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Winter 2024



the **Rose**

MAGAZINE

Exposing the Darkness of Human Trafficking

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CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The Rose is a magazine from the CUPW National Women's Committee, sent to all Sisters and those who identify as women of CUPW.

Communication is a two-way street!

We want to hear your stories and concerns – what do you have to say to your CUPW Sisters? You can submit your letters to the editor, opinion pieces, feature ideas and other thoughts to:

email: feedback@cupw-sttp.org

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CUPW THE ROSE

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LETTERS POLICY

The Rose welcomes letters to the editor. We will print letters from a CUPW member provided it:

- is 400 words or less. Union members may submit longer items for consideration as commentary pieces.
- does not violate CUPW policy opposing discrimination and harassment against women, people of colour, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender individuals, people with different abilities, and/or CUPW policies and principles.
- is typed or written neatly.
- includes the author's name, address, local and a phone number where they can be reached if there are problems.

The Rose will withhold the author's name if necessary. Otherwise, the author's name and local will appear.

The Rose will contact authors if there are problems with their letters.

We accept letters by mail, fax and electronic mail.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCTION



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The Rose 2024

For the last three years, CUPW's National Women's Committee has proudly released a new Rose in March to coincide with International Women's Day.

The National Women's Committee was formally created during the 1990 National Convention. A group of women who called themselves feisty feminists had argued for a decade that women workers needed a safe space to talk about the issues they faced at work, in the Union, within the labour movement, and as citizens of the world. Although they encountered some pushback at first, the women who led the charge for this type of committee knew that to make gains, they would have to unite and fight for them. That legacy continues today.

More women than ever before were elected to Union positions at the National and Regional levels during the 2023 National Convention. This means this 2023-2027 National Women's Committee is the biggest committee ever!

But we don't want to stop there. Women have shown, time and time again, that when we work together, we can make magic. Last year, CUPW produced a resource booklet that included information about creating a Local Women's Committee.

There is so much power in local, grassroots organizing. Let's continue to grow to help push women's issues forward.

The Rose is a vehicle to talk about the issues that affect us at work and in life. This year's Rose includes an update on CUPW's Child Care Fund, a story about finding empowerment and confidence through participating in the National Women's Committee, information about human trafficking, and a guide to leave benefits for pregnant people. You'll also read a personal essay about Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women and Girls from an Indigenous Sister.

In 2020, CUPW began the tradition of honouring the trailblazing women of the Union to commemorate International Women's Day. In this year's edition of the Rose, readers will meet eight Sisters, one from each region, who have advanced women's rights in the Union and the labour movement. They are being honoured for their activism and for inspiring a generation of women to raise their voices & be heard.

The National Women's Committee worked with CUPW staff and officers at the national office to put together this publication. We are always looking for new stories and contributions so please reach out if you're interested in writing for the next edition of the Rose.

The National Women's Committee



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What's Up with the CUPW Child Care Fund

Now into its 32nd year, the CUPW Child Care Fund continues to build on its past successes to meet the child care needs of members today.

We've done this, in part, by partnering with child care centres that have increased the number of spaces they deliver or have opened new locations. We partner with eight different child care centres to provide quality, licensed child care to postal workers. To ensure some fairness to members we have projects in each of the eight CUPW Regions.

We also continue to improve upon two of our largest projects, *Special Needs and Moving On* through evaluations to ensure they continue to support members who are raising children with special needs or disabilities. We carry-out member child care needs assessments with an eye to creating innovative projects and undertake child care policy research to advance CUPW's call for public and non-profit child care for all.

DISABILITY-SUPPORTS.ca

A place where you can find support and services for you or your family.

Disability Supports is a project of the CUPW and UPCE-PSAC Child Care Fund.

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Scan the QR code today, and find resources at your fingertips.



But let's dig a little deeper – what are some of the things the Fund has been up to over the past couple of years.

- In 2020 we did a full review of all of our child care projects. Most of these projects had been in existence for over 15 years and it was time to see if they were still delivering for members. The evaluation found that the projects remain important. But it also allowed us to make some adjustments. In Calgary, for example, our long-time partner, Churchill Park opened five new group child care centres across the city, giving more members greater access to care near to where they live or work.
- In 2022, we partnered with the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (Eviance) to review our *Special Needs and Moving On* projects. This was very useful for identifying what was and was not working for members on the projects. Over 400 members were surveyed. Bottom-line – these projects remain a valuable support. In the words of one member, “My feelings about the union have changed because of the SNP. These projects show respect for members and their families. This project is something to be proud of.”
- In December 2022, CUPW launched a first of its kind national disability portal (disability-supports.ca). We partnered with 211 Ontario to develop this project. 211 is Canada's primary source of online information of government and community-based health and social services. We developed this project after hearing from members about the frustration of trying to find the information they

need for their children. We wanted to create a site that would be easy to understand and easy to use and we succeeded. In 2023, CUPW won the Canadian Association of Labour Media award for the most innovative online tool.

- The CUPW Child Care Fund has partnered with more than 40 researchers, community partners, advocates, and policy experts from universities, non-profit organizations, and trade unions on a seven-year project. The project is funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and is called “What is the Best Policy Mix for Diverse Canadian Families with Young Children? Re-imagining Child Care, Parental Leave and Workplace Policies.” We know that working families with young children need better supports so they can work and raise their families. Through this project, we will take a broad look at how workplace and government family policies and programs can work together to better support working families.
- The CUPW Child Care Fund will continue to build on its success to better meet the child care needs of postal worker families.



Photos of children participating in quality child care in Vancouver

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit:

A personal journey, started but not ended

As I am sitting down to write this, it is the beginning of December, and Christmas is fast approaching. I have started making plans for my family. I have always loved this time of year but, working at the post office has left me with mixed feelings.

The stress of working long hours, the high volumes, making sure to get customers all their letters, cards, packages, and bringing them a little joy takes a toll on my energy, my time, and plans with my own family. It's hard to have balance this time of year. Still, I have my partner, son, daughter, sister, brothers, father to make plans with and this I am thankful for.

My mom passed 25 years ago, but before her passing, while she was in and out of hospital, we started the journey of trying to regain our Indian status. It had been taken from the women in our family by the government of Canada when my Cree Kokum (grandma) married my Metis grandfather, but that's another story.

