

THE NO-NC STAND

A PUBLICATION OF THE N.S. GOVERNMENT & GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION

FALL 2019

Workplace Safety: Worth Fighting For

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Dear members,

Yet another summer has flown by, and your union is preparing for a busy fall. The summer months were productive, however, with many of our home care locals concluding bargaining with new, improved collective agreements.

On the health care front, we have been busy advocating for the health and safety of our members: specifically, we've spent months trying to force the Nova Scotia Health Authority to take members' concerns about safety at the East Coast Forensic Hospital seriously. Thanks to the courageous advocacy of one nurse, the Nova Scotia Labour Board has ordered the employer to hire an independent, third-party expert to conduct a safety review at the facility (see page 4 to read more about this process). We are also working diligently behind the scenes to ensure essential staffing agreements are in place before we head into bargaining prep for the four health care locals.

Very soon, when you visit www.nsg.eu.ca, you will notice some big changes on our website. We've listened to feedback, we've received from members and completely overhauled our website: there's a new look and feel, and the content has been streamlined, as well. We believe the end result is a website that is mobile-friendly, easy to navigate and informative for our members, as well as members of the public who are interested in learning more about what our union does! In the coming months, we also plan to roll out a mobile app and a members-only login, where you can access information that is specific to your local (for more information on the new website, see page 15).

The fall is always a busy time for the union, and the fall after our Convention is even busier than most. We are holding local officer training to ensure all newly-elected local executive members are ready to take on the challenges and responsibilities of their new roles. Our Cumberland-Colchester Regional Council held their annual Family Fun Day at Riverbreeze Farms.

Last but not least, a Federal election is being held this October. It is absolutely critical that our members take the time to consider issues that are important to workers, and where the parties and candidates stand on these issues, and ensure they cast their ballots. Remember, your vote matters! (For more information on the election, see page 6)

I personally am very excited about the challenges and opportunities that are ahead of our union right now, and look forward to taking them on with the members at my side.

In solidarity,

Jason MacLean
President, NSGEU

CONNECT WITH US!

We want to hear from our members. If you have thoughts on this issue of The Stand, or ongoing union issues, send us your feedback! You can email us at inquiry@nsg.eu.ca or connect with us:

facebook.com/NSGEU

[@NSGEU @JMACL3AN](https://twitter.com/NSGEU)

NSGEU TWEETS

Global Halifax (@globalhalifax)

The Nova Scotia government says it registered a final surplus of \$120 million in fiscal 2018-19.-

the french wrench (@frenchwrench1)

Replying to @globalhalifax

boy. will it be hard to justify to the courts why OI Macneil froze wages for Judges Teachers and other govt workers now @DannyNSFL @NSGEU @withwozney feel bad for those without a union. but thats why they flocked to them when they froze wages in Ontario!!

Workers Health & Safety Centre (@WHSctraining)

N.S. Labour Board ordered a workplace violence #HealthAndSafety assessment at East Coast Forensic Hospital because they found it was "urgently needed". The pregnant nurse's co-worker requested the same assessment two months before the attack. @NSGEU

United Way Halifax (@UWHalifax)

We present the Community Spirit Award annually to pay tribute to extraordinary commitment and leadership to our community. This year, we are thrilled to present the award to @NSGEU for their role in spearheading the first #TamponTuesday campaign in Halifax.

Jodi Brown (@JodiB902)

Look what I found in the @NSGEU bathroom while attending the NSACCCW Conference and AGM Today!! AWESOME!! #NSPoli #NovaScotia #PeriodPoverty

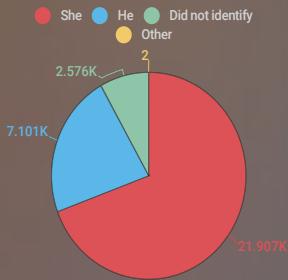


Meet your union!

The membership of the Nova Scotia Government & General Employees Union is incredibly diverse

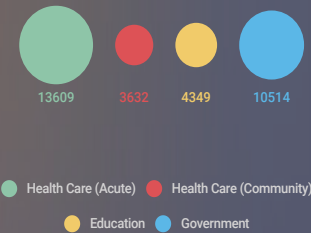
Gender

Almost 70 per cent of NSGEU's membership identify as female. Our union has a very strong & active Women's Issues Committee to represent these members' issues.



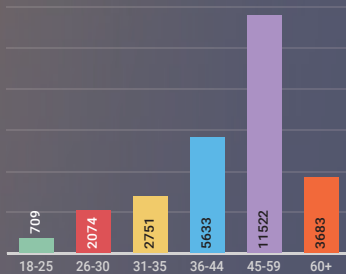
Sectors

Our members work in a wide range of occupations, which fall under four main categories: Health Care (Acute), Health Care (Community), Government & Education.



Ages

Our data shows that NSGEU members range in age from 18 to 60+ (some people did not disclose their age to us).

