



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

## Living wage campaign building momentum across province

The union's four-year campaign to champion living wages for all workers is picking up steam across the province with a number of exciting events and public forums.



HEU regional vice-president Rhonda Bruce was invited by Alex Atamanenko, MP for B.C. Southern Interior, to speak on a panel at a few stops on the *Poor No More* film tour.

The Canadian-produced documentary, hosted by actress/activist Mary Walsh, explores the plight of Canada's low-waged workers, tackles the global economic crisis, and examines the social impact of poverty. Bruce spread the living wage message to audiences in Oliver, Osoyoos and Princeton.

"It was a really good experience," says Bruce. "It was a great opportunity to talk about the Hospital Employees' Union and our leadership role in the Living Wage Campaign. It also brings a face into our community."

In preparation for future opportunities to promote the LWC, the union hosted a two-day leadership training workshop in April for about 25 activists. Part of the agenda included public speaking and media relations exercises.

HEU's Living Wage working group also met with Deborah Littman, national officer of the U.K. trade union UNISON, where she shared the ground-breaking work she's doing in London's living wage campaign.

Littman later delivered her message to well-attended public forums in Vancouver and Surrey, sponsored by the Vancouver & District Labour Council, New Westminster & District Labour Council, Vibrant Surrey: Community solutions for poverty reduction, First Call, Mosaic and A Living Wage for Families.



...more



“In 10 years, the living wage has gone from unrealistic to an idea whose time has come,” says Littman. “Over 100 employers have agreed to pay a living wage. [The campaign] has gone from marginal to mainstream. The result is £70 million more in workers’ pockets.”

Closer to home, about 20 organizations have been certified as living wage employers in Metro Vancouver, including most recently, Canada’s biggest credit union Vancity. And on April 12, HEU was proud to officially join that growing list during a ceremony at the Provincial Office.



In March, the latest living wage calculations were released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. To earn a decent wage, workers need to make an hourly rate of \$18.81 (Metro Vancouver) and \$18.03 (Greater Victoria).

Other cities have released their living wage hourly rate calculations, including Abbotsford (\$16.42),

Cranbrook (\$14.16), Williams Lake (\$15.77) and Esquimalt (\$17.31).

HEU’s Living Wage Campaign activists will participate in several upcoming events, including the union’s Long-term Care Independent Bargaining Conference, and at several community activities throughout the summer, such as farmers’ markets, Canada Day and Pride celebrations, and various rallies.

Watch our website calendar for more details.

*May 31, 2011*