As members of this union we have a say in what happens to us at work. We, the workers speak much louder and more effectively when we stand **TOGETHER**.

Your Executive Committee has been busy serving the members of the Local over the last year. Here is an update from the past year.

**Executive Committee Meetings**

The Union Executive Committee is required as per our by-laws to meet monthly. The Executive meets the Monday (and the Tuesday if any statutory holidays) before each Local Union meeting and has ad hoc meetings as required and regular phone contact with one another as needed often on a weekly basis.

**Membership Meetings**

The Local is required to have a minimum of eight regular membership meetings per year and these have been held on the fourth Thursday of each month except for July and December due to the high vacation season. There has been quorum at every meeting.

There have also been meetings throughout the year with various teams who have requested assistance from the executive with questions or concerns. Please feel free to contact the President to arrange lunch time meetings to address member issues that are specific to the team or department.
**Labour/Management Meetings**

Heather Murray, President, Michelle English, Vice President and Cheryl Rubin, Grievance Chair attended regular Labour/Management meetings with the HR Director-Melissa Beckett-Batchelor and Dawn Walcott-Parris Director of Services as well as one of the Service Directors. The purpose of these meetings is to identify, address, and respond to all specific labour relations issues as identified with AO and AODA as standing items and any OACAS items. As well if there are issues that require discussion in between these meetings there are meetings scheduled.

**Union Executive / Leadership Team Meetings**

These meetings are held regularly between the Local Union Executive Committee and the Employer’s Senior Leadership Team to discuss issues of mutual concern such as workload, agency/ministry directions, transformation, issues of health and safety, CPIN, property, funding and the financial status of the Society. The meetings have been held quarterly and with all the current changes within the child welfare field, the meetings have become monthly as of January 2017. The Local Executive then reports back on these issues at the following Local membership meetings. One main area of discussion currently is the changes that will affect the members at DCAS with the new formation of the indigenous Society-DBCFS and the services to our community to this newly forming child welfare society. This continues to be an ongoing conversation.

**Health and Safety Committee**

This committee has met every other month and reviewed all the incident reports; completed the building inspections as per the OHSA; reviewed the policies that relate to health and safety and submitted any revisions to the Leadership team. This year the committee received training for the Level 1 and 2 certification as required by the OHSA and our Collective Agreement. The committee has continued work on ergonomic assessments for staff. The committee members also organize the Wellness day every year as well as the other wellness events throughout the year. (massages by Trillium College; Soups on Us; Chocolate and oranges in February; the walk/run for funds to the Foundation etc.) If there are any issues that arise that you believe are of a health and safety concern please bring them forward to anyone on the Health and Safety Committee.

**Grievances**

Our Collective Agreement is a legally binding contract. It spells out the terms and conditions of our employment with the Society. When there is a breach of the Collective Agreement, our rights are protected when we take action against our employer. Action can mean challenging our employer through various means or formally through the grievance procedure. *(See CA - Article 11: Grievance Procedure for more information)*.

Without members bringing issues forward to be addressed, the Local would not be able to resolve issues as quickly or perhaps at all. A breach of the Collective Agreement when not challenged, affects all members. Remember you are the Local.
Countless issues, once brought to the attention of the Union and the Employer, have been successfully resolved outside of the grievance procedure. These have included travel, training, vacation, workload, WSIB/LTD, overtime, reimbursements, conflict with supervisors and bullying/harassment issues.

There has been one formal grievance filed this year around vacation language with resolution obtained.

**Workload Committee**

It’s important that workers take a stand on such an imperative issue as workload.

Most workers who have notified their supervisor that their workload is becoming unmanageable have been able to have their workload addressed successfully. The workload committee meets monthly to review the caseloads of all workers as well as attempt to highlight and address the issues that affect workload in all departments and all bargaining unit positions. This work has included discussion around different elements of technology, looking at why staff do not fill out workload assessment forms, how can workload be addressed more successfully in supervision, highlighting the position of the Local that more staff are needed to do the work, as well as vacancy managing. The workload committee has begun the work of looking at case assignment/case weighting/case ranking and will require a great deal of input from members. The committee is hopeful that there will be some structure to this over the next several months acknowledging that it will continue to be a work in progress. The workload assessment is the beginning to this but we know it is not the only way to address this issue. This work has been given the "green light" by the Leadership team. This is one of the largest items facing the members and it is time that it gets fully addressed with the employer's cooperation.