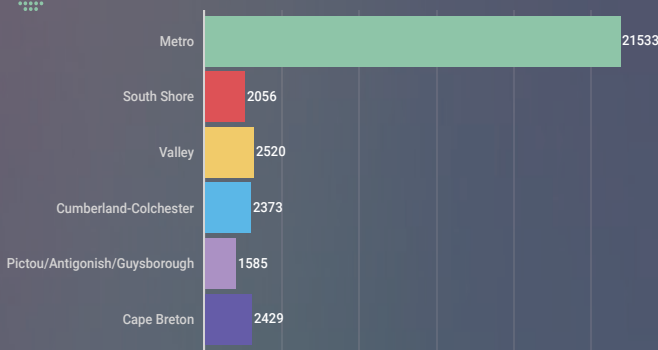


Contracts

More than 60 full-time staff at the NSGEU help negotiate and service 87 separate collective agreements on behalf of our members.

Where can you find us?

NSGEU members live & work in communities throughout the province: Metro HRM, Cumberland-Colchester, Cape Breton, Pictou Antigonish Guysborough, the Valley and South Shore.



NSGEU

Made with Infogram

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THE STAND

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The NSGEU is affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, and the National Union of Public and General Employees.

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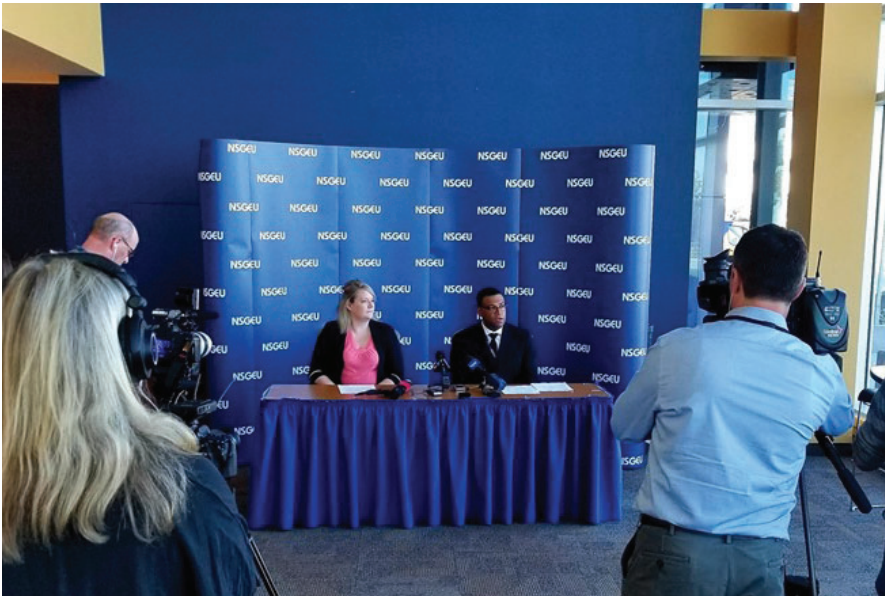
#ALL Together NOW

together FAIRNESS WORKS

The Union Stand is proudly produced by NSGEU with the help of members of IAMAW Local 2797.



Workplace Safety: Worth Fighting For



President MacLean and Local 101 member Lindsey Power speak to the media about the incident.

Change can be a slow, painful process, and making change within the Nova Scotia Health Authority has proven to be no exception.

With the help of one member in particular, the NSGEU has been diligently pushing for change at the East Coast Forensic Hospital (ECFH), where a range of health care professionals care for offenders with mental health issues. Most of these offenders have been found Not Criminally Responsible for their crimes. Working in this type of environment, with clients who have all been convicted of crimes – some of which were violent in nature – is inherently dangerous work, but in recent years, conditions have gotten much worse for staff working at this facility.

Lindsey Power is a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) who has been nursing for seven years, and working at ECFH for six of those years.

“It can be extremely nerve-wracking,” Power said, “I’m luckily one of those people, I don’t look at the person as the crime they have committed, because nine times out of ten, that’s not who they are, it’s what they’ve done. But that potential is still there.”

Clients at ECFH have complex issues: many are dealing with mental illness and addictions. Medical

staff at ECFH help perform mental health assessments; monitor clients to find out if they are having active symptoms of their illness; take them on community outings; facilitate on-unit groups; administer medications; and handle any major medical issues that may arise in the run of a day.

“We help to support them in their rehabilitation,” Power explained.

While the ECFH is connected to the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, it is technically a separate facility. And while an independent third-party safety assessment has recently been completed on the Central Nova side of the facility, for some reason, a similar assessment wasn’t done at the ECFH.

“East Coast Forensic has always kind of been this off the map, nobody talks about, little black hole in the Nova Scotia Health Authority,” Power explained.

“I feel like if the general public knew the population that we have, knew the way things ran, there would be a lot more uproar.”

Power said it wasn’t until about a year and a half ago that safety really started going downhill at the facility. First, she tried to bring her concerns to supervisors and management, but found them to be dismissive, or they would completely ignore her.