As I started this journey with my mom, I learned more about my family, my mother's family, and my culture that had been subtly taught to me through my upbringing. I started my gentle introduction to the realization of who I was, and the assimilation process I was unknowingly raised in Canada. This was right around the time I got my first unionized job, joining CUPW.

Being supported by my fellow union family, this allowed me to start facing the harder truths of my history and this country's history. I took the Turtle Island course that CUPW offers. It provided a safe space for all of



Red Dress display at National Human Rights Museum Winnipeg

us to dig a little deeper and support each other. As I chose to educate myself further, and became more active in human rights issues, not only with my union, but in my personal life, I started to learn more about my Indigenous friends and families. I realized how privileged I am to know where my daughter, my sister, and my mother are.

We Are More than Statistics; We Are Real People

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit (MMIWG2S+) is real and it's out of control. I never knew this growing up. It wasn't until I started

"Don't let the fear
of making a mistake stop
you from learning the truth
and doing better"



Inside the National Human Rights Museum

unpacking my history that I really started seeing this. I have friends who are not only impacted by the loss of one family member, but many. Some of their loved ones have suffered terrible murders and some have no idea where their family members are. I have sat through many tearful accounts.

When my friend was just a child, her mother left her and her siblings with their Auntie for the day while she went to the nearest town. Her mom leaving that day is my friend's last memory of her mother. That was 32 years ago. Thirty-two years without seeing or hugging her mother. My friend now has children who will most likely never get to meet their Kokmis (grandma). Another friend lost their loved one to a man who threw gasoline on her and lit her on fire, only because she knocked on the wrong person's door late at night. Another friend has had their cousin's DNA found on serial killer Robert Pickton's farm in British Columbia.

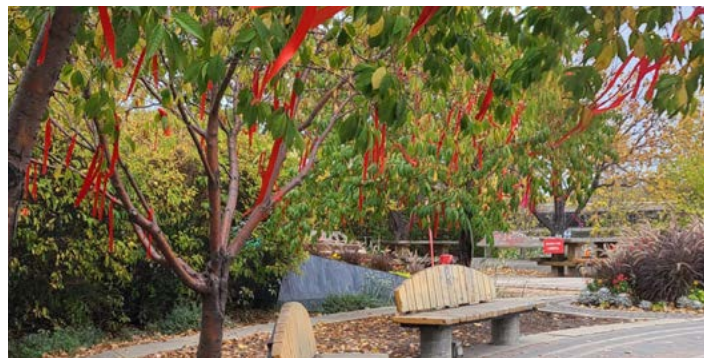
Recently, two Indigenous women shared that they had spent time at the Pickton farm in their youth and consider themselves lucky to have escaped the same fate. Unfortunately, the list goes on. The more I make time to sit and listen to my friends and family, the many more personal accounts of MMIWG2S+ I hear.

Not all stories have a sad ending. A more positive story is one that began when I was 20 years old. My close friend asked me to keep them company and help them search for their mom in Vancouver's East side. They hadn't heard from their mom in quite some time and were extremely worried. Was she still alive?

They wanted to try and track her down for the comfort of knowing that she was still alive and not "missing." We drove down, armed with a picture, water, snacks, and cigarettes. Within a few hours of driving, walking, and talking with people who lived on the streets, we finally located her. Relief. But because she wasn't ready to leave the streets, the off and on search for his mom went on for years. Years went by and one day she made the decision to go home and to live with him and his family... her grand babies. She has since passed, but it is a story that everyone wishes for, a story of being reunited.

The Dangers of Being a Girl, a Woman, Two-Spirited and Indigenous

If you are Indigenous, the stories of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit are personal. It's often one we hold close to our hearts, that many never openly talk about for fear of being judged or shamed. How many of you know of one woman in your life that has gone missing or been murdered? Or you have a friend who has suffered this kind of loss? Now, how many of you can say you personally know many women? These are not statistics to brag about, it is just fact when you are Indigenous.



Bear Clan Walk - Winnipeg

How did we get here? How did we lose so many matriarchs in our communities? Where did this start? Have you ever stopped to ask yourself these questions when you hear or see the statistics of the MMIWG2S+?? Most of us see the numbers, but unless it directly impacts us, our eyes glaze over. I know this; it has happened to me. I am not proud of it, but it is truth. Life, corporations, the state, want us to be too busy, preoccupied, just trying to survive so that we don't have the energy or time to do anything else.

We Must Unite for Change

I have an Indigenous partner, I have Indigenous children, I have an Indigenous sister, daughter, aunts, cousins, and friends, so I make the time to educate myself. My daughter and all the other children who are growing up, their livelihood depends on us educating ourselves, so that we might positively change the statistics by being change makers. We need to make improvements to the systems and policies to create a safe place for Indigenous peoples to grow up and live, to exist. When we do this, it will be a better place for all of us.

I encourage you to reach out to support **MMIWG2S+** events in your community. Make time to read *The Highway of Tears Symposium* and the *Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women's Calls for Justice*. Make time to ask questions and be prepared to listen.

Look for MMIWG2S+ campaigns, like the **Lil' Red Dress Project** in the community I currently live in. This project raises awareness, and any funds they raise support families that are impacted, through billboards, healing retreats, immediate response supports for new cases, and so on.

Apply to take the Turtle Island course when CUPW offers it. Take a step. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. I have made many, but I continue working to do better. This is the lesson that I am learning: "Don't let the fear of making a mistake stop you from learning the truth and doing better."

My wish is that one day, I will not have to write about this topic. That this country will be a safe place for all our girls, women and Two Spirit people to grow up and live. I encourage you to be a part of the change, be an activist moving forward, with love in your heart.

Chi-miigwetch, Meagan



Women's Dance performance by Indigenous Workers Group members, 2019 national convention.

Photo by Gregory Bennett.

Meagan Goudreault is first and foremost a mother who has the privilege of raising her family on the Pentlatch, E'iksan and the K'omoks First Nations traditional territory. She is an activist, a letter carrier, and the president of Local 718 in Courtenay, British Columbia. Meagan is an Indigenous facilitator and part of the National Human Rights Committee's Indigenous Working Group.



