

Take your COFFEE BREAK!



BCGEU member Stephanie Seaman, an early childhood educator at Shaughnessy United Church Child Care Centre in Vancouver, enjoys a 'double-double' from an iconic Canadian doughnut shop on her coffee break.

Your collective agreement entitles you to a coffee break – so take a few minutes for some self-care and catch up on the latest union news! Please read and pass this on to co-workers or post on your union bulletin board.



www.bcgeu.ca

Liberal government continues plans to privatize community living services

The recently re-elected BC Liberal government is expected to push ahead with its plans to dismantle the current continuum of care in community living services. Some current contracted service providers will become host agencies and contract out residential care 'home care providers'. This 'home sharing' model can never fill the need for quality residential care.

"They are putting service providers in an impossible situation – go along with the plan or lose your contract," says Gale Engstrom, a group home supervisor in Williams Lake and the Local 306 chairperson. "Our local has seen several group homes close already. The pressure is on our members too. Take an individual into your home and work 24/7 or lose your job."

CLBC also plans to 'unbundle' day programme funding – shifting it to an individualized funding model with individuals and families competing in the marketplace for workers to provide services. This will spread funding dollars for services even more thinly.



(On right) BCGEU member Loubna Kalaaji assists a young woman at the Developmental Disabilities Association's 8th Avenue day program in Vancouver.

How well will these new forms of service delivery meet the needs of either the adult needing support or the caregiver?

The BCGEU is concerned that the move to a privatized home provider model will leave members without the protection of a collective agreement and open them to exploitation. For example, how will individual providers be protected in regards to hours of work, health and safety, sick leave, holiday, or grievance issues? BCGEU Community Social Services is campaigning in support of our members in the sector and the individuals we support.

Please contact your local Component 3 chairperson or area office representative if you hear of any group home closures in your area.

Over >

COFFEE BREAK!

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Community Social Services Members

Every day BC Government and Service Employees' Union members work to strengthen our communities by supporting people with developmental and physical disabilities, children, youth and families, Aboriginal people, immigrants and refugees, women, the homeless and mentally ill, victims of crime and people in conflict with the law. We work in group homes, shelters and supported housing, sexual assault centres and victims' services, transition houses, child care centres and programmes that provide counselling, rehabilitation, employment training, recreation, outreach, advocacy and referral services.

Keep up with the latest news from your union, including reports about bargaining, by ensuring we have accurate contact information for you. Please make sure you have signed a yellow membership card (ask your steward for one). You can update your contact details anytime by going to www.bcgeu.ca/change_of_address



www.bcgeu.ca

Community Social Services Awareness Month 2009



BCGEU Component 3 executive members with some of the official CSS Awareness Month proclamations (l>r) Front row - Kiran Tiwana, Local 304, Gale Engstrom 306, Jim Johnson 311, Kathy Tones 303, Wynn Hartfelder 307, Pam Schneider 308, Dorothy Bartsoff 312. Back Row - Demian Young 303, Gillian Rutherford 303, Stephanie Seaman 303, Teri Ferworm 309, Cherie Dobbie 302, Larry Jandu 304, James Cavalluzzo 301.

March marked the second annual *Community Social Services Awareness Month* in BC. Activists from the BCGEU made presentations to municipal councils around the province leading to dozens of civic proclamations. Town hall meetings brought frontline workers, employers, individuals and families who access services together in Kamloops and Squamish. Other members staffed information tables in shopping malls to educate the public about the important work provided by community social services workers. For a list of communities that passed resolutions in 2009 recognizing *Community Social Services Awareness Month*, please see www.CommunitySocialServicesMatter.ca

Bargaining preparations underway

A bargaining steering committee led by the BCGEU has been working for months now to prepare for negotiations between unions representing community social services agencies and the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) in 2010. In the coming weeks, the BCGEU will ask members to fill out a survey online that will ask you about your bargaining priorities. The provincial Liberal government has already threatened that public sector workers will have to settle for zero wage increases for the next few years. This despite eight years of rollbacks, cuts to services, stagnant wages and an acute recruitment and retention crisis at community-based social services agencies.

The bargaining steering committee is also developing a communications strategy to keep members informed of what's happening at the bargaining table. Creative use of new media, including social networking tools, will be an important part of this effort.