**See Letter of Understanding Re: Workload.**

**Discipline**

The Union attends meetings with members that involve fact findings and potential discipline and often meetings regarding work performance issues (letters of corrective action, suspension, leave with or without pay, terminations).

The employer often does fact finding meetings to determine the events that may or may have not occurred. You can have a Union rep with you during fact finding. The employer will often let you know this and will give you the ability to connect with a rep. There are times when the employer may also contact the Union so that someone is available if time is a factor to have this meeting completed. You cannot be disciplined without just cause. The burden of proof lies with the employer. You have the right to file a grievance if you believe you were disciplined without just cause. If you anticipate the launching of disciplinary action or have received a “letter of discipline” it is strongly recommended that you contact the Union. Discipline letters (“Letter of Corrective Action”) are served to the Union concurrently. The process of “progressive discipline” is to build on past discipline and that generally means that the more letters, the greater the eventuality of being terminated if issues continue and/or are not corrected.


Return to Work Meetings

In the past year, the Union has been busy representing members at Return to Work/ Duty to Accommodate meetings which can include requests for a gradual return to work, accommodations and/or modified schedules and duties.

The goal of the return to work process is to ensure a safe and successful return to full time duties. This sometimes takes time. To ensure the smoothest transition, ensure that your Supervisor and the Union (if you are wishing that assistance) are informed well ahead of time of your return date in order to arrange a meeting if one is necessary. Remember that our co-workers need our support and understanding when returning to work with an accommodation or with modified duties. We are all an accident or illness away from requiring our own return to work meeting. The right to accommodation/modified duties is also the law. (Ontario Human Rights Code, Workplace Safety and Insurance Act). If you do not wish to have Union representation at your meeting that is your choice but if there are accommodations that are put in place a copy of that accommodation is sent to the Union as per the Collective Agreement.

WSIB Reports

It is imperative that you notify WSIB through a Form 6 of any work related illness or injury resulting in lost time at work or the need for medical attention or modified work. The employer is obliged under the WSIA to fill out a Form 7 and the attending physician is required to fill in a Form 8. The employer forwards the Union a copy of any Safety incident report that is completed by any staff or volunteer or foster parent. Please remember that Traumatic Mental Stress is a compensable injury if the policy requirements are met (see policy 15-03-02 of the Operating Policy Manual available online at wsib.on.ca).

Collective Agreement/Contract Negotiations

Negotiating a collective agreement is the single most critical responsibility for the Union. Our current collective agreement expires on March 31, 2018.

The Local executive at the last Local meeting identified that we will be looking for members who are interested in being on the negotiations committee at our September 2017 local union meeting. As a Local we will advise the employer of the negotiating committee after it is elected in September-the committee will consist of not more than 7 members. The Local will then give notice to the employer to begin bargaining in the beginning of January 2018 (approximately 90 days before the end of our current agreement.

As we embark on the bargaining process, remember that in the past, we have achieved remarkable progress through unwavering strength, determination and solidarity. Bargaining is a tremendous responsibility borne by all at the bargaining table. It is a serious endeavor and decisions made at the bargaining table affect us all. We look forward to those interested in this process to seek out more information from the Executive and we trust that there will be support for the bargaining committee who work tirelessly representing you.
CUPE Ontario Social Service Workers Coordinating Committee (SSWCC)

CUPE Ontario’s Social Service Workers Coordinating Committee (SSWCC) represents over 30,000 social service workers in Ontario who deliver vital social services in 5 sectors including CAS, childcare, community agencies, developmental services and municipal social services. The committee is mandated to carry out the policies, campaigns and action plans developed at convention and through the committee meetings. The members dedicate themselves to speaking up for social service workers and the communities we serve through campaigns, meetings with community partners, the OACAS, the Ministry, politicians, and the Ontario Advocate for Children and Youth. The committee is also responsible for planning a yearly conference.

