

Cardogin Chatline

Summer 2008

Executive Changes Since BPS Conference

A few changes have taken place to the Sector Executive since the BPS Conference. Kim Rogers-Hayes resigned to pursue other interests. We wish her all the best and thank her for her hard work. Mary Plesa moved into the Chair position, Eryne Baynard moved into the Vice-Chair position and Lorraine Adams stayed on as the Communication Coordinator. Joan White was brought up as the alternate to the Treasurer/Secretary position and has now become Chair after Mary Plesa's recent departure (see page 4). After the second meeting Lorraine Adams resigned to assist with her new grandson who was born with Maple Syrup syndrome. I am happy to report that he is doing well and growing quite quickly. Thank you to Lorraine and we wish you the best. The sector was without a Communication Coordinator and had no more alternates. That is when I, Debbie MacDonald was asked to return to do the newsletter. Before her own departure, Mary Plesa was very determined and asked so nicely I couldn't say no.

Chair—Joan White

As a Health Care Aide currently working at Allendale LTCF in Milton, Ontario since 1994, I see many areas in which OPSEU can help our members. As Worker Co chair of our JHSC, I am also well aware of the many health & safety concerns in our sector.

I believe that my experience in Corrections and Court Escort assist me in standing up for our cause.

The Provincial Government promised us an increase of hours of care for our residents and a standard of care — so far money for additional staffing has been minimal. Minimum staffing standards appear to be off the table with the release of Shirlee Sharkey's report..

We still need to be vigilant in our Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) as changes to services could happen at anytime. Together, we can help each get what is fair and right for us and the people we serve.

I have been employed in Long Term Care since 1994, coming from previous employment in Corrections and Prisoner Escort. I am

Vice President of my local, 261. I currently sit on our EERC and am Worker Co chair for JHSC. I have been fortunate to actively participate in many educational programs through OPSEU and three week long CLC courses, two which were Health & Safety.

I strongly believe that my experience and education make me a asset to this sector.

If I can assist any member of our sector, I will endeavour to find the answer.

I believe in fairness and accountability. The provincial government seems, in my opinion, to be lacking in these. When you promise something, you should come through with that promise.

I know our concerns cannot be won with just our executive members or even the Health Care Council. We need solidarity within our sector and union.

Together, we can make a difference.

Joan was acclaimed at the June 2008 meeting. The remaining executive will share the secretary duties.

Vice-Chair—Erynne Baynard

Let me introduce myself, my name is Erynne Bayard, I am the Vice Chair for Sector 8. I work for ICAN-Independent Centre and Network located up north in Sudbury. I have worked as an Independent Living Assistant in the Outreach Department for more than 14 years. I have been an union steward for 10 years. I'm the treasure for our composite Local 668. Also, I am the Certified Health and Safety staff rep for over 4 years. I'm excited to be on this executive board and look forward to the following year.

Communication Coordinator—Debbie MacDonald

I have worked for Sherwood Park Manor Nursing Home for the past 31 years. I have worked as a HCA, Housekeeping Aide, Activity Aide, Laundry Aide and for the past 10 years as a Departmental Assistant. We provide all aspects of daily living care for our residents. I was instrumental in starting our sector 18 years ago and remain very committed to it. I have held all positions on the sector executive but mainly the chair position. I have also sat on our bargaining team, labour/management committee, done presentations at Queen's park on behalf of the sector and assisted with organizing and numerous campaigns over the years.

As the Communication Coordinator I will work very hard at getting the newsletters completed and mailed in a timely fashion. I will also follow whatever direction our Chair leads and try and get all tasks set out for me by her done.

Debbie and Joan will share the treasurer duties as of the June 2008 meeting. The secretary duties will be shared by all remaining executive members.

April 16, 2008 - Lobby Day

On April 16th, 2008 the sector executives from health care went to Queen's Park and meet with about 30 MPPs, including several Ministers. We discussed violence in the workplace and expanding the legislation for Safety Engineered Sharps for all facilities. The majority of MPPs listened and took notes. Some promised to get back to us,

others promised to help us and some were just there.

