

# **UNITED STEELWORKERS**



**UNITY AND STRENGTH FOR WORKERS**

**STRONG, PROUD AND DIVERSE**

The United Steelworkers is Canada's most diverse union, representing men and women working in every sector of the economy. We are the largest private sector union in both Canada and North America with more than 225,000 members in Canada and more than 800,000 members continent-wide.

This is our day to celebrate the struggles and accomplishments of all Canadian workers.

On behalf of the United Steelworkers and Local 7916 we want to take this time to wish all working people in all sectors of the Canadian workforce a safe and happy labor day.

**USW Local 7916**



# SUN—benefiting members and patients

TRACY ZAMBORY, RN  
AND PRESIDENT,

SASKATCHEWAN UNION OF NURSES  
For Saskatchewan's more than 10,000 Registered Nurses (RN), Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPN) and Registered Nurse (Nurse Practitioner)s (RN(NP), Labour Day is an annual reminder of the important role their union plays in advancing health care, protecting patients, and fostering strong, healthy communities.

As the single largest group of direct health care providers in the system, registered nurses have always been perfectly positioned to lead change. It's their union's support, however, that has empowered them to turn their ideas into action.

Safe staffing is one of the most important, and often overlooked, examples of where nursing unions play a leading advocacy role to the benefit of not only their members, but the entire health care team, and most importantly, patients.

With enough frontline staff working on a unit, patient outcomes improve. When the whole team has enough time to dedicate to the medical, physical and emotional needs of their patients, everyone feels supported. Team morale goes up and stress levels, burnout and staff turnover go down. This promotes improved



performance, fewer occupational injuries and better, safer patient care. The end result is a stronger health system that works for everyone.

Nursing unions also give their members a voice, so they feel sup-

ported when advocating for their patients.

Registered nurses always look at a problem from a patient perspective, but speaking up or speaking out when something isn't working is never easy when doing it alone.

When the quality of care begins to slip, it's registered nurses who know about it first, and it's registered nurses who patients rely on to sound the alarm.

Better care happens when direct care providers report potential or

actual safety issues and work with management to resolve problems. Nursing unions provide their members with the necessary support to ensure this critical reporting occurs. Open communication and joint problem-solving are the hallmarks of a high-functioning health system, and nursing unions play a central role in facilitating this process.

Nursing unions also make a difference beyond the health system by actively addressing community health holistically—an approach at the core of nursing practice.

Whether it's working with stakeholders across Canada to advocate for a national pharmacare plan that will guarantee access to affordable prescription drugs for everyone, or supporting provincial community organizations in tackling the social determinants of health such as food, housing and income security, nursing unions strive to build stronger healthier and more prosperous communities everywhere.

This Labour Day, take a moment to consider the broader role nursing unions play in supporting patients and promoting the overall health and wellbeing of society. They are not just a voice for nurses, they are a voice for patients—a voice for everyone. Happy Labour Day, Saskatchewan.

## Registered nurses On the Frontlines of

### HEALTH CARE

SUN promotes safe patient care by ensuring its members are always supported in their workplaces, so they can be **a voice for their patients** when they cannot speak for themselves.

WATCH:

**MAKING THE DIFFERENCE**.CA/ADDICTIONS





## Labor Day has a long history in Canada

In a time when workers' rights are taken for granted and workers' benefits have come to be expected, it's no wonder that the origins of Labour Day are confined to the history books.

Canada was changing rapidly during the second half of the 19th century. Immigration was increasing, cities were getting crowded, and industrialization was drastically altering the country's economy and workforce.

As machines began to replace or automate many work processes, employees found they no longer had special skills to offer employers.

This is the context and setting for what is generally considered Canada's first Labour Day event in 1872. At the time, unions were illegal in Canada, which was still operating under an archaic British law already abolished in England.

For over three years the Toronto Printers Union had been lobbying its employers for a shorter work week. Inspired by workers in Hamilton who had begun the movement for a nine-hour work day, the Toronto printers threatened to strike if their demands weren't met. After repeatedly being ignored by their employers, the workers took bold action and on March 25, 1872, they went on strike.

Toronto's publishing industry was paralyzed and the printers soon had the support of other workers. On April 14, a group of 2,000 workers marched through the streets in a show of solidarity. They picked up even more supporters along the way and by the time they reached their destination of Queen's Park, their parade had 10,000 participants—one tenth of the city's population.

The employers were forced to take notice. Led by George Brown, founder of the Toronto Globe and notable Liberal, the publishers retaliated. Brown brought in workers from nearby towns to replace the printers. He even took legal action to quell the strike and had the strike leaders charged and arrested for criminal conspiracy.

Conservative Prime Minister John A. Macdonald was watching the events unfold and quickly saw the political benefit of siding with the workers. Macdonald spoke out against Brown's actions at a public demonstration at City Hall, gaining the support of the workers and embarrassing his Liberal rival. Macdonald passed the Trade Union Act, which repealed the outdated British law and decriminalized unions. The strike leaders were released from jail.

The workers still did not obtain their immediate goals of a shorter work week. In fact, many still lost their job. They did, however, discover how to regain the power they lost in the industrialized economy. Their strike proved that workers could gain the attention of their employers, the public, and most importantly, their political leaders if they worked



People walk down Queen St. W. during the Labour Day Parade in 1905 in Toronto.

together. The "Nine-Hour Movement," as it became known, spread to other Canadian cities and a shorter work week became the primary demand of union workers in the years following the Toronto strike.

The parade that was held in support of the strikers carried over into an annual celebration of worker's rights and was adopted in cities throughout Canada. The parades demonstrated solidarity, with different unions identified by the colorful banners they carried. In 1894, under mounting pressure from the working class, Prime Minister Sir John Thompson declared Labour Day a national holiday.