Trailblazing

WOMEN OF CUPW

In 2020, the National Women's Committee launched an annual campaign to recognize and show gratitude to some of the trailblazing women whose expression of feminism and trade unionism have made a lasting impact on our union.

Since then, every year, we have showcased a Sister from each region, sharing their experiences and

achievements which helped make the Union what it is today. While the next generation of women leaders emerge, they too will face challenges and many of the same barriers we've fought for years. It is only by celebrating our victories against patriarchy and advancing women's rights and gender equity that we have claimed our space over time.

We are proud to present to you the Trailblazing Sisters for 2024!

International Women's Day March 8, 2024

**Bev Collins • Bev Ray • Diane Lapensée
Kim Smith • Maryse Habel • Marg Bizuk
Pratibha Gupta • Dawn Robichaud**

**CELEBRATING WOMEN WHOSE EXPRESSION OF FEMINISM AND TRADE
UNIONISM HAVE MADE A LASTING IMPACT ON OUR UNION**

Bev Collins

Central Region

Sister Bev Collins became a postal worker in 1985, living and working in Northern B.C. as a PT clerk in Prince Rupert, Local 814. Bev became active in the Local and served as Shop Steward, Local Trustee and eventually Local President. In 2004, Sister Collins moved to Ottawa where she became a FT Letter Carrier, serving as Local Trustee and eventually Local Secretary-Treasurer.

As the first sister in a full-time position at the Ottawa Local, Sister Collins honed her skills and developed important relationships throughout the Central Region. In 2008, the members of the Central Region elected Sister Collins to act as their representative on the National Board of Trustees. She was re-elected to this position until 2015.

At the 2015 National Convention, Sister Collins was elected as the National Secretary-Treasurer, the second sister to hold this position. Bev has served in this capacity for eight years. At the end of this term, Sister Collins will have sat on the National Executive Board for 12 years. Sister Collins has always encouraged, supported, and provided guidance and training to others eager to do the work of the Union. Drawing on her experience and identifying the distinctive

needs of Locals, she developed the first ever inclusive tool for Local Secretary-Treasurers. The introduction of the USB tool (the famous key to success) has standardized the administrative work of Locals and the Union from coast to coast.

A seasoned facilitator of CUPW education, Sister Collins loves to give back by regularly providing Local Administration and Local Secretary-Treasurer training at various Regions across the country. For much of her Canada Post career, Sister Collins raised four children. This experience became the foundation for her fierce determination to improve the lives of working women.

Sister Collins, a strong supporter of archiving the work of the Union, brought forward resolutions adopted by the NEB that resulted in the development and construction of the CUPW Archive Center. In 2022-2023, Sister Collins led a small group of individuals in the development of CUPW's first ever historical publication *Pushing the Envelope, the Struggle Continues*.

Sister Collins is enormously supportive to Locals and her commitment to the Union has been an inspiration for many.

Bev Ray

Prairie Region

Bev Ray (Shero to many) blazed a shining trail in the Edmonton Local and in the Prairie Region for over 17 years. She is a smart, outspoken, passionate, articulate, and compassionate activist who never forgot that, as a Union, our primary fight is with Canada Post above all else.

Soon after Bev began working for Canada Post, she put her outspoken nature and activist spirit into action and never looked back. Bev took on many active roles within the Union beginning with Shop Steward. She then served as Edmonton Local President and Vice-President of the Regina Local. She was also an advocate for the Prairie Region serving as the CUPW delegate on the Alberta Federation of Labour Executive Council. As President of the Edmonton

Local, Bev took on and supported others in the fight against forced overtime, the implementation and impact of Modern Post, the closing of numerous retail postal outlets, countless restructures, violations to our collective agreements, and led the Local through the rotating strikes and lockout in 2011.

Bev is particularly passionate about Route Measurement and saw it as a vital tool to save jobs and keep routes manageable for carriers. She organized the Local Route Measurement Committee in Edmonton to accurately measure route pacing, and in the process, saved 100 jobs. The Committee continues to do this same work today. Sister Ray took her route management expertise to Regina to help save jobs during restructures. She continued to advocate for our collective rights, and organized the strike lines in Regina in 2018.

Bev was instrumental in organizing our political allies in order to put more pressure on the Corporation about our issues such as delivering in the dark, Modern Post, forced

overtime, Community Mail Box conversion, and fighting to keep our public post office for the people, as it was intended. The Edmonton Local has a strong tradition of mentoring and empowering women activists. Bev has followed this tradition by encouraging and supporting many Sisters to find their voices and become active in the Union. Despite her retirement in November 2023, she continues to help her fellow Sisters develop their strengths and find their voices. She is a role model for many and is part of the blazing trail of strong women activists that are vital to the success of CUPW.

Diane Lapensée

Montreal Region

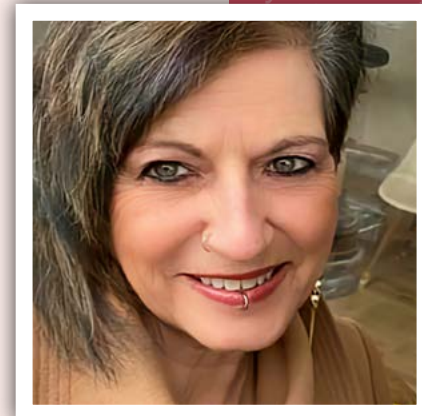
Diane Lapensée started working at Canada Post in 1989 and recently retired in January 2023. She had a rich union career: she started as a shop steward in 2001, and in 2002 she was elected Director of her local women's committee while providing support for Article 13. Later, between 2008 and 2012, she was elected 6th Vice-President of the Montreal Local before becoming the 5th Vice-President from 2014 to 2015.

Diane was a real asset for the members of CUPW as a Shop Steward and an Executive of the Montreal Local. Sister Lapensée always defended the rights of postal workers and took it upon herself to encourage her fellow sisters to get involved in the Union. She also had an extensive knowledge of the grievance system and trained many sisters on the matter. Her patience, rigour, and organizational skills helped many sisters to become more confident in their decisions. Thanks to her leadership and determination, the grievance representation project was a success.

She was, among other things, a key figure in the creation of positions for people with disabilities without reducing the number of positions in other sections. During her mandates, Diane offered training and was a member of the Article 54 Committee (Work Reintegration Program) for members requesting accommodation. Diane's empathy was a real asset on the Committee because members need to feel heard and supported when they submit a request for accommodation to the employer.



