



B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

4911 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C., V5G 3W3

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Victoria Metis and Castlegar district community services groups join BCGEU

Two new employee groups have voted to join the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union.

The 10 members of Metis Community Services in Victoria voted overwhelmingly in favor of becoming BCGEU members. They cited workplace fairness, equity and transparency as their main reasons for becoming organized. Seniority rights also figured in their decision.

The employees at this worksite provide social services and individual and family support counselling, youth support and cultural recognition support for Metis on Vancouver Island. Some of the special projects they have initiated include: *The Invisible People* poster and puppet show for identifying Metis children; an *I'm Metis* activity book; and an *Elders Speak* program to address racism. They also have two Roots social workers who make cultural connections for children in care.

"This organization is unique in serving the Metis population on Vancouver Island and the staff are passionate in their commitment to the children in their care," said BCGEU President George Heyman.

"The work they do is an integral part of the successful devolution of services to the Metis, said BCGEU Aboriginal Liaison and Equity Officer Keith Cameron, adding "they are part of the growing network of aboriginal and Metis workers in the BCGEU."

Workers at the Castlegar and District Community Services Society are also new BCGEU members. The social service agency's nine staff provide services to women, children and families around Castlegar – including counselling, advocacy, support work and mental health coordinating.

"We're pleased to welcome these two groups and are already working with them to set bargaining priorities and begin negotiating first collective agreements," Heyman said.

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