

Human Rights/Equity Committee Chair and Female Seat Chair Reports

To the committee members and Delegates of the Human Rights/Equity/FAIR conference assembled in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on September 13-14, 2018.

Greetings to you all at the 2018 conference. For the first time delegates, we hope you will learn about these two committees and the work the committees do first for the members and the advocacy work the committees do.

The Human Rights/Equity committee continues to work on its mandates and functions and liaise with other organizations in the community at large to work on human rights issues both at home and at a national level.

This report covers the mandates, functions and advocacy work from February 2017 to June 2018. On May of 2017, the committee sponsored a member to an educational training in Toronto to take the Human Rights Theory and Practice training. This comprehensive program was designed to give the participants the knowledge and practical skills to competently and confidently handle day-to-day challenges, as well as more complex human rights issues. The other member was sponsored to attend the Canadian Labour Congress Rise Up! Conference in Toronto. This conference brought together indigenous workers, workers of color, workers with disabilities, LGBT workers, women and youth workers from across the country to share and organize strategies that build and grow an inclusive movement.

In October, I attended the Sisters in Spirit gathering and feast event in honour of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls on behalf of the committee. The event was held at the First Nations University of Canada at the Veteran's Tipi.

In November of 2017, the whole committee members were sponsored to take the two days Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan (PATHS) training on the intimate partner violence and the

workplace. This training gave members the tools and resources to enable them to recognize and respond to domestic violence in the workplace.

The committee is in partnership with the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan in sponsoring the youth leadership award. This award is given to a youth annually in Saskatchewan who has contributed in promoting multiculturalism in the province. The youth on the committee usually attends the award presentation and gives out the award which is normally held during Saskatchewan Multicultural week.

On February 2018, the committee sponsored four members to attend the Regina and District and Labour Council Equity Conference which was held in Regina.

On March 8, International Women's Day, I attended an event (An Evening with Angela Davis) at the University of Regina which was organized by the Women's Action group of the University of Regina and sponsored by many unions in the province.

The youth member on the committee was sponsored by the Provincial Council to attend the YWCA Think Big Lead Now! Young Women's National Leadership program which was held in Muskota, Ontario. Many thanks to the Provincial Council members who supported this educational and inspirational event for the youth member.

The committee has a new logo which was launched at the SGEU convention. The committee worked on numbers of the 94 Calls to Action identified by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

The committee normally gives out scholarships to members or their dependents worth \$500. The scholarship application is on the SGEU web site. The 2017 recipient was Sophia Thomas.

Visibility in the Community

The youth on the committee continues to attend the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour Youth Committee on February of 2018. I attended the Workers of Color Joint Committee meeting with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour Aboriginal Committee. The next Joint Committee meeting is on September 7, 2018 in Regina.

On June 21 (National Indigenous People's Day), I prepared two big pots of soup and served over three hundred people with soup and bannock at the Justice Camp for Our Stolen Children at the Legislative Building grounds in Regina. I want to thank President Bob Bymoer for attending the event.

Donations

The committee made the following donations to various organizations in the community:

\$2,000 donation to the Sisters in Spirit Organization towards food and beverages for their annual gathering and feast event in honour of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

\$500 donation to the Diverse Saskatchewan Foundation Inc. in Saskatoon.

\$500 donation towards the purchase of groceries to prepare and host a feast for the Justice Camp for Our Stolen Children in Regina in the spirit of reconciliation.

\$200 donation to Amnesty International Regina Branch towards refreshment in observant of International Human Rights Day on December 10th.

One big contribution and achievement that I have made on this committee that I am proud of is to work in creating a partnership with the University of Regina Immigration Group in bringing to light the plight of the two Nigerian students from the University of Regina who were facing deportation for

working at Walmart for two weeks while on International Student visas. I brought the issue on behalf of the committee to President Bob Bymoer who in turn wrote letters of support and encouragement and asked the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, Canadian Labour Congress and the National Union of Public and General Employees to get involved with the case in stopping the deportation of the students and to give them the opportunity to stay in Canada and complete their studies. I worked tirelessly with all the unions and Bob Bymoer to make the two girl's dreams come true. Through our hard work and never giving up, the girls stayed and completed their studies. President Bob Bymoer, Roseann Strelezki and myself attended their graduation exercises. The national work and gain this committee made under my leadership is not only to stop the deportation of the two Nigerian students, the laws for International student's visa was changed. International Students on visa now has the ability to work while in school. Many thanks to President Bob Bymoer and Roseann Strelezki for all the help and support they gave to the committee and the girls.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the delegates of 2016 for giving me their support to occupy the female seat on the Human Rights/Equity Committee. My sincere thanks and gratitude goes to the committee members for electing me as chair for this. I am very honoured and grateful. I hope you will have a great time at the conference and please find the time to network; create friendship and get involved with the work the union is doing to make a difference not only in yourself, but in your family, at your workplaces, community and the nation.

In Solidarity We Stand Together.

Respectfully submitted:

Muna De Ciman, Chair
and Female Seat Chair