

August 27, 2013



**Canadian Union
Of
Public Employees
Local 30**

Edmonton Civic Employees
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Northlands
City of Fort Saskatchewan
Village of Thorsby

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CUPE Alberta Division
10425 Princess Elizabeth Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
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Dear CUPE Alberta,

I would like to put forward the name of Joshua Scott for consideration as a recipient of the Rick Malcolm Scholarship. Joshua is working towards a degree in Digital Media and IT at NAIT and is enrolled in the 2013 program.

Enclosed please find his essay on "Why Unions."

As I am his father and a CUPE Alberta table officer, I will remove myself from the decision process.

As you know post-secondary education costs a lot of money and any help Josh can receive will help assist him in getting his diploma without burdening him with too much debt at the end of his program.

Thanks for the consideration.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Scott".

Mike Scott

President CUPE Local 30

Why Unions?

Unions often come under scrutiny by many news sources as being a detriment to the overall work environment, and some large corporations such as Wal-Mart and Target are highly opposed to the existence of labour unions. These scrutinizers however fail to see how truly beneficial a union is; not only to a workforce, but also to the entire economy. The work world would not be where it is today without the existence of labour unions. Unions historically have always fought for the betterment of their employees and have over time flourished and become a well known force in the work world. From the humble beginnings in England, to the huge offices of CUPE and AUPE in Canada today, the world has come very far and it is all thanks to the labour unions. Unions create jobs, provide equality in the workplace, and stimulate the economy in a huge way.

One thing that unions most often fight for - and rightly so - are fair wages. This does more than just give a unionized employee a larger paycheque at the end of the pay period: this has a huge domino effect that helps out almost everyone. When the member is paid, they go out to shop; not only does this put their money back into the economy, but there is someone out there to take that money. It creates jobs. Creating jobs in turn, creates a larger workforce and a larger economic machine that keeps turning. Not only does the living wage allow the union member to shop and stimulate the economy, this also allows the member to live a more fulfilled life. Say that our union member, Joe, lives on \$9.75 an hour. His house is small and cramped, he lives pay cheque to pay cheque, and isn't content. But then his workplace becomes unionized, and all the workers start earning a living wage of close to \$17 an hour! The unionization now allows Joe to live a much happier life in a larger house and he is able to have spending money left over for the next week. Overall, economically, unions ensure that workers are able to live happily and be a contributing member of society.

Often times in a workplace, there is discrimination against others; be it racial, sexist, or against the mentally/physically handicapped. Often times the discrimination is that a certain individual is not able to perform up-to-par. When it comes to physically and mentally disabled people, the union will step in and find them accommodating jobs in the workplace so they too can be functional in the job site. Unions work hard at ensuring workplaces are inclusive and free of barriers such as sexism and racial discrimination. Unions are known to work tightly with the management of workplaces to create the safest jobsite possible, in terms of discrimination. It has been shown that unionized workforces often have much lower rates of abuse and discrimination than comparatively non-unionized work places. Unions have, for as long as they have existed, proudly done the service of providing a safe workplace for all those who are employed.

Although most unions work for employee benefits, one union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, acted against the world in 2006. The Ontario wing of CUPE voted to support the "international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel" because they were not recognizing Palestine having self-determination. This was met both negatively and positively. CUPE's national president condemned their actions, saying that Ontario was going against CUPE's anti-

discrimination policies and that he would use his influence to work toward having the resolution abolished. At the same time bodies in Ontario praised the choice that CUPE Ontario had made, and agreed whole heartedly with the decision. The kerfuffle grew even larger when the Minister of Immigration claimed that CUPE was singling out and targeting the Jewish state of Israel.

Unions are very, very versatile. From their inception in the 1800's, to today, Unions have always proven to be large contributors to the economy. Unions have and will continue to be able to provide safer work environments for it's employees. They will continue to uphold the standards set in the past and will only continue to become a bigger force in the economy of the future. Even though Unions may come under international attention in negative ways from time to time, Unions have proved that they are very good things to have around, and will be here for a long time.