



June 14, 2010

CEU announces 2010 bursary awards

Applicants share their views on trade union activism and making unions relevant to young workers

The CEU Bursary Committee met on June 2, 2010 to review five submissions. The competition required each applicant to write two essays; one following an interview with a current or former union activist, and one discussing “How can unions become more relevant to young workers?”

The committee awarded bursaries to each individual applicant; it also set five bursary amounts; \$1000, \$750, \$650, \$350 and \$250. Successful applicants were notified by mail, and prior to receiving their bursary, all applicants must provide proof of enrollment in a college, university, vocational institute or apprenticeship program.

The CEU congratulates all of the applicants and hopes they will always respect and remember the historical and ongoing role of the labour movement in the social, economic and political aspects of Canadian life.

Essay excerpts

“Educating the youth will not only help them to understand the issues, but will create an inclusive environment where a diversity of insight is offered to the discussion. In addition, it will also help them to learn about the many ways they can use the union as a powerful tool to help them deal with any future problems that they could encounter in the workplace.”

Bursary recipient: Liera Mendonca
Relative: Liane Mendonca

“I think promoting unions in the schools will allow young workers to gain an appreciation for the labour movement and union activism even before they graduate and take on full-time employment. An idea that was described to me by the retired union activist that I interviewed is to have young workers think of their employment relationship as “renting themselves to the company”.

Bursary recipient: Robert Hall
Relative: Raymond Hall

“In these times of uncertainty, and unemployment I think it is well worth it to plan ahead and have peace of mind. Older workers and young workers alike have the same concerns. The two main concerns are safety and security. I think unions do an excellent job to address that point. I think the more unions present to young workers and schools and present these two points, the more interest there will be in joining unions.”



Bursary recipient: Matthew Gabrick
Relative: Michele Gabrick

“As the economy changes, and as the workforce ages, it is important for young people to take a more active role in unionism. Michelle Day, co-chair of CUPE’s national young workers group, said that, “if we don’t start involving more young members in the union movement now, there won’t be any leadership for our union in 20 years, and if we allow public sector jobs occupied by young workers to drift away, there won’t be a union left to lead”. This means that young people have to start involving themselves with unions as soon as possible. If they do not participate, it will be impossible to continue the union movement in the future.”

Bursary recipient: Laura Chinack
Relative: John Chinack

“The trade union movement’s biggest problem with young workers today is communication. No one sits down with us and explains what they are and how they help us. The world young people live in today is constantly changing, with new and better technology. If a certain group wishes to become better known, they must put out information on our level.”

Bursary recipient: Katelyn Strangway
Relative: Anna Strangway

