



## Rallies in Nanaimo, Shawnigan Lake support health workers faced with contracting out

HEU health care workers at Malaspina Gardens in Nanaimo and Acacia Ty Mawr Lodge in Shawnigan Lake battled back against contracting out with rallies that drew supportive crowds to the facilities late last week.

At Malaspina Gardens, up to 70 people gathered in front of the care home over the lunch hour on February 3, one month after the lay-off notices were issued. Among those in attendance were residents, family members, seniors' advocates, MLA Leonard Krog, Occupy Nanaimo activists and health care workers, including HEU members from other facilities.

HEU president Ken Robinson expressed support to the laid-off workers on behalf of the union's Provincial Executive and talked about the stress that contracting out puts on seniors, their families and workers.

Malaspina Mid Island local chairperson Kathleen Watson read a poem she had written just after receiving her pink slip. "As I Step Out My Front Door" pays homage to the unique relationship health care workers have with residents and their families, as Watson describes how she leaves "my home" to go to "my other home".

The Malaspina Mid Island local will host a screening of "The Remaining Light", the documentary on the state of seniors' care in the province on March 6 – watch for details. The film was coproduced by HEU and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives BC.

On February 4, HEU members at Acacia Ty Mawr Lodge in Shawnigan Lake held a rally to raise awareness in their community about the January 23 lay-off notices issued to all Acacia care and support staff.

The long-term care facility is home to 35 residents. Members are concerned about the impact that the move to contract out will have on those they care for.

The HEU health care workers at Acacia Ty Mawr Lodge are members of the Cowichan Valley local and have plans for more rallies and actions – including a public screening of "The Remaining Light" – in the days and weeks to come.

*February 8, 2012*