Bev Collins



Bev Ray



Diane Lapensée

Many remember Diane as a compassionate human being who was available and always ready to support members. She was always the first to volunteer to help in difficult situations. Throughout her career at Canada Post and CUPW, Sister Lapensée was a compassionate and committed advocate for her fellow sisters and brothers of the Montreal Region.

Kim Smith Ontario Region

Kim Smith began her career at Canada Post in May 2006 in Simcoe, Ontario.

While in Simcoe, she worked as a Clerk, Letter Carrier and Acting Retail Lead Hand. She also spent some time working in Delhi, Tillsonburg, and London. Sister Smith currently holds a retail position in Tillsonburg.

While in London, Kim became active in the Union. She became interested in this work after discovering that no matter where she worked, Sisters were being treated poorly by management. She watched Sisters suffer through discriminations for being pregnant, single mothers, older, or with disabilities and for their religious beliefs.

After witnessing this discrimination, she set out to correct the behaviour through union activism. Sister Smith started with basic union duties such as a Health and Safety Representative, Shop Steward and first aider.

The London Local then approached her about becoming a member of Local Executive. Over the years, she held the position of Secretary-Treasurer and First Vice-President within the London Local. She also sat on numerous local committees.

Sister Smith especially loved the First Vice-President work, as it aligned with issues she held close to her heart, namely advocating for women's rights and human rights on the work floor. While in these positions, and with the help of other local Union Representatives, she helped resolve issues surrounding unfair working conditions for singles moms and pregnant Sisters. At the same time, significant case law was being released around family status matters for women and

the members of the Executive were able to use it to improve the working conditions for Sisters.

Throughout her career, Kim has taken part in many Union educationals and became a Union facilitator as well as a Health and Safety Facilitator for the Workers Health and Safety Center.

This provided an avenue to share some of this information with members. She devised a two-hour workshop for Short Term Disability and has continued to put on various workshops across the Region. Through her participation in various national committees and discussions with other members, she found more solutions for workers.

She also ran for an Alternate Union Representative and had the honour of being called up to the Ontario Regional Office. Subsequently, she was elected as a Regional Union Representative and is currently serving her second term as Regional Grievance Officer.

Sister Smith still sees a lot of opportunity for positive change and has been working on improving the working conditions for Sisters and all CUPW members. Kim would like to thank everyone who has supported her in her journey. It takes strong solidarity to achieve such remarkable success!

Maryse Habel Québec Region

History shows that it is easier to remember people who filled important functions or positions in an organization. The region of Quebec wishes to show its gratitude to an exceptional woman whose involvement, rigour, authenticity, and devotion were remarkable.

Maryse Habel knew how to make the most of the Union training she received during her career. Steward, picket captain, facilitator, trustee, social steward; she wore many hats throughout the years and her involvement always exceeded expectations.

She was the only representative of the Quebec Region to sit on the Constitution Committee during the National Convention of October 2011. Sometimes we find our best allies in adversity. One thing is certain; the Quebec Region acknowledges the work she accomplished.

After this challenge, she passed on her knowledge and shared her experience during the next two National Conventions, returning as a member of the Constitution Committee.

She was a voice for her community and her Brothers and Sisters after the rail disaster in Lac-Mégantic. She expressed herself with sensibility regarding the hardship in this community. Maryse Habel was a Social Steward from 2009 until her retirement in 2021. She was one of the pillars that, over time, built the network of social stewards as we know it. She was the voice of reason, and we could always rely on her good advice.

We thank her sincerely for her involvement and we wish her a wonderful retirement.

Marg Bizuk Pacific Region

Sister Marg Bizuk began her career as a part-time PO4 in Peace River, Alberta, working her shift at the post office once her school day ended. After graduating high school, she was promoted to full-time staff and was immediately drawn into the Union.

Her Union education came from mentorship and experiencing firsthand the real-life struggle of how postal workers succeeded in making great gains by standing up to their bosses, the government, their own leadership, and even the labour movement when it necessary.

Sister Bizuk was an active participant in the Union and the labour movement from 1973 until her retirement in 2011, and she continues to take part as a retiree today. Many life lessons were learned on the picket lines, starting in 1974 when the Union went on strike to fight against the introduction of technological change with the low-paid coder classification. In 1978, she held the line with her Brothers and Sisters as Union members refused to comply with government back-to-work-legislation, which led to the arrest of the CUPW National President at the time. She participated in the 42-day strike in 1981 to achieve maternity



Kim Smith



Marg Bizuk



Maryse Habel

leave benefits first for postal workers, then for all workers. And all the struggles that followed. She and the Union vowed to never go backwards and never give up.

In 1988, Sister Bizuk worked diligently on the Union's national campaign "Struggle 88" to keep our public postal office and to expand and improve postal services. Not only did CUPW succeed in making this a federal election issue at the time, but it also strengthened the grounds for the fight which must continue even today.

Sister Bizuk is the first woman ever elected in the Regional Education Organizing Officer position in the Pacific region. She also worked with the National Women's Committee on the first CUPW International Women's Day button "a woman's place is in the struggle" and she knows the message remains relevant today. She urges her Union Sisters to unite to take their place and to use their power of standing in solidarity as the struggle continues forward.

Pratibha Gupta **Toronto Region**

Pratibha Gupta is a passionate advocate for workers' rights. She firmly believes that when people come together, positive change can happen. Growing up with a strong sense of justice, Pratibha has dedicated her career to making a difference in the lives of workers.

She began her career as a postal worker in 2011. In her journey to defend, educate, and inspire women in labour, she has held many elected roles within CUPW including Shop Steward, Local Joint Health and Safety member, and member of the Local and National Women's Committees. Sister Gupta knows the value of education and has taken many of the courses offered by CUPW including a four weeklong Union Education Program. She trains new workers in health and safety, and she is an instructor for the Workers Health and Safety Centre in Mississauga which provide essential high-quality training to workers, their representatives, supervisors, and employers, in public and private sector workplaces.

During the first few years of the pandemic, Pratibha served on the COVID 19 Committee in Toronto, offering council and support to roughly 10, 000 members during a frightening

and confusing time. She documented this work and her fight for worker's rights in an article published by Toronto Life magazine.