Three CAS representatives are elected every two years at the CUPE Ontario Social Service Conference held yearly in March. Nancy Simone (CUPE 2190-TCCAS), Aubrey Gonsalves (CUPE 2316-TCAS) and Heather Murray (CUPE 3223-Durham CAS) are the three elected CAS representatives until the end of term in March 2018.

This year has been especially busy confronting issues such as CPIN/mergers/amalgamations/professional regulation and shared services. The committee and CUPE staff have met with several ministry officials in multiple meetings including the Deputy Minister (MCYS), Assistant Deputy Minister (MCYS), Director Child Welfare Operations Branch (MCYS), Chief Information Officer Operations (MCYS) and also the Minster of Child and Youth Services. The Minister did attend one of the Societies currently on CPIN to view how the system worked.

The committee has also been closely watching and advocating against mandatory registration with the College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers and implemented a campaign that got the attention of OACAS that resulted in OACAS putting this “project” on the back burner. The committee will keep an eye on this.

The committee has also met with the Director of Investigations, Office of the Provincial Child Advocate with regards to their new investigative powers of services to youth, including CAS’s. As well the committee met with the Child Advocate to begin to give feedback on the changes coming to the CFSA (Bill 89 being proposed). The committee attended deputations on the bill proposals.

The committee has also been in touch with Adoption workers across the Province with respect to the KPMG review of the child welfare and private adoption system. The Labour reps have been obtaining input from the field in order to prepare for rebuttal to any of the suggestions that may come from this report.

As well the issue of mergers and amalgamations is still in the forefront for the committee and all bargaining unit members across the Province. We will continue to work on how to best address this issue so that the rights of members are as protected as they can be. As well the shared services project is a large area of concern and we are keeping members up to date as we get information.

Heather Murray is also the SSWCC Rep for the OMERS committee and has attended a minimum of quarterly meetings with the Cupe Ontario reps as well as the OMERS board. Cupe launched a successful campaign to have OMERS stop the plan to implement a
withdrawal of indexing on our pensions. This was a solid victory as we continue to have member input into our pension.

The committee is planning at the upcoming strategic planning session for the work that will continue for the entire sector regardless of your job position. We are also planning for more Town Hall calls going forward to keep the flow of information to members.

**Worker Safety Sub Committee**

For years the unions representing CAS workers have had concerns with regards to the safety of our members and have been advocating that worker safety is a critical issue for workers and what was required was a systematic review and solutions. In 2011, a commitment was negotiated under the Provincial Discussion Table Consensus Agreement, and CUPE, along with other unions that represented CAS workers, established a Worker Safety Subcommittee. The joint union-employer subcommittee which includes the OACAS and MCYS was established to advise and report systematic matters relating to the health and safety of child welfare workers in Ontario. CUPE’s representatives on the subcommittee include Nancy Simone and Andréeane Chénier with assistance from the other CAS Sector reps.

The purpose of the project is to work towards a coordinated sector-wide approach to worker safety for Child Welfare in Ontario. Funding from the MCYS supported the hiring of a consultant to conduct the research and the second stage of this project that has made recommendations including sector specific tools and training to support workers.

Highlights of the research study include:

- 74.7% of CAS employees reporting that they had experienced violence during their careers (averaging 11 years), 26.8% experiencing assaults or attempted assaults; 45.2% experiencing threats or stalking; 67.9% experiencing verbal or written abuse.

- Approximately one-third (32%) of child protection workers reporting that they had experienced violence (assault/attempted assault, threats, stalking, and verbal or written abuse) while working alone.

- Employees and CAS agencies indicating that CASs were highly variable in the policies and programs they maintained, with some providing higher levels of worker protection and many providing lower levels of worker protection.

The comprehensive report titled: **CAS Workers at Risk: A Current Assessment of Worker Safety, Client Violence and Child Protection in Ontario Children’s Aid Societies-A System Under Pressure** has been released, distributed and is posted on our website: [www.cupe3223.ca](http://www.cupe3223.ca)

In the CWP training redesign, the matters of worker safety and resilience are being addressed in several places throughout the new CWP series.

