

# STRIKE CONTINUES



### WHO WE ARE

We are a key part of the team that ensures public health services are being delivered in Grey-Bruce Counties. A sample of the tasks which are provided by program assistants are:

- Ensuring timely vaccine delivery to local doctors
- Ensuring rabies cases are identified and communicated
- Processing samples of suspected bird flu / West Nile
- Making sure our area beaches are safe and clean
- We play a key role in every program the health unit administers
- Process data for 48 hour calls to all new mothers
- CINOT (children dental program)

### REQUEST FOR STRIKE ASSISTANCE

At the time of publication of this request for donations we have been on strike for over 50 days. Our members are feeling the pinch although their spirits remain high and their commitment remains strong. Your generous donations will be greatly appreciated. If you have already made a donation, please allow us this opportunity to express our gratitude. Your generosity has been highlighted on placards that are mounted in our strike headquarters.

For those who wish to make a donation please make your cheque payable to **Local 276 Strike Account** and **mail it to OPSEU Local 276, 80 – 9<sup>th</sup> Street East, Owen Sound, ON N4K 1N4** and make sure to include a return address so we can thank you for your generosity and tell you how things turn out. **(over)**

## WHAT THIS STRIKE IS ABOUT

Our employer, the GBHU, wants to make an example of us to scare the ONA bargaining unit, which is following right behind us in bargaining. They always say that they can't give us this or that because then they'd have to give it to the other bargaining units and to the non-union staff. The employer is also very arrogant and considers our work to be "unskilled" when in fact our job postings specify that we need at least one year of college in office administration.

We have proven that we are \$6000.00 to \$9000.00 behind the provincial average for Program Assistants in other health units and we are determined to have this corrected in this round of bargaining. Our boss, the Medical Officer of Health, has received pay increases that average about 15% each year for the last six years; they just built a twenty million dollar (\$20,000,000.00) office building; they say that there is no more money for us. We can't accept that and would bet that you wouldn't either.

It is very difficult to "hurt" a public sector employer. The management and executive staff still get paid. Their "bottom line" isn't affected. They are muddling along without us allowing our work to pile up and only doing those clerical tasks that absolutely must be done. The services that we provide to the public are being severely downgraded but the employer seems to be OK with that. With the support of OPSEU we have fought this strike with everything we have. We even went to Ottawa and confronted the Minister of Health and our local MPP. We are still fighting – and we intend to win.

Strike pay is not intended to support a family and indeed it doesn't. That's why we are appealing to you and your Local Union to donate to our strike fund, it's helping us keep it together while we try to outlast our employer. We realize that your Local may not be meeting over the summer months but if you can send a donation now and have it ratified by your membership later we'd really appreciate it. If you have to wait until your next General Membership meeting to discuss the donation we understand.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this and for anything that you can do to help.

In solidarity, the striking members of the Grey Bruce Health Unit

For the latest bargaining update visit: [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org) or for questions call 1-800-268-7376