

PROFILE

Cory Bryan

Prior to joining the OPSEU family, I played semi-pro football and also served in the Canadian military for 15 years. Initially in the Canadian Airborne Regiment and then as a Canadian Armed Forces Firefighter. On completion of my military service, I made the decision to return to college to obtain my Developmental Services Workers Diploma. During my studies, I also worked part time at Prince Edward Heights. Upon graduation I was able to gain full time employment with Community Living, and was there for 14 years. I quickly became an activist in my unit, serving as both a local steward and a print out security on the LEC. I now believe it was their way of getting me to the table. Once I was there and started becoming active, there was no turning back. This new found social justice arena promised infinite possibilities for knowledge and growth.

While at Prince Edward Heights, we found ourselves locked in a labour struggle that finally resulted in its final closure. By then I was the vice-president of LOCAL 448, and also a BPS president of a composite local needing rebuilding. As a local Executive we managed to sustain a functional Local. We were able to support our brothers and sisters in their OPS Strike as well as keep our attendance at the area and labour councils. As all union activists learn, once you broaden your participation in the union, several opportunities for growth and advancement open up to you. To date I have been able to take several labour related courses. The knowledge I gained through taking these courses, coupled with the skills gained through serving as a unit steward has allowed me the privilege of now serving for several years on the EERC, Bargaining and Health and Safety committees.

I've also had the honor to be elected as OPSEU's Region 4 Provincial Human Rights Committee Representative. This opportunity has been quite an eye-opener for

me. As a lower middle class black man in Canadian society, I used to feel that my lived experiences were enough to insure a somewhat liberal outlook on life. The responsibility that accompanies being an elected Human Rights official, coupled with the educational opportunities that accompany the post, and my innate drive for justice has allowed me the privilege of a new way in thinking.

My first term involved a lot of learning and listening. That year saw 4 new members join our committee, which increased our total to 7. The committee quickly worked out a work plan for the year. Along with working on the Harassment & Discrimination policy, we also needed training as the regional representative. After training as an Advisor and taking a couple of train the trainer courses, it became apparent to me that Labour Rights and Human Rights were mutually dependant on each other. Both concepts fall under the same justice umbrella and therefore addressing one and not the other would not be a constructive use of OPSEU's time or resources.

We get to see this year the new courses in Accommodation and the newly introduced course Speak Up Organize: Challenging Bullying and Psychological Harassment in the Workplace. As a regional representative, I will have the opportunity to train as a Co-facilitator. As my brochure in our last election stated, I AM THE FACE OF CHANGE & THE VOICE OF REASON. There is a new day in OPSEU and I can say as your Equity Human Rights Representative I have been out in the forefront of the equity issues and continue to educate and service the members of region 4 and our union. I hope to see all members of equity at the next Human Rights Committee meeting in February. The agenda will include last year's accomplishments and all the work that still needs completion before convention.