Pratibha was also a Coordinator for the *Delivering Community Power* campaign and raised awareness about the Union's vision of the post office of the future to rank-and-file members and the general public in the GTA. In a city as diverse as Toronto, she has been able to reach many racialized and marginalized women as she can speak numerous languages.

Pratibha wants to see a world where women are not a commodity; a society where people view women's issues as everyone's issues. Every day, she fights against gender and racial bias to help empower women, and her voice is now being heard far and wide.

As a Union activist, Pratibha has led campaigns for safe working conditions and the fair treatment of workers. Her commitment to fairness has not only improved workplaces but it has also inspired others to join the fight for justice. Pratibha challenges the current system and pushes for change to make workplaces better for everyone. Her dedication has made her a respected figure among colleagues and the labour movement, and a source of inspiration for new activists.

Whether in powerful meetings or on the front lines of labour movements, Pratibha Gupta is a symbol of hope for those seeking positive change. Through her hard work, she continues to shape the conversation around workers' rights and fairness, making a lasting impact in the workplace.

Dawn Robichaud **Atlantic Region**

Retired after 35 years of service at Canada Post, Dawn Robichaud of Saint John, New Brunswick, worked within Groups One and Two, with her last nine years working as a Letter Carrier.

Six weeks into her first job at Canada Post, Dawn experienced her first strike. The big issue at the time was about Coders. In the early days of technological change, when coding was done by hand and machine, women were

most often hired to do this job. It was an exciting time, and according to Dawn, a very important time for women's voices to be heard. Over the course of her career, Dawn participated in at least half-dozen strikes and boycotts, including the Union's Boycott the Postal Code which would have had a negative impact on all workers.

The Union gain that meant the most to her was Maternity Leave. During the strike of 1981, Sister Robichaud was on maternity leave, and when she returned to work, her Employment Insurance was topped-up, a direct benefit won from the strike. This was a huge victory for society. Dawn also believes it helped strengthen our Union and that we should still be celebrating this momentous victory.

When asked to define "The Struggle is Real," Dawn responded: "Working class folks are always struggling to be paid and treated fairly. It is unfortunate most workers feel that they owe so much to their employer, I feel the opposite is true." Dawn loved being a part of the Union. She says she tolerated the job so she "could participate in my Union."

Sister Robichaud gave so much of herself to CUPW. She balanced being a mom to four boys with Union responsibilities like being recording secretary of her local, participating in numerous educationals, and facilitating numerous courses at the local, regional, national, and even international levels.

Dawn made it easy to learn, listen, understand, focus and take action. She supported many Sisters with her ability to lead with empathy. Dawn attributes this to the Sisters who came before her, more specifically, Ruth Larson, who mentored her in becoming an activist.

A huge advocate of the CUPW Special Needs Program, Dawn facilitated the Child Care Course and helped members who needed this support. She says she is forever grateful to the Union for the help she and her family received through this program.

Dawn shares this advice with all CUPW Sisters: "Women bring a wonderful perspective and consensus-building to our Union. We are insightful and great listeners. I encourage everyone to ask of and give support to your fellow Sisters, go to the microphones, attend educationals, jump-in and make a difference because your Union needs you!"



Pratibha Gupta



Dawn Robichaud



The Trafficking of Persons: A Spotlight to Expose the Darkness of Human Trafficking

One of the many benefits of being a member of the CUPW National Women's Committee is the opportunity to get together twice a year with other like-minded women of the Union from across the country. During these meetings, we come together to discuss the issues we face as women workers and make recommendations to the National Executive Board.

Over the years, we've been fortunate to hear inspiring stories from an array of guest speakers. During our last meeting, held in October 2023 in Ottawa, we heard a powerful story about human trafficking. It left a lasting impression on me and so many of the other women in attendance which is why we felt it was important to include information about trafficking in this edition of the Rose.

"Trafficking in persons, or human trafficking, is a serious human rights violation that can occur domestically or transnationally with the crossing of international borders. Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation or harbouring of a person and includes controlling or influencing their movements with the goal of exploiting, or facilitating the exploitation of, a person."

- Public Safety Canada

The degree to which human trafficking affects humanity is staggering. On a global level, the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, using data from 148 Countries, reported that 1 in 3 trafficking victims identified are children. Girls are mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation and boys for labour.

Other global studies estimate that every 30 seconds, a child becomes a victim of human trafficking. Information obtained by survivors indicates that on average, victims are trafficked four times, but as many as 12 times while trapped, exploited and enslaved. The Human Trafficking Institute reports that 52.1 percent of victims are minors and the average age a victim is first trafficked is 17 to 18 but spans the ages of 13 to 25.



How Does Trafficking Occur?

Sex trafficking is an exploitive, interpersonal crime of manipulation, abuse of power and control. Masked as love, protection, and/or hidden behind a false promise of a better life, traffickers can be intimate or romantic partners, friends, acquaintances, even family members or they can be perfect strangers. Trafficking is a process that unfolds over time; usually involving dynamic stages of recruitment, grooming, isolation, and escalation of abuse and harm.

Sex traffickers approach potential victims in a variety of ways. Some young victims are recruited at parties where they are drugged and exploited and then shamed and blackmailed. Traffickers will sometimes use older girls to recruit other females by befriending them, and then turning them over to a pimp. Today, social media plays a big role with traffickers finding victims online. Traffickers and other predators are using Facebook, Twitter, Whisper, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok to have direct access to kids. They make false promises of work and financial aid, and sometimes threaten a victim's safety if they do not comply. Victims of trafficking are isolated and often transported to a variety of locations, sometimes in different provinces to keep them away from family and friends who could help them escape.

Human Trafficking in Canada

Human Trafficking is identified as one of the fastest growing crimes in Canada, yet it continues to be difficult to detect and is often under-reported by the

police. The business of human trafficking is often characterized as a “low risk/high reward activity” because the crime is clandestine and difficult to detect and investigate resulting in relatively low prosecution rates worldwide.

Unlike the sale of drugs or guns, human beings can be sold over and over for the financial or material benefit of the traffickers, making this crime extremely lucrative. Modern justice systems still rely heavily on witness testimony to prove that the trafficking has occurred. Due to the trauma experienced during the trafficking, many victims will have memory gaps. Many victims are blackmailed with threats of exposure to family, fraudulently manipulated into debt, and often too traumatized to face their traffickers in court.