Feeling frustrated, Power decided to get the union involved. She attended a Labour Management Meeting with NSGEU Employee Relations Officers in February 2018 and brought up the safety issues she and her co-workers had noted.

“That was the meeting that I decided to step up and take a lead role on the safety stuff,” she recalled.

Power began meeting with NSGEU’s OHS officer, Paul Cormier, to figure out next steps. Then, she began documenting her incidents and concerns, notifying management, and bringing the concerns to the OH&S Committee.

“It is a process. It doesn’t happen overnight,” Power noted.

In accordance with the Occupational Health & Safety Act, the union submitted a list of concerns to management in March 2018. Most of the concerns surrounded the Personal Security Alarms (PALs) which were held together by tape and not working properly; as concerns about the outdated video surveillance system, which had multiple blind spots; and inadequate staffing. At this time, the union requested the employer hire an independent third-party expert to conduct a safety assessment at the facility.

These concerns weren’t addressed to the satisfaction of the employees, so in late March, a report was submitted to the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee. In a follow-up meeting on April 16, 2018, the employees were told a violence in the workplace risk assessment would be “a waste of time.”

Meanwhile, also in March, another incident occurred with a client who set a fire. Then in April, a pregnant co-worker was attacked by a client.

Troubles were mounting, media attention forced the employer to respond, but they didn’t take any meaningful action, and they still refused to have a third-party assessment.

Ultimately, Power and Cormier decided to appeal to the Nova Scotia Labour Board to see if they would order the third-party independent safety assessment.

Finally, in mid-June 2019 – more than one year after Power and Cormier began pushing for change – the union finally received word that the Labour Board was ordering the Nova Scotia Health Authority to conduct a comprehensive violence in the workplace health and safety assessment of the ECFH.

In their order, the Labour Board concluded that this review – which must be conducted by an independent expert – was “urgently needed.”

“We are very pleased with the decision that has been ordered by the Labour Board,” President Jason

MacLean said in a statement. “It is unfortunate that the employer had to be ordered to do the right thing, and that they have dragged their feet on this process for such a long time. I am hopeful they will finally start placing a greater deal of importance on the safety of their frontline workers.”

The review process is supposed to start within 90 days of the order being issued, so we expect the review will begin this fall.

In the meantime, there have been some positive steps made in the right direction: the NSHA has finally brought in new camera systems and personal alarms. They’ve hired a lot of new staff, as well, but Power is concerned that many are inexperienced and don’t have the proper training to work in this environment.

She is hopeful, however, that the Labour Board’s order also puts other employers in Nova Scotia on notice: that they are responsible for protecting the health and safety of employees and other persons in the workplace.

“This is changing things on a national level,” Power said, “To hear that other unions across Canada are reaching out to the NSGEU ... it means a lot.”

But it was a hard-fought victory.

“There were a lot of days I wanted to give up, to be honest. But I wanted to see it through because first of all, (workplace safety) is something I wholeheartedly believe in,” Power said.

And after her pregnant co-worker was attacked, Power said she felt guilty, wondering if she had fought harder, perhaps she could have prevented the attack.

“I don’t want someone’s family to have go through that ever again,” she added.

Power is also hopeful that the assessment will improve the culture of safety in her workplace, and wants to encourage others to speak up if they have concerns: “I am a firm believer that if you’re not going to do the work to make the change, then don’t complain when change doesn’t happen.”

Upcoming Federal Election



The candidates: Andrew Scheer, Justin Trudeau, Jagmeet Singh, and Elizabeth May.

This fall Canadians will get the chance to vote in a federal election. There is a lot at stake for the future direction of the country and for working families. The four main party leaders, Andrew Scheer (CPC), Justin Trudeau (Liberal), Jagmeet Singh (NDP), and Elizabeth May (Green) will be crisscrossing the country talking to voters. It is important to listen closely to what party leaders and their local candidates say during the campaign and understand how their policies will affect working people.

Issues like universal pharmacare and childcare, health care and seniors care, pension protection, opportunities for young people, good jobs, affordability and the environment need to be priorities for the next federal government.

This election has the potential to be Canada's most negative one ever. The playbook of fear, used so effectively south of the border, has already found its way into Ontario and is already showing up in media across the county. It is important for all of us to stand up against hate at all times, but especially when its used as a political weapon. We all have to stand together and make it clear to all candidates that we have to make hate wrong again.

This federal election there are a number of former provincial MLAs seeking federal seats – you may know some of them or they may have represented you at Province House. These former MLAs are now part of a new political brand that is different from the one they represented as part of a provincial party.

While the NSGEU is non-partisan, working people need to have their say in this election. Hard working people make up a large percentage of voters and together we can have a federal government that reflects the values and priorities that matter to us.

During the upcoming campaign, the NSGEU will keep you informed of any proposed policies and programs that have dangerous consequences for working people. However, it is up to you to be informed and be part of the process. Vote on Election Day and make sure your voice is heard.

