International Day of Mourning: a time to reflect on workers killed or injured on the job

Since 1985, the Canadian labour movement and allies have gathered together from coast to coast on the International Day of Mourning – April 28 – to remember and honour workers injured or killed on the job, and those who have died from work-related illnesses.

According to WorkSafeBC's most recent stats, a staggering 144,865 workers were injured on the job in 2012. There were also 149 fatalities, including deaths resulting from occupational illness. Alarmingly, 48.63 per cent of violent injuries are in the health care sector.

That's why HEU's People with disAbilities (PWD) Standing Committee continues to advocate for safer working conditions through its Blue Poppy Campaign, and they have chosen the Blue Poppy to represent people injured or killed at work.

As part of the Blue Poppy Campaign, the PWD committee distributes posters and blue poppy buttons to HEU locals throughout the province.

And as a way to raise awareness to HEU members and their families about the importance of the International Day of Mourning, the PWD committee is holding its annual children's colouring contest. Contest details are available on the HEU website at <http://www.heu.org>.

Now observed in about 100 countries, the International Day of Mourning is marked in Canada by flying the flag on Parliament Hill at half-mast.

And in many communities, labour organizations, unions and government agencies hold public ceremonies including speeches, lighting candles, wearing ribbons, laying flowers and wreaths, observing a moment of silence, unveiling monuments, planting trees, releasing balloons, laying out empty shoes or hard hats to symbolize those who have died at work.

The B.C. Federation of Labour is hosting a ceremony at the Vancouver Convention Centre, Jack Poole Plaza area, on April 28 at 10:30 a.m.

For events in your community, check with your local labour council or visit the B.C. Fed's website at <http://bcfed.ca/>.

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