



## The Importance of Organizing



Precarious workers are the backbone of our economy and although labeled as heroes by government officials during the pandemic; they are often the most marginalized when it comes to working conditions.

COVID-19 further highlighted how essential precarious workers are and yet they often face insecure employment with low pay, no paid sick leave, and regularly have to work in unsafe conditions. It is important to recognize that racial and economic inequality are linked, as precarious employment is higher in racialized and immigrant communities.

Workers' frustration over these injustices grew during the pandemic, particularly seeing the lack of safety measures and protections available to them. This led to more workers reaching out to unions to seek representation to improve their workplaces. Paid sick leave, racial justice, scheduling, job security and health and safety, were main issues that saw workers reach out to our union to assist with.

Despite having to move our organizing program to a completely virtual model, PSAC Ontario continued to unionize new members. Most recently our Region was certified to represent workers at Kids Help Phone in Toronto, which provides mental health services and crisis intervention to the public in the non-for-profit sector. The workers decided to join PSAC due to several workplace issues, including: Scheduling, work life balance, mental health supports and a lack of input on workplace policies. Now our newest members have the collective power to enact positive change and are working towards negotiating their first collective agreement.

Craig Reynolds, PSAC Ontario Regional Executive Vice-President



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## Ontario Council Members' Bios



Living with a disability has helped me to understand the different experiences, struggles, and pain, that comes with navigating an ableist world. As a disability advocate, I share my experiences to help people understand the barriers and discrimination people with disabilities face daily.

My desire is to help our members achieve equity, free from discrimination and harassment. I want to make sure that our members' rights and quality of life are respected and that we tear down obstacles to full and equal participation.

Souad (Sue) Soubra Boone, Members with Disabilities Representative

## Ontario Election 2022

It's never too early for activism



My name is Ande Benedict and I am your new LGBTQ2S+ Representative on Ontario Council. I was encouraged to take on this position by the outgoing representative, AM KuarSingh, who was also my nominator and who has been my friend and mentor in my Component and the PSAC for years.

I attended the 2018 PSAC Ontario Young Workers Summit, where I met other young union activists and learned about how labour is interwoven into almost every other anti-oppression movement, many of which I had been supporting for years. When I look back now, I can draw a straight line from that four-day summit to my current place in the labour movement. Much of my work has focused on union succession, youth and labour history and I'm excited to advocate for these as part of the Ontario Council Education Committee.

I may be new to Council, but I have a lot of experience with committee work, being the current Secretary on the PSAC GTA Pride Committee and Co-Chair of the PSAC GTA Young Workers Committee.

What started for me as 'just showing up' has turned into an opportunity for me to have a more active role in engaging with members who have been historically underrepresented or excluded from union spaces, in particular racialized and/or 2SLGBTQIA+ members and elevating their voices and experiences.

Ande Benedict - Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans, Queer and 2-Spirit Members Representative



## Labour Day—Sudbury and North Bay Area Council



Labour Day was full of activities organized by the PSAC Sudbury & North Bay Area Council. The week kicked off with members of the Area Council Executive Committee in attendance at the festivities.

A Labour Day car caravan parade then took place from the south end of Sudbury and made its way to the Steelworkers Hall. Once at the hall, we set up a tent with some swag for PSAC and community members. At the hall, the Sudbury & District Labour Council treated all those in attendance with a bagged lunch provided by a unionized grocery store in Sudbury.

There were also live performances by bands and guest speakers including two of our local MPPs, who spoke on the importance of worker solidarity to push forward a true worker-centric agenda.

D'Arcy Gauthier, Region 2 Northeastern Representative





## Best First Day Ever Campaign



Best First Day Ever Campaign ensures that kids have the supplies they need to succeed in the classroom. This campaign allows families to have one less thing to worry about when their children return to school.

The PSAC London Area Council is a regular supporter of the United Way and their Best First Day Ever Campaign, which ensures London school children start the school year with a fully loaded backpack.

However, a few years ago, it came to the attention of Labour United (a United Way Committee of union activists) that children in First Nations schools in the area were being left out of this initiative afforded to other schools in the Thames Valley School District.

Labour stood up and worked to address this injustice. In partnership with the London District Labour Council and the Labour United Committee of United Way, PSAC London Area Council spread the word to get members involved, made a financial donation and showed up to pack the backpacks.