Local 78B - Stock Transportation

It's been a busy and trying summer for our members working at Stock Transportation. On June 6, 2019 our members were wrapping up their day getting "their kids" home safely when the news started to get out that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development had announced that after the 2019-2020 school year the province would break its contract with their employer and undertake a Request for Proposals process to seek operators for the 2020-2021 school year. This announcement blindsided everyone.

We were notified midmorning that Minister Churchill would make an announcement shortly after lunch. We attended the announcement where the Minister stated that the contract was being broken because Stock was not meeting the terms of the contract. However, he was unable to name concrete examples of how the contract was breached. He was followed by representatives from the Halifax Regional Centre for Education, who repeated the Minister's announcement and also didn't offer concrete examples.

Following the announcement, President MacLean spoke with media about the hard work our members have undertaken to bring their on-time standards up to almost 99%. This is an accomplishment we are all very proud of. President MacLean also spoke of the turmoil this was creating for our members, not knowing who their employer might be in September 2020, whether their collective agreement would be protected or whether they would even have a job?

In the days and weeks following the announcement our number one concern was ensuring that Local 78B's collective agreement would remain in place regardless of which bidder would be selected. We had numerous conversations with the Minister of Labour Relations, Mark Furey, we wrote the Minister of Education, met with Stock's Atlantic Canada Director, Patrick Meagher, and Stock's Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Mark Hannah and on June 26, we met with Elwin LeRoux, the Regional Executive Director of Education for the HRCE and Jacob Ritchie, the Director of Operations Services. We raised our concerns with them and received news that left us with some hope.

The HRCE explained to us that it was their intent to have the NSGEU Collective Agreement in their RFP when it would be issued in July. The RFP was issued on July 26 and it acknowledged that the services are currently being provided within a unionized environment and the HRCE required interested proponents to become familiar with the Local 78 B collective agreement and to prepare their cost structures based upon labour costs that reflect all aspects of the Local 78B collective agreement. As well, proponents were reminded that they needed to consider costs in expectation of future collective agreements.

The message we received in our meetings with HRCE and then again in RFP itself is that they had no interest in providing bussing services outside of a union environment. It seems they wanted labour and workforce stability. This reassurance was followed up by the Bidders' Meeting in late August where the HRCE requested representation from the NSGEU to answer any potential questions from bidders. John Cook ERO and David MacKenzie, Communications Coordinator, attended the meeting.

During the meeting one of the interested parties asked the HRCE:

"Is HRCE mandating that the proponents voluntarily assume the existing NSGEU collective agreement with Stock Transportation or, alternatively, are the proponents' free to make their own arrangements for the provision of labour whether or not it is under a collective agreement?"

The HRCE's answer was encouraging:

It is expected that proponents/vendors to provide service with unionized bus drivers as that been the common practice here in Halifax and the HRCE is not looking to change that through this RFP.

The RFP process closes on September 27th and we will continue our lobbying efforts to ensure our members' jobs are protected and that the rights that have been long fought for remain in their collective agreement.

LPN Reclassification Ruling Clears Important Hurdle

We've been hearing a lot about the workload issues facing our nurses recently (and rightfully so). But there's been another battle brewing under the surface for years: our Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) have been fighting for a Reclassification Review

LPNs weren't utilized to their full scope of practice until a few years ago (scope of practice and scope of employment are two different things). When the employer – at the time, the Capital District Health Authority – changed the LPNs scope of employment to match their scope of practice, there was no corresponding increase in compensation. As a result, the LPNs with the support of the union initiated the reclassification review process.

We are very pleased to report that on Monday, September 23rd, the NSGEU received an important decision from Arbitrator Bruce Outhouse on this long-standing LPN reclassification appeal.

Mr. Outhouse found in favour of the NSGEU, and determined that the role of the LPN has been substantially altered since 2011. This is a significant ruling and clears an important hurdle in the NSGEU's fight to have LPNs properly compensated for the work they do.

This ruling is a victory for all the nurses who have been fighting long and hard for this reclassification. It is a result of the tireless work of the LPN reclassification committee and all the LPNs who acted as witnesses during the hearing.

But our fight isn't over, yet. The issues of appropriate pay and retroactivity must now be decided.

Now that it has been determined their jobs have been substantially altered, the union and the NSHA will now attempt to determine a salary commensurate with the substantial alteration. The union has been with the LPNs every step of the way, fighting for wages that properly reflect their new duties. We will see this through to the end by advocating for a fair rate of pay.

If the NSGEU and the NSHA cannot come to an agreement on a fair rate of pay, the issue will need to go back to an independent arbitrator to make a final decision. This will take time, however, the NSGEU has written to NSHA legal counsel to attempt to expedite this process. We will keep the affected members up-to-date on any developments.

It is important to note that this decision was based on a grievance that applies to LPNs employed by the former Capital District Health Authority. That is because the NSGEU filed the grievance several years ago under the old Local 42 Health Care collective agreement in place at the CDHA. However, it will be the position by all unions representing LPNs that any changes to the rate of pay must be applied to all LPNs in the province.

