

**REPORT OF THE  
WOMEN'S COMMITTEE  
TO THE MGEU 66<sup>TH</sup> CONVENTION 2021**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Area 1** Theresa Hatch  
**Area 2** Theresa Hardie  
**Area 3** Vacant  
**Area 4** Treasure Dubé  
**Area 5** Crystal Bisson

**Area 6** Vacant  
**Area 7** Carolin Brown  
**Area 8** Terry-Lyn Gagnon  
**Chair** Stephanie Swain  
**Staff** Donna MacDonald, Staff Representative  
Erin Klym Massey, Administrative Assistant

**SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS**

The MGEU Women's Committee, with the assistance of the Communication Unit, launched two social media campaigns in March 2021 on the MGEU Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter feeds.

**#SIGNALFORHELP**



The Women's Committee asked members to share #SignalForHelp. The MGEU Women's Committee is committed to supporting sisters everywhere and isolation can increase the risk of violence at home. Strict isolating measures necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic have led people in Canada to increasingly turn to video calls to stay connected. The social isolation measures are making it more difficult for those who are at risk of abuse or violence to safely reach out for help.

"Signal for Help" is a simple one-handed sign someone can use on a video call to alert family, friends, or colleagues that an individual needs help. It is a simple single-hand gesture that can be visually and silently displayed during video calls to alert that they would like someone to check in safely with them.

**CAMPAIGN #DONEYWAITING**



The Women's Committee, through social media, encouraged members to speak up and add their voice to ending wage discrimination, ending sexual harassment and violence, and fixing the child care crisis by signing up for the #doneywaiting Campaign.

Launched in 2018 by the Canadian Labour Congress, the #doneywaiting Campaign called for a National Action Plan on gender-based violence, implementation of the calls for justice on the national inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and funding to women's organizations.

**NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

The National Day of Remembrance is commemorated in Canada each year on December 6. This is the anniversary of the 1989 École Polytechnique massacre in which an armed student shot 28 people, killing 14 women, before dying by suicide. The Manitoba Federation of Labour hosted a luncheon in remembrance of those women, and those Manitoba women and girls who have lost their lives to violence.

The MGEU purchased tables for this event in both 2018 and 2019. In 2020, MGEU Women's Committee members, MGEU President Michelle Gawronsky, and other MGEU activists attended this event remotely. It was a unique situation that provided an opportunity for us to remember and mourn the women and girls who have lost their lives to violence.

### **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST**

Members of the MGEU Women's Committee attended the International Women's Day Breakfast held at the Union Centre March 8, 2019. The event was hosted by the Canadian Labour Congress, the Manitoba Federation of Labour, and the Winnipeg Labour Council. The event featured a come and go breakfast and silent auction, with proceeds being donated to CCPA-Manitoba research on child care and minimum wage.

The International Women's Day Breakfast March 6, 2020 was again held at the Union Centre. Featuring a come and go breakfast and silent auction; in 2020, the proceeds were donated to the Women's Health Clinic.

In 2021, in place of an in-person celebration this year due to the pandemic, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Manitoba Federation of Labour, and the Winnipeg and Brandon Labour Councils sponsored a joint social media effort to pay tribute to extraordinary women in honour of International Women's Day by requesting the use of the hashtag #Labour4IWD2021 on social media accounts.

### **PRAIRIE SCHOOL FOR UNION WOMEN: SASKATCHEWAN FEDERATION OF LABOUR**

Hosted annually in the spring by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour at Waskesiu Lake, Saskatchewan. This four-day school program is filled with learning and sharing in a supportive environment. The women who attend come from various unions, jobs, and walks of life. In 2019, eight MGEU women were selected to attend the school.

Unfortunately, the 2020 Prairie School for Union Women was cancelled due to the pandemic; MGEU Committee member Treasure Dubé regrettably, did not attend.

The school was held virtually June 22-25, 2021. MGEU Committee member, Treasure Dubé attended.

### **W.I.S.E. BREAKFAST**

Working in Support of Equality (Manitoba) Inc. (W.I.S.E. Manitoba Inc.) is the provincial branch of a national, voluntary sector, non-profit organization which advances the equality of women and girls in Canada. MGEU annually supports this organization by purchasing tickets for their breakfast fundraiser. The Committee, joined by President Michelle Gawronsky, attended the breakfast October 18, 2019 at the RBC Convention Centre.

### **NUPGE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE**

Seventy-five women from across Canada met in Ottawa from February 20-23, 2019 at the Coming Full Circle - Connecting the Generations Conference hosted by the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE).

The Conference was packed with insights from the National Union's research into issues facing women and workers in Canada. These issues ranged from pay equity, job security, pensions, child care, caregiving, and gender-based violence.

NUPGE also launched a new research project on bridging the generational divide between young and established workers. The data compiled from a national survey will be analyzed further and shared widely to help unions make the generational shift more smoothly.

In a session facilitated by Barb Byers, former secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress and SGEU/NUPGE member, participants worked in groups to find ways unions can take on issues that relate to both younger and older workers.

Participants were introduced to Razia Sultana, the founder of Rohingya Women Welfare Society. Sultana is a lawyer, human rights advocate, researcher and educator specializing in sexual violence (specifically mass rape), trauma, state violence, and the trafficking of Rohingya girls and women.

### **MGEU WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 2020**



The 2020 MGEU Women's Conference was to be held Thursday, April 23 to Saturday, April 25, 2020. The Conference - Empowered Women Empower Women - aimed to connect, empower, and elevate discourse amongst attendees. Discussions and workshops were to focus on challenges and obstacles facing female leaders, understanding cyber stalking and bullying, and exploring the gender dynamics of emotional labour. The Conference was to begin Thursday evening with a three-person speaker's panel discussing challenges and obstacles faced being a woman leader.

The Conference was to serve as an excellent first point of contact for female members who have shown some interest in their Union but hadn't quite known how to get more involved. The Conference would provide an opportunity to learn more about the Union and each other, and explore opportunities to get involved in improving their work lives, their Union, and their communities.

100 women were registered for the Conference. Many of the registrants would have been first-time attendees; new to the labour movement, or had limited exposure to activism.

### **PARTICIPATION OF THE COMMITTEE**

Throughout the three-year term of our Committee, we experienced significant changes. Thanks to Terry Rear, Jacqueline Paton, Brenda Myskiw, and Hannah Prodan for their hard work and commitment to the Committee; it was sad to see them leave.

Other events attended by the sisters on the Committee were as follows:

- **March 8, 2019 - International Women's Day**

Terry-Lyn Gagnon attended an event hosted by the Honourable Rochelle Squires and the Chair of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, Barbara Bowes, at the Fort Garry Hotel celebrating women's important contribution to research.

- **NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues**

Chair Stephanie Swain is a member of the NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues (ACWI). The ACWI meets quarterly and provides an opportunity for members from across Canada to report on the activities of their respective Women's Committees.

- **National Day of Mourning**

Chair Stephanie Swain attended the April 28, 2021 National Day of Mourning event organized by the Manitoba Federation of Labour. A virtual candlelight vigil to honour and remember the workers lost to workplace injuries and illness was held.

In Solidarity,

MGEU Women's Standing Committee