

**NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues**  
**BCGEU Component Report**  
**November 17-18, 2011**

Let me begin this report by expressing my sincere regrets at not being able to be there with you at this meeting. I am very much looking forward to working with you all in the upcoming years.

It has been an incredibly busy half year since I was elected to the position of Treasurer and we, as a union have been very involved in Women's issues both Provincially and Nationally. Below is a snapshot of some of the events and initiatives we have participated in.

**1. Regional Women's Conference**

The BCGEU Women's Committee held a hugely successful regional women's conference in Castlegar in April 2011. Our theme was "Double-duty: Finding Life/Work Harmony". We had attendance from approximately 70 women from the region. The conference included guest speakers, panel discussions, presentation of the NUPGE Quality of Women's Lives survey report, and world cafe/open space discussions. A highlight was a special evening to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IWD. The BCGEU Women's Committee is making tentative plans for two regional women's conferences in 2012.

**2. 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IWD**

The union promoted IWD through articles in *the Provincial*, website and e-bulletin, poster, fridge magnets, sponsorship of events. Our Womens Committee members also organized or participated in IWD events in their own communities, including a march and rally in Vancouver. The union commissioned special scarves hand-woven by women in refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border to commemorate IWD.

**3. Canadian Women's Foundation (CWF)**

The BCGEU has continued to support the CWF's "Women Moving Women" program to involve 2,500 women in donating \$2,500 to move 2,500 women out of poverty. The union held a Sisterhood Soiree in May for women leaders of other unions to present the campaign and encourage sponsorship. Other committee members have given presentations on the campaign to their labour councils. In September, BCGEU women attended a CWF benefit in Toronto featuring Gloria Steinem. To date, the BCGEU is sponsoring 17 women, through HQ and components.

**4. 2011 Summer Institute for Union Women**

A number of BCGEU members attended the very successful BC Federation of Labour SIUW at the University of Victoria in July. Several BCGEU staff were facilitators.

**5. Women's Worlds 2011 -- July 3-7, 2011 - Ottawa-Gatineau**

BCGEU women attended the Women's Worlds 2011 Conference with over 2,000 participants from 92 countries in Ottawa-Gatineau in July.

## **6. Federal Election**

The political activism subcommittee of the BCGEU Women's Committee produced and circulated an e-postcard to members critical of the Harper government's record on women's issues.

## **7. Child Care**

The BCGEU has appointed a new PE Child Care Committee, and is continuing to work with the Coalition of Child Care Advocates and other advocacy groups calling for universal, publicly funded, not-for-profit child care. As an organization we have formally endorsed the [Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning](#)

## **8. October – Women's History Month**

The BCGEU issued a statement from the Treasurer/Chair of the Women's Committee in celebration of Women's History Month to members which can be found here [http://www.bcgeu.ca/womens\\_month\\_111012](http://www.bcgeu.ca/womens_month_111012)

## **9. PE Women's Committee**

The BCGEU has a newly appointed PE Women's Committee. The committee will be meeting in the coming weeks to determine priorities and workplan for 2012.

## **10. Walk For Justice**

The BCGEU supported the Walk For Justice for missing and murdered women both here in BC and across Canada.

## **11. Other Conferences**

The BCGEU held an Equity and Human Rights Conference "Raising our Voices, Building Our Power" where our new Equity and Human Rights Committee was elected by delegates. We will also be sending a number of delegates to the BC Federation of Labour Union Renewal Conference "New Voices, Growing Unions" a conference designed to address the issue of engaging workers of colour and Aboriginal/First Nation and Metis workers.

## **12. Child Care Human Resource Sector Council**

I continue to sit on the CCHRSC as a labour representative for NUPGE but as some may know, our future is very uncertain at this time. All funding for the Sector Council programmes will be cut as of March 2013 and the council, in its current structure will no longer be able to remain as all of our infrastructure funding comes from the HRSDC. We continue to work as a board to explore our options as it is felt by many that our continuation in some form is vital. We were the last national organisation for child care to have received federal funding but those before us, the Child Care Federation and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, we have been "defunded". Until we are no longer able to do so, we will continue to work on projects related to Human Resource issues within the child care sector.

### **13 Bargaining**

Finally, in December of this year we will be holding our bargaining conference for all of our various sectoral members in preparation for bargaining in 2012. It is estimated that between 80-90% of our membership will be at bargaining tables in the upcoming year. After two years of a net zero mandate, we have heard loudly and clearly from our members that there must be fair and meaningful gains in the next round. A tough challenge in times of economic restraint but one we are prepared to meet head on.

I look forward to being able to meet you all the next time that we meet and hope to meet some of you before then if at all possible.

In Solidarity

Stephanie Smith

Treasurer, Chair of BCGEU Women's Committee

BCGEU