



# Global Justice

Winter 2008

## Protesting for peace in Colombia



CUPE Manitoba Global Justice Committee member Denyse Lambert (left), also a member of the national GJ Committee, joined a demonstration for peace in Colombia in Winnipeg on March 6. Thousands of Colombians have been forced into exile during a civil war that has been raging since the 1960s. Several hundred of them now live in Winnipeg. To oppose the Canada-Colombia free trade negotiations: [www.clc-ctc.ca](http://www.clc-ctc.ca).

## CUPE aids "Voice of the People" in Guatemala

**A SMALL** CUPE-assisted radio station in Guatemala serves as the "Voice of the People," says a trainer and supporter of Radio Libertad (RL).

In Canada in January to visit her Italian-Canadian family, Marcella Braggio spoke of the contribution RL has made in northern villages, thanks to the CUPE Global Justice Fund.

"We make information available

to people that they probably won't get through the mainstream media," she said. "We provide commentary on ecosystems, mining, water and other public issues."

The programs run from country music and children's stories to liberation theology and people's economics, adds Braggio who has a background in community-based work with non-governmental organizations.

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**CUPE**

## Hydro worker visits remote school in Guatemala



**WHEN** Manitoba Hydro technical assistant Arlene Macklem, first vice-president of CUPE 998, visited Guatemala earlier this year, she took a box full of CUPE shirts and other supplies with her. Here, in Macklem's words, is what she did with them.

"I had a great time although pursuing some of my goals was very emotional. I visited an orphanage and spent time playing with the little ones, age two and under, and when we left, the babies started crying."

"We donated some of the supplies, including CUPE stuff,

to the poorest children attending school in a village called Santa Cruz Bylamja. It is very difficult to contact the poorest of the poor because these children do not attend school."

"Some groups are addressing this problem like the one in Guatemala City working with the 'garbage' children. The rest of the supplies (crayons, markers, etc.) went to a school in a remote area in the highlands. I figured that we would drop off the supplies and leave, but the whole school gave us a royal welcome with singing, dances and lunch. It was very

moving and unexpected."

"The principal gave us a list of supplies that they need. The hope is that they can organize an adopt-a-school project. Some of the children do not have shoes, warm clothing (it gets cold in the highlands) or food. Some only eat one meal a day, the one provided at school."

Macklem is back in Winnipeg now, but she's already planning ways to do more work in Guatemala next year. One of the ideas is to set up an ongoing project with a Guatemalan public sector union and use the Global Justice Fund to build union solidarity."



### FORMER NEB MEMBER WINS AWARD

Former CUPE National Executive Board member Leo Cheverie has won the 2007 Alumni Award presented by World University Service of Canada (WUSC), a leading Canadian development agency. A graduate working as a library technician at the University of Prince Edward Island's Robertson Library, Cheverie is president of CUPE 1870. The award recognizes his exceptional contribution to international development through his support of WUSC's programming. Congratulations, Leo!

## Community members learn the power of radio



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Founded on March 14, 2004, RL now is on the air about six hours daily, but it is as much an alternative place of learning as it is an outlet for popular broadcasting.

“A 55-year-old woman learned to use a computer at RL,” Braggio reported. “Young kids get involved at ages eight and nine to learn to do things on the kids’ program. They play children’s music, read stories and do riddles and interview other kids. Events are sometimes broadcast in coordination with the local schools. Last year, the kids were learning to produce radio spots that would be inserted with the music.”

Working with the Peten Alliance for Life and Peace, Braggio says the CUPE contribution has meant a lot for RL. “We’ve worked miracles with the money from the Global Justice Fund. It covers our basic operating costs and helps upgrade our equipment. We have also guaranteed training with the RL team for two other stations in northern Guatemala.”

## Former shop steward protects activists in Indonesia



Kevin Freedman (right) with Yan Christian Warinussy, recipient of the 2005 John Humphrey Freedom Award from Rights & Democracy.

**WINNIPEGGER** Kevin Freedman is a former CUPE activist with a passion for human rights. Last year, that passion took him to Indonesia to work as a Peace Brigades International volunteer, providing non-violent protection to local human rights activists.

“My earliest experience with human rights concerns was through my CUPE jobs,” Freedman said. “In fact, I found that human rights was tied directly to labour rights.”

After seven years as a lifeguard at inner-city swimming pools (CUPE 500), he saw that “management wasn’t very responsible and I saw the results in human rights terms. I also saw a lot of patrons of the pool who didn’t have the same

benefits that I had.” As a worker at a Salvation Army homeless shelter (CUPE 2348), he also witnessed human rights abuses.

What does he bring to his international work from his days as a CUPE shop steward? “With globalization today, international labour solidarity is essential. People are experiencing the same labour issues across borders. Many people, who don’t have the same labour rights that we have here, are being abused by the same western companies we work for.”

Freedman recently was awarded the 2007 Peace Medal by the local YM-YWCA for his work in Indonesia.

**CUPE-OXFAM  
CAMPAIGN UPDATE**



CUPE and Oxfam are partners in a campaign to fight poverty by promoting public services like clean water provision and efficient garbage and other waste disposal.

**THE MANITOBA REGION**

launch of the CUPE-Oxfam campaign to fight poverty was attended by Ang'er Deng Ruay, Southern Sudanese 'Lost Girl'; Ray Dirks, a Canadian artist; Denyse Lambert, National global justice committee member; Michelle Beveridge, Oxfam Canada Prairie Region coordinator; and Alexandra Hrabowych, an Oxfam volunteer.

For more on the campaign, visit <http://www.oxfam.ca/what-we-do/campaigns/open-for-all-public-services-fight-poverty>.

**CUPE national leaders respond to global concerns**



National President Paul Moist introduces Public Service International's new general secretary Peter Waldorff to national convention last October.

**NATIONAL** President Paul Moist and National Secretary-Treasurer Claude G n reux have called on the Canadian government to urge the Israeli government to temporarily lift its economic sanctions imposed on the Gaza Strip territory on humanitarian grounds and to encourage members of the international community to do the same.

CUPE's leaders have also urged Iran's president to release students and labour activists being detained as political prisoners in Iranian jails.

And the leaders have responded to a Canadian government decision to boycott the United Nations world conference on racism set for Durban, South Africa, in 2009.



**INTERNATIONAL CONDOLENCES FOR DONALDA**

The international labour community has felt the loss with the recent death of Donalda MacDonald, a National Executive Board member, CUPE P.E.I. president and CUPE's representative on the women's committee of Public Services International.

PSI General Secretary Peter Waldorff expressed sadness on behalf of the global union federation's 20 million members.