



Women in CUPE Strengthening our union

A force that will strengthen our union. One year ago on International Women's Day, CUPE National's Women's Task Force was launched. Since then, women and men across our union have been working to fulfill its mandate: consult broadly with members on women's equality issues and how to improve women's participation and representation within CUPE.

The journey has been an impressive one. Task Force groups held more than 196 face-to-face consultations in 121 communities, meeting with more than 1,650 women and close to 300 men. More than 4,600 members responded in written and online surveys and a different survey captured the comments of more than 250 union locals.

"The issues raised by members show that women want and expect their union to work for them," says Task Force co-chair Barbara Moore. "Hundreds and hundreds of suggestions, from small actions to large, have poured in. Women want better representation. They want to be included and become more active in the union."

Co-chair Paul Moist, CUPE national president, says the Task Force work is about strengthening our union for all CUPE members.

"Responding to what the Task Force has heard will make us stronger across our membership and within our communities," says Moist. "From acknowledging women's multiple roles and family responsibilities to collective bargaining to address economic

insecurity, workplace restructuring and workload, the Task Force is spurring change that will renew CUPE's work with employers and all levels of government."

Over the months to come, the Task Force will make presentations on its

findings to members in the regions, promoting discussion on the changes and challenges CUPE faces for the future. In October, the Task Force will submit its final report to delegates at the CUPE National Convention in Toronto.

Poster celebrates women



CUPE is marking International Women's Day and the one-year anniversary launch of the Task Force with a new poster. Full of vibrant colour, the poster says 'women strengthen our union' and recognizes the diverse roles women have in society.

Created by artist Helen D'souza, the illustration is a stylized representation of four women, each depicting diversity and the north, south, east, west breadth of women's work. The arms – upraised with hands touching or melding into a seamless infinity –

symbolize how women join together to mentor and support each other.

The leaves within the women's bodies represent new life and growth. The water, mountains and earth, the cross-country landscape that shape us. The fire symbolizes passion and renewal.

The bread and roses in hand highlight the ongoing historical struggle by women, not just on March 8, but every day: fighting for equality and recognition of the work women do in the workplace, union, home and community. The buildings represent the conflicts that arise from those varying roles and the need for harmony and balance.

Posters will be available at upcoming CUPE events throughout the regions or you can order copies by contacting CUPE's Equality Branch in Ottawa at equality@cupe.ca or by phone at 613-237-1590. Check out the website at www.cupe.ca for more on the National Women's Task Force.

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