The Labour Relations Committee, with the support of the Worker Safety Subcommittee, has prioritized the critical recommendations described in Phase I to inform Phase II of the
project. Phase II is a 12 month project that has begun. The goals for Phase II of this project are to:
1. Gather in-depth information on the priority areas from Ontario CASs;
2. Develop a provincial set of resource materials to support worker safety; and
3. Develop a provincial set of template policies, procedures, protocols and supports to improve worker safety across the sector;

The Final Report from Phase II may identify areas for further implementation during a third phase of the project and the second survey regarding this project has gone out.

**CPIN**

Over ten years ago, the province committed to working with Children’s Aid Societies to develop the Child Protection information Network, CPIN. This year CPIN was implemented at DCAS to date with the training segments as well as labs. The “go live date” is set for June 12th. The Union will continue to monitor CPIN’s impact on workers and workload and as per the collective agreement have had the opportunity to discuss with the employer on several occasions in meetings solely devoted to CPIN.

As part of the SSWCC, a survey was developed in 2015/2016 by CUPE which invited all CAS workers in the province currently using CPIN to fill it out. The information gathered from the survey was important to reiterate our concerns to the Ministry about CPIN in its current form. As mentioned above, the committee representatives, including Nancy Simone, Aubrey Gonsalves, Heather Murray and CUPE staff met several times with ministry officials in multiple meetings including the Deputy Minister (MCYS), Assistant Deputy Minister (MCYS), Director Child Welfare Operations Branch (MCYS), Chief Information Officer Operations (MCYS) and the Minster of Child and Youth Services. Our message was clear: The stakes in child protection work are high - the serious technical and functional deficiencies within CPIN are currently an impediment to front-line child protection work, putting children and youth at risk. We advanced your concerns that the system makes it difficult to do basic tasks such as searching for clients and inputting contact logs, has increased workload and stress for front-line child protection workers and does not currently achieve its objective of sharing information. We made recommendations at the meetings including postponing bringing any new Children’s Aid Societies on CPIN until the serious technical and functional issues with the system have been resolved, provide additional funding and support to early adopter agencies to increase staff complement, have support staff available to answer questions and support overtime due to the business process changes necessary with CPIN, and to create a front-line child protection working group with union-appointed participants to meet with MCYS technical staff to help identify problems, prioritize CPIN technology fixes and provide advice on necessary supports.

**Training**

Training is offered regularly throughout the year through CUPE, The Ontario Federation of Labour, The Occupational Disability Response Team (OFL), and The Canadian Labour Congress.
Conferences/Conventions

Delegates represented the Local at each of the following Conferences/Conventions in the past year:

- 9 Delegates (Heather Murray, Michelle English, Judy Durham, Patricia Mercurio, Sharon Taylor, Kelly Dwyer, Kevin Anderson, Silvio Pucci, Jenna McNaughton) at the CUPE Ontario Social Services Conference in Niagara Falls, March 2017
- 1 Delegate (Heather Murray) at the CUPE Ontario Division Convention in Toronto, in May 2016 as well as upcoming May 2017.

S.O.S. Committees and Achieve Blue and Culture Club

The Local Executive members have all tried to be active members of these committees. The President attends the SOS Supervision sub-committee as well as Achieve Blue and the Culture Club to keep a pulse on these activities as well as share information that may assist in these projects.

Youth Holiday Meal

Once again, the Local participated in the Youth Holiday Meal for the youth of our Society that took place in December 2016. The Local provided the funds to assist this great event. The Local has been the major financial contributor of this event and it is with thanks to the membership who have continued to support this event through the yearly motion.

Other Internal Committees

The Local membership has assisted in many of the events that internal committees have put on for the greater good of our staff members and community. This continued support is invaluable and makes these events far more successful.

To all of our members, it is our hope that you attend meetings, training, and become involved in strengthening our voice.

The Executive Committee extends its appreciation to our CUPE National Representative Jacqueline Lancaster, and to all the members who demonstrate their support of the Local and the labour movement, those who participate on the executive, in committees both Labour based and internal Society committees, conferences, conventions, training, attend meetings and have brought issues and concerns forward.

In Solidarity,

Your Local Executive members 2016-2017

-In Unity, there is Strength-