We all felt the afternoon went extremely well and got our message across. Each roundtable met with one MPP at a time. Each table had someone speaking from each health care sector to get our points across.

We all felt positive leaving Queen's Park. Another success for OPSEU.

It's A New Day

Convention 2008

Convention 2008 was a success — more business got done this year than in any convention I can remember.

A banner reading “It’s a New Day” was strung across the head table. After President Smokey Thomas welcomed everyone he brought out Sharon Riley and the Faith Chorale to start the day. They performed a few songs and sang O Canada. They were fantastic. After the blessing by Reverend Michael Blair, Smokey introduced City of Toronto Councillor Paula Fletcher, who gave a great speech and welcomed OPSEU to Toronto.

After Smokey and Patti addressed the delegation and convention 2008 was on its way.

The budget passed in a record 11 minutes. The Executive board paid off the mortgage at head office and our line of credit. Some perks to the budget included additional funding for more staff. There was little debate about the budget as Patti presented a balanced budget.

We managed to get through many resolutions and constitutional amendments. Some passed and other were defeated.

Tom Potter gave a moving presentation about fundraising for Umduni and Vulamehio HIV Aids Association. The association helps children either with or stricken by HIV. He urged OPSEU to help with the cause and the delegation came through. We raised about \$52,000.00 just from our locals and personal donations. OPSEU matched it bringing the total to about \$104,000.00. Tom came back up and thanked everyone and stated he was overwhelmed by OPSEU member’s generosity.

Other highlights of convention included the Blue Jays baseball game where members purchased tickets, part of the proceeds going to the Live and Let Live Fund. We also enjoyed a comedy night, it was really well received and we laughed until our stomachs hurt.

Awards were given out for Health and Safety, the Leah Casselman award and many others.

I believe convention 2008 was one of the best conventions I have attended in years. A lot of business got done, there were many changes to the style of convention, which everyone spoke highly of. Congratulations to Smokey and Patti for a great first year and a great convention.

Fight for 3.5 Hours of Care Ongoing

We all had hopes of this government stepping up to the plate and doing what was right for our residents by legislating a regulation making mandatory a minimum 3.5 hours of direct care per resident per day (based on average acuity), but once again we find we are still fighting to make this happen.

We have done presentations to Queen's Park, participated in another group meeting with the minister's office, and worked with the Ontario Health Coalition to make this happen. So far they are telling us we now provide about 2.9 hours of paid care per resident per day. Most unions that represent long term care homes are questioning these numbers — we certainly aren't at those levels in my nursing home. They are talking about moving to three hours of paid care per day — but that still isn't enough.

Former health minister George Smitherman apologized for his stupid remark about wearing a brief all day to see how much they hold. They don't realize without proper funding, more violence happens, more staff injuries occur, families complain more, as do the residents. It becomes a vicious cycle with no end in sight. Staff become discouraged and leave the profession. It becomes harder and harder to recruit good staff and they are often underpaid and undervalued.

I have been in this business for 31 years and the changes I have witnessed are not all for the best. I have been permanently disabled because of inadequate staffing levels and unfortunately have seen the same thing happen to my coworkers. Unsure of when the government will finally get it and fund this sector properly, we will keep fighting and campaigning to make sure they understand.

Executive Changes Again—Vacant Position Available

Just prior to our June meeting Mary Plesa resigned her position with OPSEU to pursue other interests. We thank her for all the work she did for the sector and wish her well.

Erynne decided she was not ready to take on the chair position, so a motion was put forward to elect from the two remaining executive members. Debbie nominated Joan for the position. Congratulations Joan, we know you will do a great job.

That leaves a vacant position on the executive. If this is something you might be interested in please contact Joan, Erynne or Debbie for more information. The sector is a great source for information and a chance to learn about other units just like yourselves. Contact us, we would love to hear from you.

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