Nova Scotia and Ontario account for the highest rate of police reported human trafficking cases in Canada, and 87 percent of trafficking cases happen in large urban centres with a population of 100,000 or more. Métis, First Nations, and Inuit women, youth and Two-Spirit/LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be targeted for and impacted by sex trafficking and gender-based violence (GBV).

The crime of ‘Trafficking in Persons’ was added to the Criminal Code of Canada and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2005, and in 2020, the federal government proclaimed February 22nd as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day.

What Can We Do?

Human trafficking is a big business that generates about \$32 billion USD annually according to the United Nations. Ending human trafficking will take a coordinated and sophisticated approach from governments as well as civilians. Most citizens feel helpless and have no idea how to help.

The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking provides information about the signs of human trafficking and what to do if you suspect someone is being trafficked. It also runs 24 hours, seven days a week, multi-language hotline to provide resources to people who are being trafficked and also accept tips and reporting about potential trafficking. If you are a victim/survivor of forced prostitution or forced labour, or believe someone else might be, call the hotline at 1-833-900-1010.

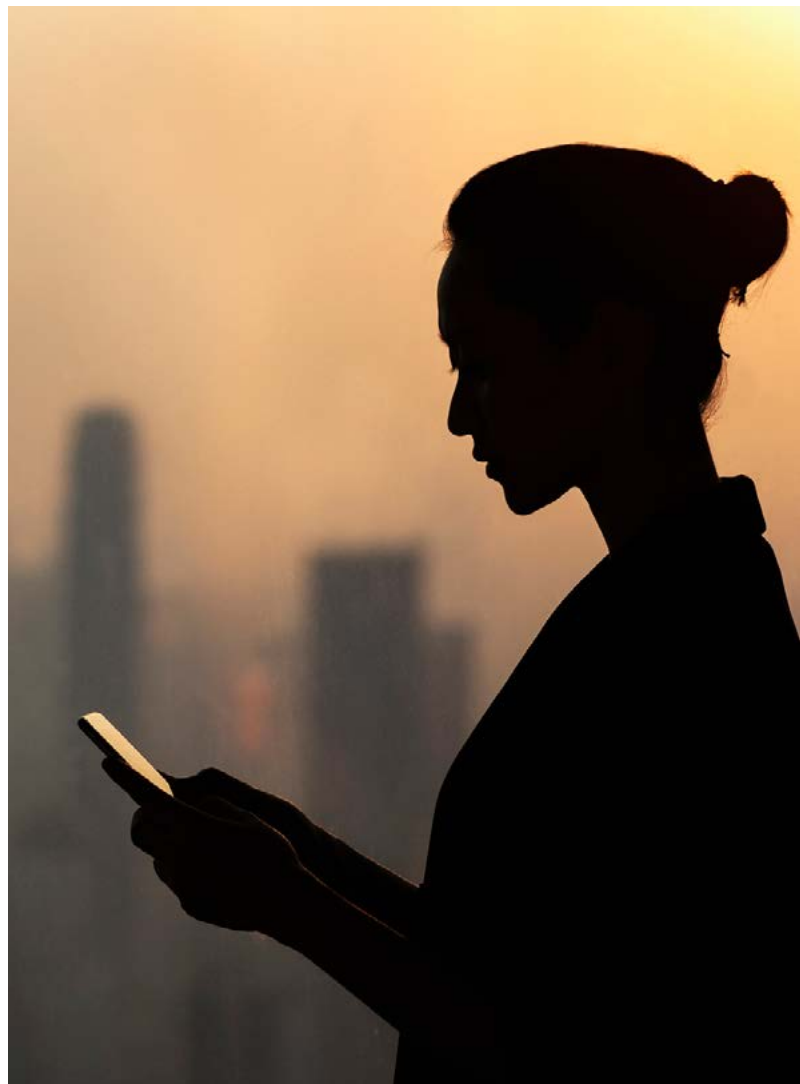


**THE CANADIAN HUMAN
TRAFFICKING HOTLINE
1 833 900 1010**
CANADIANHUMANTRAFFICKINGHOTLINE.CA

It's important to educate ourselves but also to speak up. It's an uncomfortable topic, but it must be discussed, out in the open. We must challenge our elected leaders to take a stronger stand against the exploitation of people. Awareness is crucial to exposing the horrifying assault and exploitation of our most vulnerable.

Resources used for article

The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking
The Human Trafficking Hotline
The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
Public Safety Canada
Statistics Canada
Disrupt Human Trafficking
Metis Nation of Ontario



Tracey Langille is the President of Hamilton Local 548 and an elected member of the National Women's Committee for the Ontario Region.

She has been an activist for 15 years, been on the executive for 13 years, and is also a Social Steward. She has three children and one grandson.

Human Trafficking Trends in Canada (2019-2022)

1 Human trafficking remains a significant challenge in Canada

Between 2019 and 2022, the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline:



Year	Calls	Trafficking Cases	Victims/Survivors
2019 ⁸	1,459	251	358
2020	2,637	421	666
2021	3,679	460	628
2022	4,931	368	518

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking typically involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit individuals and force them into providing labour or services, including sexual services, for the benefit of someone else.

Sex and labour trafficking were the most common forms of human trafficking⁹



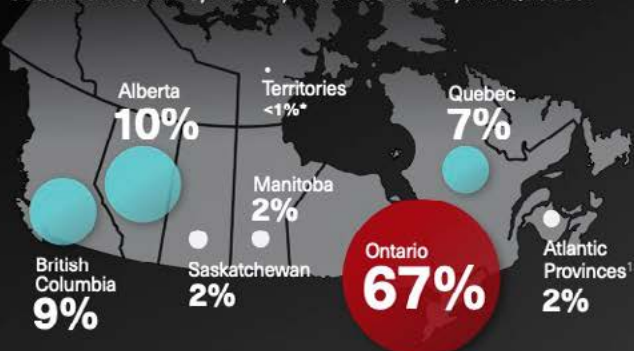
2 Human trafficking happens everywhere in Canada

Human trafficking happens in every region and community. Cases identified by the Hotline can include one or more trafficking incidents.¹⁰ Most trafficking incidents reported to the Hotline occurred in large urban centres with populations over 100,000 people.¹¹



This data is based on geographic data that callers voluntarily disclose to the Hotline. Not all callers provide this information.