We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this process for their ongoing support and patience. This has been a long, difficult road, but we're walking it together!



Supporting Women in Trades Conference 2019 Vancouver, BC - June 2019

Though being a female in a predominately male workplace has its challenges, I definitely didn't feel alone at the SWiT 2019 conference in Vancouver this past June. I took the earliest flight I could (there appeared not to be ANY free snacks on these flights – not even peanuts!) in order to see some of Vancouver while I was there and it did not disappoint! What a beautiful city it is. I was lucky enough to take a helicopter ride and saw so many beautiful areas.

The conference was held at the Westin Bayshore Hotel right in downtown Vancouver. A lovely location for the event. The vendor area where you walked to the main hall was brightly lit by the sun the entire duration of the event – it was a larger area made up of many windows letting the light in (and the heat). There were employer vendors showing their support for and recruitment of women in the trades. There were educational institutions with amazing programs available for women to explore the trades and to continue to build a life in the field. There were also many organizations showing their support and providing information to participants as well; networking and finding allies & resources were the focus of the foyer.

The conference itself was basically divided into main sessions that included everyone and breakout sessions which you could choose based on your particular interests, which of course were smaller groups. The big group stuff was good for the most part – heavily geared to the west coast and its employers and services available there. The breakout sessions – though I found them very short – were excellent. This was the time you really got to meet others, talk, share and brainstorm about what the realities are of females working in the trades still, even after so many years. The promotion and recruitment of women in trades is nothing new, in fact, it's been researched and had action plans in place for over 40 years; but to no real breakthrough or successes. The percentage of women in trades is no better now than then, maybe even slightly lower – a whopping 3 to 4 per cent across the country.

So, what is being done?

After deciding that the talking is done (SWiT 2018) and that actions need to be taken, some things have been put in place; many provinces are supporting independent programs to support women wanting to explore the trades (try before you buy, so to speak). Programs similar to Women Unlimited here in Nova Scotia. Networks are being created to help the apprentices to have all their information in one place – hours, employers, jobs etc. The hope is that someday the databases may be merged and become a national program to help all apprentices to be successful. A support program that has been extremely successful in Newfoundland over the past ten years is currently being rolled out in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and our very own Nova Scotia. In Newfoundland they have seen an increase from 4 per cent to 13 per cent women working in the trades over the ten years and have sustained it. There are very high hopes for this program which is supported by all levels of government and affiliated with The Office to Advance Women Apprentices. I'm looking forward to seeing this program take shape.

After all the sessions and networking events were complete, it was time to return home to Halifax; but not before visiting the otters at the Vancouver Aquarium! I met a fellow otter enthusiast while watching feeding time. Ok, then it was time to hop the sky train to the airport and head for home on the red eye. Thank you so much to the NSGEU for your support with this event. It was an incredible and invigorating experience.

submitted by Danielle Hansen, Local 119



NUPGE Convention 2019



Local 83 member Tracy Groves speaks to the delegates at the 2019 NUPGE Convention.

If you're reading this, chances are, you're a member of the NSGEU. But did you know that, as a member of the NSGEU, you're also a member of a national union, which represents public sector workers throughout the country?

Yep, that's right. The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is based out of Ottawa, and is made up for 11 component and three affiliate unions, making it one of the largest unions in Canada. The majority of their 390,000 members deliver public services of every kind to the citizens of their home provinces. The NSGEU pays a fee to be a part of this national union, so we can benefit from their research and analysis on a variety of topics, including federal-provincial transfer payments; national standards for health and social programs; federal-provincial jurisdictional changes and employee transfers; tax policies; Canada Pension Plan; changes to (Un)Employment Insurance; legislation respecting the workplace; and many other issues that are relevant to our members.

Like the NSGEU, NUPGE holds a Convention every three years, where their leadership for the next term is elected, and delegates vote on what the union's priorities will be for the next three years.

This summer, NSGEU's Board of Directors travelled to Winnipeg to participate in NUPGE's Triennial Convention, which took place from June 21st to 23rd.

One of the reasons it was so important that our Board members participated in Convention was to ensure our own members learn more about NUPGE's campaigns, and understand that we have a national union that is fighting on behalf of our members at the national and international level.

"They're actually part of this! Part of their dues actually go towards all these campaigns," explained Laura MacMillan, who is a first-time NSGEU Board member, and President of Local 100.

"People want to see what they're part of, they want to experience what they're part of, and if they can, they want to be involved."

NSGEU Board members also had an opportunity to share some of the experiences our union has had in Nova Scotia with delegates from across the country. Since NUPGE only represents public sector unions, like the NSGEU, across the country, there is tremendous value in sharing our collective experiences, and talking about issues and campaigns that may be relevant for our members.

"I was looking forward to meeting all of the other sectors across Canada and listening to their thoughts and what their situations are, and comparing ours to theirs," Hagen said.

