

June 22, 2009

**CEU announces 2009 bursary awards  
Applicants share their views on trade union activism, a wide-range of  
social justice issues and youth**

The CEU Bursary Committee met on May 27, 2009 to review the submissions of ten applicants. The competition required each applicant to write two essays; one following an interview with a current or former union activist, and one discussing “Why are social justice issues important to trade unions?”

The committee awarded bursaries to each individual applicant; it also set three bursary amounts; \$400.00 (3); \$300.00 (3) and \$225.00 (4). Successful applicants were notified by mail, and all applicants must provide proof of enrollment in a college, university, vocational institute or apprenticeship program prior to receiving their bursary.

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

**Essay excerpts**

“I learned a great deal about unions from my interview with John. I learned more about union structure, how union officials help their members while protecting their individual rights, and more about what unions have contributed to society, such as “weekends”. Most importantly, however, I learned that for unions to be effective, union officials need to have the support of their members, and union officials must have a respectful relationship with the employer.”

Bursary Recipient: Conrad Locke                      CEU Relative: Shelagh Locke

“My views on trade union activism have expanded after talking to Bill Eadie. I now realize how necessary unions are for fair payment and treatment of all employees in a workplace. Union activists, such as Bill, fight against favoritism in promotions, raises, opportunities and scheduling hours/holidays. Most importantly, union activists help abolish discrimination and harassment on the job and assist in making their place of work as safe as possible.”

Bursary Recipient: Lauren Eadie                      CEU Relative: Doris Eadie

“As a young person I can see how a union protects workers of all ages. I have known people who were paid the \$6.00 training wage because they did not have any previous work experience. This is a prime example of how young workers are being penalized because of their lack of work experience and is an example of a social injustice. This training wage is a two-tiered minimum wage structure

that was implemented in 2001 by the BC Government. Their reason for implementing this was to lower the unemployment rate for BC's youth. The government felt that the majority of people who would be earning the \$6.00 training wage would be teenagers in high school and living at home. However, statistics show that this is not the case and show that over 60% of those making this training wage are adults 19 years and older and are women."

Bursary Recipient: Morgan Allen

CEU Relative: Marion Allen

"As a whole the trade union movement has definitely influenced the general public's attitude toward social justice issues. For the current generation entering the work force, I do not believe they have a concept of what it would be like to work in an environment where some of the past injustices took place. For example, it is widely known that foreign workers have been (and actually still are) treated very poorly; extended little compensation in terms of wages, living conditions, job security and generally do not receive promotions."

Bursary Recipient: Larissa Ianson

CEU Relative: Dawn Ianson

"After talking with Ms. Wyllie I have gained a new appreciation for the union as well as a better understanding of how it affects my own family. My mother works in the Kwantlen library alongside Ms. Wyllie, and because of the interview, I realize that it is largely through the dedication of trade union activists like her that my mother has a fair place to work. Especially during these economic doldrums, workers are often scared that if they do not comply with everything their employer asks of them, then they will get fired."

Bursary Recipient: Daniel Mendonca

CEU Relative: Liane Mendonca

"Young people will soon be running society, and it is very important that they are educated on social justice issues and their human rights. Sandra Giesbrecht, Vice President of the HEU states "society takes care of each other, meaning that the general public needs to stick up for one another. Getting young workers involved in the trade union movement will ensure that the rights of workers will be protected for the future. The best way for unions to spread their messages to young people would be to associate themselves in the ways of how young people are comfortable. Technology is the key to the new generation."

Bursary Recipient: Jessica Beach

CEU Relative: Gregg Beach

"Since I have not worked at a job with a union, I have not spent a lot of time thinking about trade union activism. My research for this essay has left me deeply impressed by the work of trade union activism. I felt that most union activists fought solely for benefits that would improve the conditions of the staff members at that union. This experience has shown me how many rights that I enjoy, are the result of trade union activism. Not only that, but many issues I feel

are vitally important and worth standing up for, I have found that unions are fighting for. I appreciate the fight of union activists against racism/bullying, and the work they do to support children who live in poverty.”

Bursary Recipient: Maurie Phifer

CEU Relative: Mark Phifer

“Through this interview, I have learned what a trade union is, and the work that is involved. How one must stand up and speak out for what one believes in, and that benefits and a good salary are not just handed to people, they are benefits that the people who worked before us have negotiated for. Good wages and benefits for workers do not come easily, they are hard won. A union is a group of people who work together to make a safe, healthy workplace, and who bargain with the employer for fair wages and benefits.”

Bursary Recipient: Sheldon Horner

CEU Relative: Ralph Horner

“All in all, I learned a lot about being in a union and being a trade union activist. I never really knew what being in a trade was all about, but since I have conducted this interview, I feel I have solidified my knowledge and understanding of what it is trade unions strive to accomplish. When I get into my career, I plan to be in a trade, so it is good that I understand the importance of being a union member. If it wasn't for unions and people like my grandfather and what they stood for, things wouldn't be the same as they are today. I am proud to have been given this opportunity to get to know my grandfather on a deeper level, I have achieved an even greater appreciation for the work that he did.”

Bursary Recipient: Zackery West

CEU Relative: Wayne West

“I think that if unions want to broaden and strengthen public support with people aged 18 – 30, they should advertise their benefits in a public manner. Some possible places to advertise would be: the internet, the newspaper, and advertisements on local television. I think that the majority of the public would be more than willing to support unions if they had a little bit more information about all the ways unions advocate for social justice. Another cool idea would be to hold a contest for young people that gets them to produce a video on social justice and unions. This would give people a great learning opportunity, all while presenting it in a fun and involving way.”

Bursary Recipient: Cam Pasternak

CEU Relative: Jeff Pasternak