



November 30, 2017

## OUR MEMBERS ARE HURTING

It hurts to work at the post office. Overburdening and lack of respect contribute to a very stressful workplace and life. Sometimes the pain of these injuries are not visual. We carry physical or emotional pain and get through the day best we can. We are not alone. There are an estimated **one billion people** who are living with disabilities worldwide. This Sunday, December 3, 2017 is the International Day of Disabled Persons.

Our members and those who are differently abled face enormous barriers in the workplace and in society. They do not enjoy equal access with others, especially in areas of transportation, employment and social and political participation in society. These folks represent our families, our friends, our neighbours and co-workers. They deserve fairness and equality.

Further, the system of constant growth and exploitation that we live under is unsustainable and uses our bodies to increase profit and bonuses for the richest and most privileged in our society. The result of this destructive system is that it is built around winners and losers that leaves many behind. Rather than a holistic approach of sustainability, respect and dignity, ours is a society that regards power and wealth generated at the expense of our bodies and well-being as the way to run a society.

Maybe there is another way, to create systems of respect and accessibility? Why not nurture the special gifts in each person and not to make us feel guilty for experiencing pain or for looking different. A free and democratic society would take care of people, celebrate the best in humanity and recognize the possibility in every person. It would celebrate life and working with Mother Earth.

In Canada Post workplaces we see these unnatural ways of living and being, where bodies are processed as machines and driven to the breaking point. Why? Is this a social experiment to see how much our bodies can be driven like pack mules? Or is it a manager using our health and well-being to generate a Holiday bonus? Who knows what logic underlies the stress and injuries we encounter at work?

Instead, we see the lack of support systems where the injured and differently abled are often made to feel like burdens on society. We all have a role to play in supporting one another. The CUPW membership, having fought for a decent child care fund plays a part in our “special needs” and “moving on” projects which assists postal worker families who require additional supports to enrich the lives of loved ones requiring different kinds of supports.

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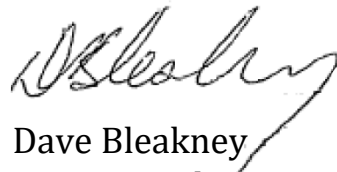
We should be able to turn to governments for vital public programs and services to support those living with disabilities. Yet, far too often this is not the case. Two decades ago CUPW made a decision to step into the breach and to support members who have young and adult children with disabilities to access the supports and services they need to develop and to live active and meaningful lives.

**This December 3 is a time to reflect on how we can better support each other, build power so that all workers have support and access and respect.** One of the best ways to fight back is to support this round of bargaining. We need to be united against overwork and poor treatment in the workplace. We need to stand strong for better work life balance to meaningfully address situations of overwork, lack of respect and under appreciation.

**We can also support a greener post office and Delivering Community Power which aims to convert Canada Post into a healthier and dignified workplace while being community leader for more holistic practices.**

Celebrate difference as a strength. It is time to remember and organize. We are in this together. Every one of us.

In solidarity,



Dave Bleakney  
2<sup>nd</sup> National Vice-President

2015-2019/Bulletin #288

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