415 backpacks were needed to support both Elementary and Secondary schools for the three Indigenous communities in the area: The Oneida Nation of the Thames, the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation and the Munsee-Delaware Nation.

In two hours, four dedicated members of Labour United were able to fill backpacks with notebooks, binders, pens, pencils, highlighters, paper, tape, post-its, rulers, scissors, pencil cases and more!

Every year, the administration of schools in the area are moved to tears that Labour remembers them, and the families and children are very grateful.

Nancy Richter, Chair PSAC London Area Council



**BEST FIRST DAY**  
community-wide school supplies drive





## Ontario Council Members' Bios



My name is Tony Crupi and I am your Region 1 Northwestern Representative on Ontario Council. I have been involved with my Local for the past 17 years, holding various positions during that time. I have also been active in our union's various structures, including holding the President and Vice-President positions of the PSAC Thunder Bay & Northwestern Ontario Area Council over the last few years.

During this time, I was able to attend PSAC Regional & National Conventions, which gave me the opportunity to learn more about what happens at our union's regional and national levels. I have also been active with my Component, the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE), serving on the National Equal Opportunities Committee for the past three years. This role has provided me the opportunity to learn more about how to create an equitable workplace for our members.

I chose to run for my position on Ontario Council so that I can be a visible presence in my area, and continue to participate in Area Council meetings, Local events, District Labour Council meetings, and committee meetings. I want to help Locals mobilize their members, along with increasing participation in our Area Councils and Committees.

Tony Crupi, Region 1 Northwestern Representative

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My name is D'Arcy Gauthier and I was first elected as the 1st Alternate, North-eastern Representative for Ontario Council. I was asked to accept the position of serving on Ontario Council as a representative for the district along with Trevis Carey. During the Ontario Regional Convention in June, I had accepted the nomination of first alternate because I believe when members ask you to serve, you do it (unless it's not possible).

Although it adds another role to my portfolio, I do look forward to serving on Council to move forward a true worker agenda on behalf of PSAC members in the region. This is also being done within my own Component (CEIU), as well as with the Sudbury & District Labour Council.

As a PA bargaining team member, working with Council members will be important in this term as we face a government that is tough to bargain with. It can't be said enough that we need member solidarity to achieve fair collective agreements that take into account our new work environment.

D'Arcy Gauthier, Region 2 Northeastern Representative



## Ontario Council Members' Bios



Hello there, hope everyone is staying safe. I am your Region 6 (Hamilton/Niagara) Representative on Ontario Council. I understand that a lot has changed over the last 19 months and I want you to know that I am here to assist in any way that I can. I have been a union activist for many years, getting involved due to injustices within my workplace.

I became involved after attending an Area Council and Local meeting with a good friend of mine. He asked me to go with him to learn about our union, what we could do to help, how we could improve our working conditions – and it was an amazing experience meeting dedicated activists.

It was a bumpy road at first, but eventually I learned the ins and outs of our Collective Agreement and who to ask for help. There have been many impactful union activists who have mentored me, educated me, and helped me along my path to where I am today. Mentorship is very important to union activism, we have to create a union environment where varied opinions, actions and events are accepted. To create change we have to work as one, work in collaboration, understand and accept differences but know that there is a common goal.

Wendy-Ann Moulton, Region 6 (Hamilton/Niagara) Representative

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Hi! I'm Karuna Dsouza, the Academic Workers Representative on PSAC Ontario Council. I'm a PhD student and a Teaching Assistant at Western University. I ran for this role after experiencing the injustices of precarious work in the academic sector and recognizing the important role that unions can play in pushing back. At my own Local – DCL 610, I hold the position of Racial Equity Chair for 2021-22.

Universities have been undergoing a series of cost-cutting measures and as a consequence - we, precarious workers, are the first in line to face the effects. Further, a number of our members are racialized international students who have very little support. New to Canada's systems, these members are more vulnerable to exploitation in order to protect their immigration status.

I see my role on PSAC Ontario Council as one that brings forward issues unique to the growing membership of the academic sector. To get in touch with me, please email me at [karuna.dsouza@gmail.com](mailto:karuna.dsouza@gmail.com).

