Guilty or not guilty have been cut off in a bar?
Not applicable to me! :)

Favourite season?
Spring.

What's your go-to karaoke song?
Don't have one :)

Torontonians should discover?
Rouge National Urban Park.

1 Secret expertise:
Getting a good sleep is very important.



Know someone we should feature?
Please email us at
info@cupe2998.com.



EXECUTIVE TEAM



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MEMBER AGENCIES

APPLEGROVE COMMUNITY COMPLEX
CECIL STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE
CENTRAL EGLINTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
COMMUNITY CENTRE 55
EASTVIEW NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE
EGALE CANADA
RALPH THORNTON COMMUNITY CENTRE
SCADDING COURT COMMUNITY CENTRE
SWANSEA TOWN HALL
THE 519
UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT
WATERFRONT NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

RESOURCES

LOCAL 2998 BY-LAWS
AOCs COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT
UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT
EGALE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT
ONTARIO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT AND REGULATIONS (THE GREEN BOOK).

FOLLOW OUR LOCAL ON FACEBOOK, AND INSTAGRAM!

FOR MORE CUPE NEWS & UPDATES FOLLOW:

CUPE ONTARIO (FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM)

CUPE NATIONAL (FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM).