

# CUPE Scoop

Local 5167

**Hamilton: Our City. Our Union. Our Stories.**

## What's the Scoop

**Page 2**

Free Mom Hugs Southern Ontario

**Page 4**

5167 Support Staff

**Page 5**

St. Patrick's Day Word Search

**Page 6**

Choose to Challenge Gender Bias & Inequality

**Page 7**

Ice Skating

**Page 8**

Commentary – Ed Thomas

**Communications Committee:**

- Jodi Coville, Chair,
- Steve Alaimo, City Inside Unit,
- Barry Conway, City Outside Unit,
- Monica Galarnau, DARTS Unit,
- Dianna Waldner GSWS Unit,
- Sharla Armstrong, Member at Large
- Evan Johnston, Member at Large
- Michelle Bowerman, Member at Large
- Karol De Stefano, Member at Large

## April General Membership Meeting

Monday, April 26, 2021 at 6 pm

This meeting will likely will be held online unless COVID-19 restrictions change. Please watch for postings to register your attendance.

### Nominations will be held for:

Executive Board

Sargent At Arms (2)

Trustee



At the February GMM the newly elected **Election Committee** announced that due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, and the ongoing lockdowns and restrictions to in-person gatherings, **the upcoming term elections will be held online.**

**Any questions should be directed to:**

[elections@cupe5167.org](mailto:elections@cupe5167.org)

**Karol DeStefano is a CUPE Local 5167 member who sits on our very own Equity Committee, and is known for giving the very best hugs. How do we know this?**



**She personally hugged 10,000 people in 2019 through Free Mom Hugs Hamilton, Wentworth.**

Karol became an LGBTQ2S+ activist after her daughter came out as lesbian at 18 years of age. Her daughter and wife communicated some of their friend's coming out stories that in some cases were terribly sad. Unfortunately, many people in the LGBTQ2S+ community are met with rejection, feelings of pain, hopelessness and isolation.

Karol recognized the need to help and started her research! She found there was little to no Hamilton support groups. The Free Mom Hugs movement (USA) was founded by Sarah Cunningham, when her own son had come out, and her religious beliefs left her struggling with acceptance. The group grew after Sarah herself attended a pride event wearing a button that said, 'Free Mom Hugs'. Karol contacted the organization, however, there was no Canadian chapters, and they couldn't offer much support. Karol did however find another Facebook group called Free Parent Hugs Canada and she joined. The group had the best of intentions, however they were lacking in any real action. Karol was able to connect with one member of the group who felt they should be doing more as well. Karol also recruited one of her friends from work, Stefanie

Thomas! The three of them met on a Monday, had "Free Mom Hugs" shirts made and were at their first event that very Friday; it was a protest against a form of conversion therapy.



In October 2018, the group began its journey of Free Mom Hugs Southern Ontario; a group of parents and allies including dads, moms, sisters, aunts, friends and brothers who offer unconditional love and support to the LGBTQ2S+ community.



**The group is uniquely Canadian, very diverse and does not subscribe to any political or religious ideologies. They have grown and presently have over 700 members. Free Mom Hugs Southern Ontario is one of the largest and most active groups in Canada run solely on social media.**

They tell the LGBTQ2S+ that they are loved just as they are! They hear sad stories in the community about rejection from parents and loved ones and try to take away some of that pain. They were in the middle of the violence at Hamilton Pride 2019 hugging people that were affected by the violence.

**Free Mom Hugs Southern Ontario** is run on a volunteer basis and self-funded. They attend protests, run booths at Pride, and support a mentorship program that matches people who need support with a caring Mom,

CUPE Local 5167 SCOOP

Dad or friend. They offer community referrals, share resources and have partnerships with other LGBTQ2S+ groups in various communities across Southern Ontario. They also obtain and deliver gender appropriate clothing for those transitioning. They offer help to those who are no longer welcome or safe in their homes, by helping them to obtain the necessary housewares, furniture, etc. for independent living. They offer advice, encouragement and support to other groups that want to form free mom hugs groups. As COVID-19 hit all of their activities went virtual. Virtual movies and chats highlighted community groups that could provide resources such as virtual yoga classes, virtual board games, community outreach and support.

**When Karol was asked, what is one thing you wish you'd known**

**sooner?**

She said she wished she knew sooner of the need for this type of support, and also the impact a small group of people working together could have to make such a positive change.



Keep an eye out for Karol and her group in the community. Karol has been **nominated for the Woman of Distinction award from the YWCA in the community champion category.** The Woman of Distinction award will be given out on March 8, 2021, coincidentally falling on International Women's Day 2021. Interested in getting involved? The group is looking to grow and could use volunteers to help with political action, fundraising and community outreach.

**FOLLOW on social**

**media!**

**FREE  
MOM  
HUGS**  
SOUTHERN ONTARIO



Team Meeting  
Brenda, Le & Phaedra  
Keep 5167 operational!!

5167 is fortunate to have AMAZING STAFF that support the local operations of our union! 5167 has a Collective Agreement with COPE 343. Brenda, Le and Phaedra are the backbone of running the 5167 office! We thank them for their efforts all year round!!

[#cupeproud](#) [#cope343](#)

The **Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union Local 343** has a long history of representing its membership through collective bargaining, grievances, arbitrations and other legal proceedings.

COPE Local 343 consists of 1600+ members and 93 collective agreements across Canada. Local 343 is an autonomous Local and the largest COPE Local in Ontario.