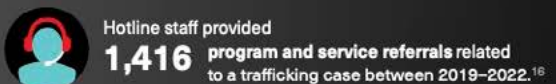
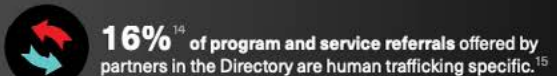
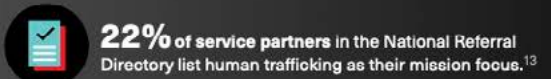
The majority of trafficking incidents disclosed to the Hotline occurred in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec.



* Collectively across the Territories, fewer than 10 trafficking incidents were disclosed to the Hotline. It is likely that human trafficking is significantly underreported in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut.

3 Victims/survivors depend on social services to heal from human trafficking and other traumas

These supports require additional funding and resources from federal, provincial and municipal governments.



Approximately **37%** of callers that contacted the Hotline about a trafficking case were victims/survivors.²²



For more information

Please visit: *The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking*

Right to PAID preventive withdrawal for federal employees

Background

At Canada Post, as in all federally regulated companies, under Section 132 of Part II of the Canada Labour Code, pregnant or nursing women may cease to perform their work if it becomes dangerous for them or their child, and if the employer cannot reassign them to other duties. However, this preventive withdrawal is without pay.

In larger facilities, the employer can easily reassign pregnant or nursing workers to safer tasks, but this is not the case in smaller facilities, where it is harder to provide accommodation.

As a result, some workers are forced to stop working early in their pregnancy, leaving them without pay. In Quebec, federally regulated employees who meet the Code's eligibility criteria for preventive withdrawal are entitled to maternity benefits under the provincial parental insurance plan from the 16th week preceding the expected date of delivery. The maximum duration for the benefit period is 18 weeks.

That is to say that a pregnant worker who must leave work that is dangerous for them or their child, and whose employer is unable to accommodate them, may find herself without pay up to 16 weeks before their expected delivery date. However, if they start receiving maternity benefits from the provincial plan 16 weeks before delivery, they will have only two weeks of benefits left after giving birth.

The burden of these workers is compounded by the stress of having no income for part of their pregnancy. As a result of receiving maternity benefits early, they often choose to return to work sooner after giving birth, taking the risk of continuing to work rather than going without pay.

Gap Between Jurisdictions

In Quebec, a pregnant or nursing worker whose employer is not federally regulated and unable to assign them safer tasks is entitled to CNESST's For a Safe Maternity Experience (FSME) program.



For a Safe Maternity Experience Program

Pregnant or breastfeeding workers can apply for the FSME program if their job involves physical hazards to their health or that of their child.

According to the CNESST, the objective of the program is to allow pregnant or breastfeeding workers whose work involves physical hazards to their health or that of their child to continue to work. Under the program, these workers may be assigned to other positions or safer duties that they are reasonably capable of performing, or if this is not possible, be entitled to preventive withdrawal.

Preventive Withdrawal

Pregnant or breastfeeding workers may be entitled to preventive withdrawal if reassignment to another position or other duties is not possible. This measure is part of the FSME program. It allows a pregnant or breastfeeding workers to stop working and receive an income replacement indemnity. These benefits are entirely paid by their employer. Workers receive 100% of their regular wages for the first 5 days, then 90% of their net salary for all other weeks, up to 4 weeks before the expected date of delivery.

In short, in Quebec, pregnant or nursing workers whose work poses a risk to their health or that of their child, and who cannot be accommodated by their employer, are entitled to paid preventive withdrawal – unless they are subject to the Canada Labour Code.

Solution

Pregnant or nursing women should not have to go without pay if the nature of their work poses a danger to them or their child. They should not have to choose between their income and their safety. This is why Section 132 of the Code should be amended to include an income replacement indemnity when a pregnant woman's work poses a risk to her health or that of her child.

If such an amendment is impossible, Section 132 of the Code should provide access to income replacement benefits under provincial laws when a preventive withdrawal is necessary.

Advocating for Change

There are many ways to support pregnant workers who require assistance. The first is through bargaining. When CUPW put together its program of demands for the current round of bargaining with Canada Post for Urban and RSMCs, we included a combined demand that pregnant and breastfeeding employees shall be entitled to precautionary cessation of work. The second is through joining forces with other unions and labour organizations to bring visibility and attention to this issue so that politicians and governments have no choice but to update laws so that more women can obtain preventive withdrawals.



Cathy Verret is a leader and activist from the Quebec Region. She is committed to improving the lives of all women. With her encouragement and support, many women have found their voice on the workfloor and in the Union.

Finding my Voice Through the Union

I have always been a fighter, even when I didn't realize it. My twin sister and I were born in 1970 two months premature.

I weighed 3lbs 15oz and my sister weighed 1lb 7oz. We both survived but my sister is challenged due to a lack of oxygen. I started advocating for my sister almost from the start. She followed me everywhere and was always with me growing up.

Fast forward many years later, I met a man and married him at 21. I thought he was the one I would spend the rest of my life with. Right from the start, he began verbally abusing me. I was never smart enough, or pretty enough; I was stupid, and nobody would ever want me. I began to believe he was right. Somewhere along the way, 12 years to be exact, with the help of friends and family, I escaped and began the long hard battle to become the person I am today.

In 2007, I began my career with Canada Post. From my very first Union membership meeting, I knew I wanted to get involved. I didn't realize how much this would change my life for the better. I became Vice-President of my local and my journey began. I started



Laurie Hines is an RSMC who began working for Canada Post in 2007. She is a member of the Muskoka Local and has held the position of Vice-President for 15 years. She is a shop steward, a social steward, and a member of the National Women's Committee. She has also been a Special Olympics coach.