Over time, Labour Day strayed from its origins and evolved into a popular celebration enjoyed by the masses. It became viewed as the last celebration of summer, a time for picnics, barbecues and shopping.

No matter where you find yourself this Labour Day, take a minute to think about Canada's labour pioneers. Their actions laid the foundations for future labour movements and helped workers secure the rights and benefits enjoyed today.

**Labour Day 2019**

*On this Labour Day we salute all those hard working Saskatchewanians and Canadians for their contributions*

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*This Labour Day I would like to salute the working men and women of Saskatchewan and thank them for the huge contribution they make to our province's economy.*





## Paint your future in the trades

Choosing a career? Oh yes, a blank canvas and a palette of colours, awaiting your first strokes. While it isn't easy at any age, for younger adults with limited experiences, a career choice, whether it's picking a trade or a university major, can be downright intimidating.

For some people, it comes easy.

A lover of animals, my little sister had veterinary medicine on her radar from my earliest memories. A perfectly executed career plan – Grade 12, undergrad, veterinary school – and 20 years later, Lynlee has been a very happy and successful vet in Houston! The right choice made early, all so seamlessly.

In contrast, a childhood friend abandoned his ophthalmology practice (and the six figures that went to attain it, to say nothing of the potential MD income) to become a Catholic priest. But Fr. Martin seems happier in his higher calling, and we're proud of him.

And while that might be an exceptional vocational pivot, the simple fact is that young adults in North America are being systemically coaxed into committing early and investing heavily in formal academic (university) training down career paths that potentially may not be for them, at least not in the long haul.

It's difficult to comprehend at 20, but what suits your fancy now, may not at 40 or 50. Whether it is changing interests associated with age, economic motives, evolving demands of life, etc., people are remaking themselves constantly.

Given that, before you commit to spend (or more likely borrow!) \$75,000 to attend, for example, the University of Saskatchewan for an art history degree, I would encourage you to at least give some consideration to the unionized, skilled trades.

Yes, the trades are more "vocational" than "academic" paths, bucking the mantra that everyone should go to university right out of Grade 12. But Western Canada is still developing, and there are real opportunities for good Canadian tradesmen. If you are willing to work hard and (perhaps) travel, not only can you make real money by your 22nd birthday, but you could also be a formal, registered Apprentice in a certified Red Seal Trade, well on your way as a fully ticketed Journeyman (like a Painter).

And here's the joyful part: all that tradesmen training is on another's dime. That's right. No student loans. No mountain of student debt to climb out of. In the unionized skilled trades, training is already budgeted for by others (unions, affiliated employers, governments, etc.). And the work is diverse and interesting.

Consider the Canadian painting markets, which range from marine to industrial to architectural areas. From ships, hydroelectric dams and floodways, to pipelines, tanks and bridges, to high-rise buildings, malls and sporting arenas, in this Painters Union you could have access to any or all of these markets.

And it's a real accomplishment of modern organic chemistry that today's paints, coatings and linings are much more sophisticated while simultaneously environmentally friendly. Consequently, they require real skill and, in many cases, thorough surface preparation and very



Technology has transformed the potential of painting application. Shown above are workers on Winnipeg's Redwood Bridge applying a "zinc thermal spray" - a process known as metallizing. In this metallizing process, zinc wire is melted via an electric arc and sprayed onto the steel bridge truss structure to provide corrosion protection.



The Union of Painters has been responsible for the look of many of our public venues, like Polo Park (left) and MTS Centre (right).

expensive equipment to properly apply. So, while painting your bedroom may pique your interest in our trade, that doesn't make you a painter any more than unclogging your sink makes you a plumber – these are sophisticated products with highly trained and skilled tradesmen applying them.

Indeed, it is an exciting time in the painting industry! And here's another golden nugget for your right-out-of-high school, university-bound friends, who may have never given the trades much thought: good tradespeople (including painters) make as much or more money than many university-educated people, in the short and long run.

Don't get me wrong – I'm all for a university education. In my youth, I earned a bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University (LSU).

I love my alma mater, I bled purple and gold – and as long as LSU beats Alabama on the second Saturday of November, I'm good!

But to the point: my university experience didn't necessarily need to occur between the ages of 18 to 23 as it was culturally prescribed. In fact, in many ways, it could have been more appropriate (at least for me) five or ten years later: older, more mature, and with a trade in my back pocket.

Think about it: what a confidence booster. At 25, you could be a fully certified, Red Seal Painter! Managed smartly, you could have real cash stashed away for your university venture, if that is what you so choose – not so dependent on Pops, or more likely in this day and age, student loans.

And, want to earn real money during summer break? Hey, no problem. Call this union hall. You're a certified Red Seal Painter! Placing you for summer work is gravy.

It's all about maximizing your options. And, only a unionized trade (like being a Painter) is going to ensure your formal enrollment in Apprenticeship Programs

to get this process started.

I see it every day. Young people – from high school dropouts to the university graduates – come into my office here at the Painters Union, looking for a better job (with a living wage, actual benefits and a pension) than the one they currently have which almost always is working as a nonunion contractor. But they have never been enrolled in Apprenticeship, and despite that time in trade, they are still very unskilled, as they weren't mentored during that run. It's very unfortunate.

That won't happen in our pipeline! So, whether you are a tradesperson to the core, or just a young adult considering your career options, looking for real-world experience before possibly going back to school one day, I would encourage you to give the building trades serious consideration. And in particular, try us, the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, District Council 17.

# International Union of Painters & Allied Trades



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