"There's lots of similarities as far as how they handle the ultra-Conservative wave of governments across Canada."

Paul Hagen, Secretary Treasurer for Local 8, is Chair of the Civil Service PR Occupational Council and sits on NSGEU's Board of Directors. This was the first time Hagen or MacMillan had attended NUPGE's Convention.

It seems like many Liberal and Conservative provincial governments are operating from the same playbook: trying to legislate away workers' rights, and litigate later. And those fights are far from over.

"We're just going to have more battles. If the Conservatives win the Federal election, there are just going to be more battles across the country," MacMillan said.



Delegates toured the Canadian Human Rights Museum.

At NUPGE's Convention, our representatives had an opportunity to speak on a wide variety of resolutions, as well.

"It was important for even bonding with the Board to be able to go as a team and put the values of Nova Scotia and our members' forward and make sure we had a voice, and that voice was heard," said MacMillan.

Hagen was nominated and elected to the Resolutions

Committee, and chaired the NSGEU's Resolutions Committee at our own Triennial Convention in May.

"It was a good experience. I got to meet first-hand representatives from across the country and talk about their issues," he said.

Convention featured a variety of speakers. Hagen said one of the more interesting presentations they saw was on promoting youth involvement in the union movement in Ontario.

"It was eye-opening, in terms of how far they'd gone in their movement, and we're having the same struggle with the board the last term, as far as how do we get the under 35 worker involved in the union more, and their voice heard at the Board level," Hagen explained.

"We've started with the family barbecues and the picnics, and that seems to get them out that way, but both parents are working now – that's the standard – and it's hard to get to a local meeting and other events and to be active ... They just don't have the time, with trying to raise a young family."

A resolution was passed that NUPGE would do more to recognize young workers and accommodate their needs.

MacMillan said other topics, like precarious work and the need for a national universal Pharmacare program, were key issues that emerged at NUPGE's Convention. But a guest speaker who came to speak to delegates about the sexual violence against women in Rohingya really hit home for MacMillan: "I don't think there was a dry eye left in the building when she was talking about some of the things these women have been experiencing over there."

Overall, the NUPGE Convention was a great opportunity for NSGEU Board members to find out more about what's affecting public sector workers across Canada, to share what our own members are experiencing here in Nova Scotia, and to develop a plan for action over the next three years.

"Everybody there had the same value system, and common goals for the common good. They were looking at the whole picture: they weren't looking at just them or just their union," MacMillan said.

Apply Now! NSGEU Scholarships & Bursaries

The Education Committee would like to advise that they are now accepting applications for the NSGEU Member Bursaries, NSGEU Member's Dependent Bursaries, and NSGEU Member's Dependent Scholarships for the Fall (deadline is October 15th).

The NSGEU believes in supporting members and their dependents who are continuing their education. Every year NSGEU offers 29 Member Bursaries (14 with a March 15th deadline and 15 with an October 15th deadline). NSGEU also offers 10 Member's Dependent Bursaries and 15 Member's Dependent Scholarships, both with an October 15th deadline.

Bursaries are awarded based on financial need and scholarships are awarded based on scholastic achievement, at the discretion of the NSGEU Education Committee.

Please find our Applications and Application Guidelines at: <http://nsgeu.ca/education/scholarships-bursaries-awards/>

We look forward to receiving your application.

Application Deadline: October 15th, 2019.

Applications received after this date will not be included in the selection process.



NSGEU Bursary award recipient

Congratulations to Nicole LaPierre, member of Local 100, who recently received one of the \$1,000 NSGEU Member Bursaries.

For information about our program visit: <http://nsgeu.ca/education/scholarships-bursaries-awards/>



Services are available to all our members of the Civil Service as well as members working for Nova Scotia Pension Services Corporation and Tourism Nova Scotia.

Office of Workplace Mental Health

A safe and confidential place where managers and employees can access the mental health and wellness supports they need.

We will help create a positive culture of mental health and wellness, help employees access the supports they need, and help leaders and managers create supportive workplaces.

Contact Us

Local: 902-424-CARE (2273)

Toll Free: 1-833-389-CARE (2273)

Email: OWMH@novascotia.ca

All calls and emails are confidential.



Child Welfare Social Workers Achieve a Memorandum of Agreement



#CHILDWELFAREONTHEBRINK

Did you know that Nova Scotia's child welfare system is on the brink?

WE NEED TO SPEAK OUT.

NSGEU members who are social workers in Child Welfare have been advocating for improvements to their working conditions and improvements to our provincial social system for years. You might have seen our campaign that began in early 2019, in advance of the Spring provincial budget, where we joined with the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers to develop a joint website called "Child Welfare on the Brink" <https://childwelfareonthebrink.org/>. The website describes the challenges for our child welfare social workers as they struggle to do their work properly under very difficult circumstances. It also urges people to write the Premier and call for more support for low income children, youth, families, and the services they require.

