

# Our World Our Way



## President's Message

by Sharon Cummins



I hope all our members have enjoyed a pleasant summer. Speaking for your union executive and bargaining committee, we're looking forward to getting back to the table, with a conciliator, to work for a first contract that gives us all the respect we've been seeking. Your ongoing support and solidarity will help us achieve improvements in wages and working conditions for everyone!

August 24, 2007

Volume 1, Issue 2

## Union files application for conciliation

Our negotiations with Kids & Company got to monetary issues early in the summer. The employer tabled their offer.

Unfortunately, what the employer put on the table is a far cry from what your bargaining committee believes is needed to get a fair collective agreement. We need a first contract that sets the tone for our future with Kids & Company. That means seeing some real improvements in our standard of living and working conditions.

That's why we have asked the Ministry of Labour to appoint a conciliation officer. A conciliation officer is an employee of the Office of Media-



tion at the ministry and assists unions and employers in moving closer to achieving a settlement at the bargaining table without having to resort to a lockout by the employer or job action being undertaken by the union.

The ministry has responded to our request by appointing conciliator Michelle Ryan. We expect to hear soon about a date in September when she will be available to meet with us and the employer.

## Who's at the bargaining table?

Kids & Company has three people at the bargaining table: Jennifer Nashmi, chief financial officer  
Sue Purser, vice-president operations  
Arthur Tarasuk, lawyer

The CUPE 4823 bargaining team includes:  
Sharon Cummins, president  
Elishia Prendergast, vice-president  
Elana Eisenbaum, recording secretary  
Catherine Kruger, Ottawa bargaining unit representative  
Laura Moore and Jim Morrison, CUPE national representatives

## Your union at work

### Fight is on for August civic holiday

Kids & Company is trying to change past practice regarding the August civic holiday despite a legal requirement to maintain existing conditions of work.

The first Monday in August is

not a statutory holiday, contrary to popular belief. However, in 2006, employees at Kids & Company received a day off in lieu of the holiday. This year, the day off in lieu was denied.

Your union believes this to be a violation of the statutory freeze conditions of the Labour Relations Act. Under the act, employers are obligated to maintain the status

**Continued on reverse**

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**Join the Parade**  
Monday, September 3

**Toronto:** 9 a.m.  
Look for the CUPE contingent on University Avenue, south of Dundas. Ends at the CNE; free admission with wristbands.

**Ottawa:** 11:00 a.m. gather at City Hall, 111 Lisgar. Parade starts at noon, featuring Bellies on Parade — Labouring women need child care now! 1:00-4:30 party/picnic in McNabb Park. Free and fun for all ages!

Contact CUPE 4823:  
c/o Jim Morrison, CUPE  
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**We're on the web:**  
[cupe.ca](http://cupe.ca)

## Your union at work Continued from front

quo on working conditions during the period between certification and a first collective agreement.

CUPE has raised the issue with the employer, stating that providing the day in lieu of the August civic holiday is an established practice. If we are not able to resolve this issue internally, we will pursue it at the labour board.

CUPE has also contacted the Ministry of Labour regarding health & safety conditions at the Wellington site in Toronto.

The site had experienced constant flooding, which the union brought up numerous times at the bargaining table. The cause of the flooding has been addressed, but it left behind mould and mildew.

Following CUPE's contact, the ministry ordered that the class-

room in question be closed and the mould and mildew be safely removed.

Bereavement leave is an important benefit for workers — a point that CUPE brought home to Kids & Company.

A member recently lost several family members in a tragic car accident. After taking 2.5 days off, she was informed by her supervisor that she would not be paid.

CUPE national representative Laura Moore contacted the vice-president of operations to quote the Kids & Company policy manual to her. Employees are entitled to one day bereavement leave on the death of "a relative." Moore suggested that the company ought to recognize the deaths of several relatives. The member received full pay for all the

time she had to take off and an apology.

Some of the other issues CUPE 4823 has tackled since certification include:

- sites being over ratio, an ongoing issue
- saved two members their jobs when the employer wanted to have them terminated
- new blinds in the Ottawa Centre because of the heat
- ensured that injured members have been paid while off work because of a workplace injury
- sexual harassment issues with a supervisor
- serious complaints regarding verbal harassment and the cleanliness of sheets at one site.

## Quality child care – make it the law

Parliament is scheduled to resume on Sept. 17 and with it comes a final vote on Bill C-303, the NDP's Early Learning and Child Care Act.

Take action supporting this bill right now by emailing your member of parliament. It's fast and easy to do right from the CUPE national web site, [www.cupe.ca/childcare](http://www.cupe.ca/childcare).

Bill C-303, the Early Learning and Child Care Act, lays the foundation for a high-quality, universal and accountable child care system. The bill limits expansion of for-profit child

care, a move that protects Canada from international trade disputes and ensures the highest quality care.

The Bloc and Liberals worked with the NDP to move the bill through the House of Commons and at committee. If your MP is a member of the opposition, they need to know Canadians are counting on their support to make this bill the law. In this minority Parliament, every vote counts.

Conservative MPs need to hear from their constituents that their "plan" isn't child care and

doesn't meet the needs of Canadian children and parents.

Email your MP today. There's a sample letter, but add your own comments to be sure your letter has an impact. Form letters to MPs don't get noticed.

CUPE has also published a new booklet that makes the case for a universal, high quality, not-for-profit child care system. It outlines the major issues facing child care workers. You can download a copy at [www.cupe.ca/childcare](http://www.cupe.ca/childcare).