Karuna Dsouza, DCL Academic Workers Representative

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## Members' Corner



The past months have been extremely difficult for every PSAC member, their families and our communities. COVID-19 has forced us to change the way we live our daily lives to try to protect ourselves and our loved ones. But it has also caused changes in our communities, including many shuttered businesses and people who have lost their employment. That is why it's more important than ever to support our local food banks, which have seen a dramatic rise in use since the start of the pandemic.

On December 19th, 2020, the Hamilton Area Council held a food drive where we asked our members to drop off donations at a central downtown location for the Neighbor 2 Neighbor Centre in Hamilton. We provided members with information regarding COVID-19 precautions to ensure we complied with public health regulations, including wearing a mask and maintaining social distance when dropping off items.

We also encouraged our members that couldn't participate or didn't feel comfortable participating in-person to make monetary donations online. Our Facebook fundraising drive hit our goal of \$500! In addition to this, the Hamilton Area Council Executive re-allocated funds from our 2020 budget to be able to make a matching \$500 donation to the Neighbor 2 Neighbor Centre!

A big thank you to all of our members that participated; you've made an impact on our community!

Matthew Freeland



PSAC members and retirees across Ontario are doing amazing things! Rallies, parades, training, lobbying MPs, picnics and many more — we want to hear about it! Share your thoughts, tell a story, speak on an issue that's important to you. We've set aside space in every issue for member's submissions. Articles should be approximately 250 words and pictures are welcome!

Send your submissions to Lino Vieira, PSAC Ontario Region Political Communications Officer, at [vieiral@psac-afpc.com](mailto:vieiral@psac-afpc.com).

**Submissions are welcome anytime!**



## 2021 PSAC National Women’s Conference



Participants from the Ontario Region met on September 26, 2021, the final day of the PSAC National Women’s Conference for our caucus meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to brainstorm and develop a plan of action related to the Gender Equity Taskforce’s report and its 13 recommendations. A copy of the Report can be found at: <https://psacunion.ca/gender-equity-task-force-report>

I shared my own excitement about the Gender Equity Taskforce (GET) finally getting the attention it deserved. I shared that its inception came from the National Women’s Working Group in 2018, where I was annoyed that there was little being done at the time about some of the identified issues.

I reported to the Ontario caucus that for me, one of the key issues is a lack of representation and a need for formal mentorship within our union. This is in line with the Taskforce’s Recommendation #5, which is also connected to Recommendations #11, (Create a Women’s Network), and #4 (Leadership Development).

I want to emphasize the incredible energy of and my appreciation for the women in Ontario who participated in the Regional Session. I am committed to pushing your feedback both regionally and nationally, and to having real conversation on what the women in Ontario want to see.

Missy Taylor, Regional Women’s Committees Representative



## All-Candidates' Debates — Federal Election



On September 7th and September 8th, 2021, the PSAC Sudbury Area Council hosted two all-candidate debates for the ridings of Nickel Belt and Sudbury respectively. Candidates were asked about their stances on universal childcare, the importance of protecting labour rights (especially in the context of back-to-work legislation), as well as protecting public services (no austerity!).

The highlight of the events came on the first night when the Conservative candidate, Charles Humphrey, made a statement about not knowing Erin O'Toole's record while serving in cabinet under Stephen Harper. The moderator challenged the candidate, stating that it might be a good idea to understand his leader's record rather than blindly following someone he apparently knows nothing about.

D'Arcy Gauthier, Region 2 Northeastern Representative

The PSAC Barrie Area Council and the Barrie Regional Women's Committee held an all-candidates debate for the candidates of the Barrie-Innisfil riding for the 2021 federal election. This virtual debate took place on September 1st, from 6:30 – 8:00 pm.

The Liberal and New Democratic Party candidates accepted the debate invitation, while the Conservative candidate declined. The Green Party candidate also accepted the debate invitation, but later announced that he would not be running a few days before the nomination deadline and did not take part.

The Liberal candidate, Lisa-Marie Wilson and the NDP candidate, Aleesha Gostkowski were asked questions on their Party's stance on possible post-pandemic austerity measures. In addition, other topics covered included: Long-term care, Indigenous Peoples rights and reconciliation, paid sick leave, support for a wealth tax, anti-racism initiatives and climate change, among other topics.

Ryan Ward, Alternate Regional Executive Vice-President Ontario