A classification grievance was filed on behalf of social workers in a large part due to increased responsibilities as a result of changes to the Children and Family Services Act. There were over 80 amendments made to the Act including an expanded definition of a child in need of protective services, including youth 16-19 years of age and tightened court timelines. Many of our members report that they are stressed and overwhelmed in an organization that is in constant change.

In April of this year, we reached a settlement –

a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) - to the classification grievance and a group grievance that was filed about working conditions at a specific office. You can see the MOA here: <http://nsg.eu.ca/agreement-reached-for-child-welfare-social-workers/>. As part of this settlement, the government agreed to create four regional Labour/ Management Committees. These Committees will be where our union representatives and management representatives will be raising important workplace issues, such as staffing and caseload reviews as well as enhanced OH&S training, and Violence in the Workplace Assessments. We are cautiously optimistic that these Committees will result in a list of actions that should be taken to improve working conditions for Child Welfare Social Workers and consequently the services they provide.

In the meantime we continue to work with the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers to support a call for more investment in child welfare. Here is a recently written opinion editorial written by Lynn Brogan, the Acting Executive Director of the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers. It does a good job of capturing the frustrations of our members and her members at this time. <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2019/09/11/nova-scotias-child-welfare-services-are-in-urgent-need-of-more-funding.html>.

A New Online Home for the NSGEU



If you've visited our website recently (www.nsgeu.ca) you may have noticed some big changes. We received a lot of feedback from members via our communications survey that it was a bit difficult to find information on our website, especially from a mobile device).

So, we've redesigned and relaunched our online home. On our public website, you can find information about the union's history, structure, upcoming events, bargaining, ongoing campaigns, and much more.

In the weeks to come, we also plan to roll out a members-only area. Members will be able to log in to find information that is specific to their local: their contract, executive team, upcoming meetings, and more. Finally, an app for Android and Apple users is on the way, as well.

We want NSGEU members to be able to easily find information about their union, and believe that these technological changes should help you stay in touch with what's going on with our organization.

Unions make a difference in our lives.

Unions fought for many of the benefits workers enjoy today: Sick leave, maternity & paternity leave, vacation, minimum wage, paid breaks, overtime, workplace safety standards and regulations, collective bargaining rights, and much, much more.

Do you know of a group of non-unionized workers who might be interested in joining the NSGEU? Please contact:

Lori Smith, Education & Organizing Officer
902-456-6531 or 1-877-556-7438 or lsmith@nsgeu.ca



An Award in Honour of the “Unstoppable” Michelle Mahoney



Dal Health staff member Michelle Mahoney. (Danny Abriel photo).

Overwhelmed,” is how Michelle Mahoney describes her reaction when she heard that the Occupational Therapy’s (OT) Class of 2019 had created a student award acknowledging her contributions to the School and the profession of OT as a whole.

“I’m so honoured,” she says. “I can’t tell you how much this award means to me.”

The class wanted to acknowledge Michelle and the impact she made during her time as the receptionist and website manager in OT, where she formed close bonds with the students. The class raised nearly \$700 as a start, and have since opened the fund up to accept donations from the public. Beginning this fall, the \$500 Class of 2019 Michelle Mahoney Prize will be awarded to a second year OT student.

“Michelle had a lasting impact on our class,” said graduating OT student Laura Power in an address to her classmates. “We wanted to recognize her enthusiastic, positive spirit, all while providing students with encouragement and support

throughout their journey here at Dalhousie.”

“She embodies all of the characteristics that we strive to attain as occupational therapists, and encourages everyone to be the best version of themselves,” said fellow student Cynthia Osborne. “Her life motto is ‘I can do anything, it just might take me a little longer. I am unstoppable.’”

Originally from Springhill, NS, Michelle is the youngest of five children. She graduated from St. FX in 1995 with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, and has worked at Dalhousie in various roles for over 20 years, including 10 spent in the School of OT. She sits on the Board of Directors for Easter Seals Nova Scotia and has been recently been appointed to the national board.

Michelle was born with Arthrogryposis, a rare physical condition — she was only the third known case in Nova Scotia. She has limited mobility in her arms, hands and knees, and doctors told her parents she would probably never walk, feed or dress herself.

Today, Michelle is an avid surfer and skier, and takes

part in the Drop Zone fundraiser for Easter Seals where she rappels down the tallest buildings in Halifax. She says with the help of occupational therapists throughout her life, she's able to learn to swim, ride a horse, drive a car and more.

"Occupational therapists have helped me with everything from putting on my own socks, to attending university."

Michelle rappels down some of the highest buildings in Halifax to raise money.

She is also a strong self-advocate with a determination to succeed. "I learned from a young age to advocate for myself, and I never back down from a challenge. In fact, I love an obstacle. Just tell me I can't do something, and watch me do it."

It's this spirit of determination, advocacy and positivity that the students wanted to recognize with the award in her honour.