"Just because your voice is louder and stronger than mine doesn't mean that what I have to say isn't just as important. You need to allow everyone in this class to have their say and opinion."

taking educationals. At one of the first courses I attended, I became very frustrated with trying to share my ideas, and opinions with the class, as there were quite a few men in attendance and their voices were louder, stronger and it seemed only their opinions mattered. Somehow, I found the strength and courage to stand up and tell them how I felt. Somebody had to stand up for the other sisters as well. I told them "Just because your voice is louder and stronger than mine doesn't mean that what I have to say isn't just as important. You need to allow everyone in this class to have their say and opinion."

I realized that day that what I have to say is important, that I have a voice and I am WORTHY of being heard. I am no longer the little girl cowering in the corner afraid to speak my mind, to give my opinion, to speak up for those who have not found their voice yet. At the last Convention I was elected to the National Women's Committee, and I hope to inspire other women to find their voice, confidence, and STRENGTH.

I can now look a man in the eye and tell them with assurance and strength, exactly what it is I need to say. I can speak publicly in front of hundreds of people and not be afraid. I can speak with authority in my voice and tell my truth. Had it not been for the Sisters and Brothers who lead us and teach us their knowledge, I would never have found my voice. Therefore, I say get involved, find your voice, learn from our leaders in CUPW. Don't be afraid to find your true self like I did. The first step is always the hardest but once you take it there is only moving forward and NOTHING can stop you!!!!

2023 Poster released
for the National Day
of Remembrance and
Action on Violence
Against Women



National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Light Beam Ceremony on Mount Royal: City of Montreal, Comité Mémoire and Polytechnique Montréal

We remember the 14 young women whose lives were cut short on December 6, 1989.

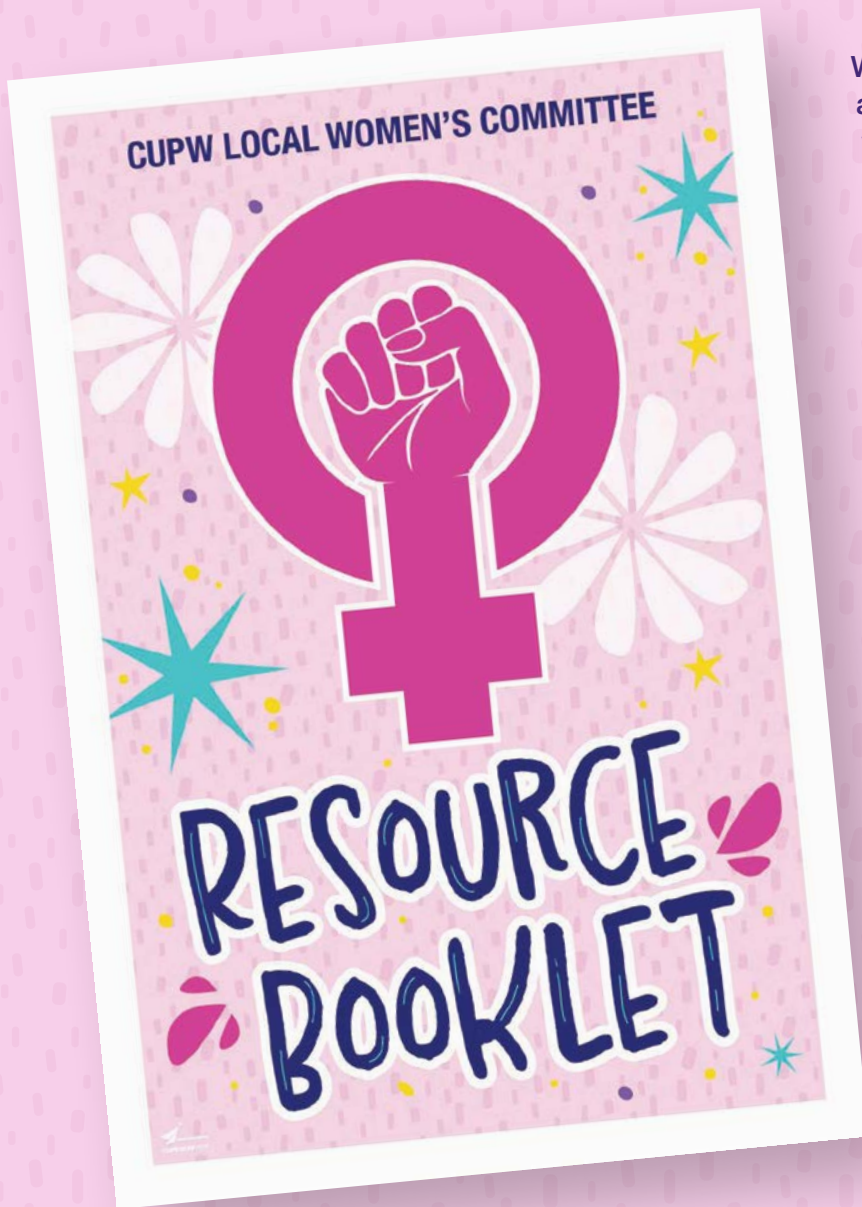
Geneviève Bergeron, 21 – Hélène Colgan, 23 – Nathalie Croteau, 23 – Barbara Daigneault, 22 – Anne-Marie Edward, 21
– Maud Haviernick, 29 – Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, 31 – Maryse Laganière, 25 – Maryse Leclair, 23 – Anne-Marie Lemay, 22
– Sonia Pelletier, 23 – Michèle Richard, 21 – Anne St-Arneault, 23 – Annie Turcotte, 21

In order to keep the memory alive of the 14 women who lost their lives in the anti-feminist attack of December 6, 1989, the City of Montreal, in collaboration with the Comité Mémoire light up the Montreal sky. At 5:10 p.m., the time when the first shots were fired, light beams will illuminate the sky one at a time, every few seconds, as the names of the 14 victims are called.

cupw•sttp The Canadian Union of Postal Workers

CUPW.CA

Logo of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and the Comité Mémoire.



Women have struggled for equality against oppression for centuries, and while some battles have been won, women are still disproportionately affected by all forms of violence and discrimination in every aspect of our lives. Women can make magic when they work together, and CUPW recognizes that together we are stronger.

The idea for a Resource Booklet first came out of the Atlantic region and grew with contributions from the National Women's Committee. The final Resource Booklet is filled with key dates, information about creating a local women's committee, and excerpts about women from the National Constitution. We hope you make good use out of the information found in this booklet.

To get a copy scan the QR code to add your email to the waitlist.



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