[www.cope343.ca](http://www.cope343.ca)

# St. Patrick's Day Word Search

S L S S U P O T A T O X I H G  
E H D Z T C W D L O G L D V K  
V Y A N Y N F O U R M R P L E  
E P Q M A R C H B B O B E W C  
N C R R R L I J A N L X Q A S  
T M Q P T O E P V W I I L O I  
E L S F P R C R P Z Y A N X I  
E M A C O J E K I D D W R R S  
N G I J S E Y A Z U H H M G M  
N A N S T Q Y K J A P T P C P  
A E T A B D N R C S D J O O H  
L L E P R E C H A U N V Z K I  
H S I R I O C N M N L G N D W  
P K V B G K C I R T A P T S V  
D S H I L L E L A G H K B Z N

DUBLIN  
FOUR  
GOLD  
GREEN  
IRELAND  
IRISH

LEPRECHAUN  
LUCKY  
MARCH  
ORANGE  
POTATO  
RAINBOW

SAINT  
SEVENTEEN  
SHAMROCK  
SHILLELAGH  
ST PATRICK

## Choose to Challenge Gender Bias & Inequality by Dianna Waldner

**March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 is International Women's Day!** This year will certainly look different from previous celebrations, however the purpose remains the same; communities around the world will come together and celebrate International Women's Day.

The United Nations theme for this year is **"Choose to Challenge"**, where we choose to challenge and call out gender bias and inequality. International Women's Day is a time to celebrate and acknowledge the accomplishments women have made despite the continued barriers they experience on a daily basis. During these celebrations a renewed commitment is made by participants to work together to continue to bring about change for greater gender equality and to the empowerment of women and girls around the world.



Everyone is invited to the **International Women's Day event** coordinated by The AIDS Network and supported by other agencies within Hamilton, including Good Shepherd Women's Services. This year's event will be taking place **online, on March 8<sup>th</sup> from 4pm to 6:00pm. Events will be launched live using multiple platforms. Please check out The AIDS Network Facebook page for more details** about platform information and event details.

**Can you believe ...** At the beginning of the 20th century, women were denied the right to vote in provincial and federal elections. Women fought for their right to vote in provincial elections in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta and finally won that right in 1916. However, this right was only extended to white women. British Columbia and Ontario granted women the right to vote in 1917. Quebec finally followed in 1941 and Northwest Territories in 1951. In 1947, some 'minorities' were allowed to vote, but not until 1960 were all men and women allowed to vote, and finally included Indigenous men and women. **This was in most of our parents' lifetime!**

Outdoor skating is a great activity to get some fresh air, exercise, and fun for the entire family! Many people even create home-made rinks in their back yards! What fun!

## Outdoor Rink Warning:

Please remember - **DO NOT build or skate on any outdoor ice rinks** that were built on stormwater ponds. The stormwater ponds that you usually see outside a subdivision are definitely not safe for skating. Often times there is a moving current under the frozen ice and if a person were to fall through the ice they would likely get swept under the ice making a rescue very difficult.

Keep your family, friends and neighbours safe this winter!

Check out some outskating around Hamilton:

- Bernie Morelli – Serafini Family Outdoor Ice Pad
- Dundas Driving Park
- Freelton Community Park
- Waterdown Memorial Park



## For more information

[www.hamilton.ca/recreation/outdoor-ice-seasonal](http://www.hamilton.ca/recreation/outdoor-ice-seasonal)

[www.hamilton.ca/recreation/drop-in-skate](http://www.hamilton.ca/recreation/drop-in-skate)

**Did you know?** The first ice skates are believed to date back to 3000 BC in Scandinavia, they were made of animal bone. Moderate steel-based skates appeared in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Finland. By the 1700s the first skate competitions were documented in Europe.

“In 2008, the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) officially declared that the first game of organized ice hockey was played in Montreal in 1875”. Source: [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca)

## The April 28<sup>th</sup> Candle & Ceremony – by Ed Thomas, Retiree

Ed Thomas & Alberta Federation of Labour



**On April 28**, people in over 120 countries around the world participate in ceremonies to mourn for workers who have been killed and injured on the job. Each ceremony is unique in their own way, but they all have one common thread – there is the lighting of a candle.

**The candle** itself is made from the natural wax of the honeycomb of bees. It is a chosen symbol of transformation. The candle ceremony is said to shed understanding on the buried, and into hidden dimensions of life and work. The honey, which is part of beeswax, contains the spirit of life.

**The wick** portrays the thin line in our lives. It denotes the emergence of life from our unconscious history, which is too often shrouded in secrecy, or remains hidden in the realm of silence, oppression or repression.

**The flame** contains the dominant message of the April 28 ceremony, and represents the turning points to the suffering, the pain and to death. That points to all the burning and suffering in all our lives and to the destruction of life itself.

**The heat** from the burning is associated with the impact on victims and the suffering of communities.

**The hot wax** is a symbol of the waste, from the burning and decay. It is often manifested in air, soil, water, and workplace pollution. It is also whatever remains after this death and destruction. It is said to contain the despair and the mourning which is survived by the burning and embodies the resulting emotions, remaining reactions, and effects.

**From the ashes** come the motivation for change, conscious action and energy, and new hopes and aspirations.

**On April 28**, we mourn for all the people who have been killed and injured in the workplace.

**Light a candle and think about the significance of its meaning.**