"We thought it would be a great way to recognize Michelle's contribution to the school of OT and our profession as a whole. It's not just one person she has influenced during her time here but countless

students, faculty and staff," said Laura.

"She has also given us the insight and wisdom to make us the best therapists possible," added Cynthia. "When we took the idea to our class, we had a lot of interest. Director Lynn Shaw was also instrumental in the speedy development of this prize, providing a lot of support to us in making it happen over a very short timeframe."

Although she is starting a new chapter within the Faculty of Law, Michelle has made an indelible impact on the School of Occupational Therapy, and will for years to come.

"I'm thrilled and very humbled by this award. It makes me feel pretty successful, because of the impact I've made on student lives," she says, adding with a smile. "They'll always remember me."

Michelle is a member of NSGEU Local 77 - Dalhousie University. This article was submitted by Dawn Morrison, Michelle's co-worker. Reprinted with permission.



WELCOME TO THE NSGEU!

We are pleased to announce that a new group of workers has joined the union!

In August, approximately 65 home care workers employed at the Canadian Red Cross voted overwhelmingly in favour of joining the NSGEU. They deliver services throughout the Halifax Regional Municipality, with their head office based out of Dartmouth.

More information can be found here - <https://www.redcross.ca/in-your-community/nova-scotia>.

They are now known as Local 106, and held their first local meeting at the NSGEU office on September 5th.

Welcome, Sisters & Brothers!



**Canadian
Red Cross**



Post-Convention Training

Several sessions of post-Convention training took place around the province this September. Local Officer Training will take place in October.

If you were elected into an Executive Committee position you should set these dates aside and attend!

Whether you are new to union leadership, or returning, your next step is to attend the appropriate workshop. Here, you will find the support you need to fulfill your role within the NSGEU.

Local Officer Training:

October 16 - All Local Officers in Metro A B C Regions

October 17 - All Local Officers in Valley & South Shore Regions

October 18 - All Local Officers in Cape Breton, Cumberland / Colchester, & Pictou / Antigonish / Guysborough Regions

If you have any questions about the upcoming training, please contact the NSGEU Education Department at 902-424-4063 or call toll free 1-877-556-7438. You can also email NSGEUeducation@nsg.eu.ca.



President Jason MacLean address participants at a session of post-convention training.

Union Threads

There's a whole range of colourful NSGEU clothing available at the union office at 255 John Savage Avenue. For more info, call the NSGEU at 424-4063 (toll free at 1-877-556-7438) or email inquiry@nsgeu.ca.



NSGEU unisex golf shirt \$15.00 (xs-2xl)



Unisex zip up jackets \$30.00 (s-3xl)



NSGEU sweatshirt \$30.00 (xs-2xl)



Unisex zip up jackets \$30.00 (s-3xl)



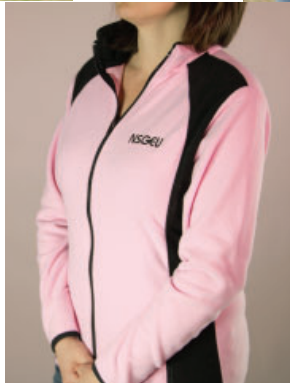
NSGEU 1/4 zip Pullover \$20.00 (xs-4xl)



Ladies Vest with Hood \$45.00 (xs-2xl)



Vest - Unisex-no hood \$45.00 (s-v4xl)



Micro-fleece jacket \$15.00 (xs-2xl)



Unisex long sleeve t-shirts grey, navy, black, \$15 s-l



NSGEU members participated in the Halifax Pride Parade on July 20th.





9th Annual Family Picnic

NSGEU families had a ball at the annual NSGEU Family Picnic on July 13th at Oakfield Provincial Park.



Labour Day
September 2nd



NSGEU proudly took part in the Labour Day Parade, Halifax.





NSGEU President Jason MacLean and 1st Vice President Sandra Mullen were proud to present The Lodge That Gives with a \$7,500 donation from the NSGEU for the One Night Stand Against Cancer Campaign.

A Fair Canada for Everyone

Let's elect a government that will invest in people and build a better Canada that we want and deserve.

[Sign Petition >](#)

CLIMATE ACTION

Climate Action

Canada must do its part by investing in green manufacturing and infrastructure, better transit, and green home and building retrofits.

[Read more >](#)

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Inclusive Canada

Canada needs a government committed to challenging hate and intolerance in all its forms.

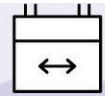
[Read more >](#)

PHARMACARE

Pharmacare for everyone

Canada's unions are working to win a universal prescription drug plan that covers everyone in Canada, regardless of their income, age or where they work or live.

[Read more >](#)



Events

Get involved and attend one of our events. Check out what's happening in your community.

[See Events >](#)

RETIREMENT SECURITY

Retirement Security

Canada's unions are pushing the government to take action to protect workplace pension plans.

GOOD JOBS

Good Jobs

Canada's unions are working to create good jobs for everyone.

Learn more by visiting the CLC web site at <https://canadianlabour.ca/>