



NORTH BAY & DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL

Press Release

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Attention: Labour calls for Pharmacare and Decent Work

“This year’s Annual Labour Day Picnic is our 12th, and we’re expecting our largest event in as many years,” says Henri Giroux.

On September 4th, the North Bay and District Labour Council will celebrate Labour Day by hosting its annual Picnic and Flag March. The Flag March starts at 11:30AM at the top of Memorial Drive and is followed by the very popular free Picnic BBQ in the grassy area of North Bay’s beautiful waterfront. The theme this year is “A Plan for Everyone and Decent Work.”

“This year we’re helping the Canadian Labour of Congress begin promoting the idea of nation-wide prescription drug coverage,” says Giroux. “Canada’s unions have fought hard to win health insurance for our members,” adds Giroux. “But we’re not stopping there because 3.5 million Canadians can’t afford to fill their prescription.”

“Far too many people must choose between paying for groceries and paying for medicine—this is outrageous in our wealthy country.”

“The Picnic is totally free for all the people that come out to celebrate with us: we have huge inflatable slides and castles, a very popular climbing wall, face painting, live music, fish pond, and of course the BBQ, pop, and cake,” explains Giroux. “Everything,” says Giroux, “is to celebrate a future of decent work and easier living.”

“Without amendments to Bill 148, many Ontario workers will be left out of the Labour Relations Act and the Employment Standards Act,” says Giroux. “We are working hard to demand the changes that will stop the rise of precarious, insecure work and set the conditions for decent work for all.”

1.7 million Ontarians earn at or near the minimum wage, and many work more than one job to make ends meet. The government has committed to raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2019, but higher wages are just one part of creating decent work.

“That’s why we’re calling for changes that would make it easier to join a union, such as card-check certification and we’re demanding changes that set a fair standard in the workplace for all workers whether they are unionized or not,” says Giroux.

“Labour law in Canada needs improving,” says Giroux, “because it fails to reflect the changing nature of work, the fact that so many people in our community work precarious jobs, and can barely pay for basic needs, let alone make important investments in the community like buying and owning property, paying for children’s recreation, and traveling on public transportation.

“It’s simply no longer fair. The precariously employed and the work they do needs to be regarded as an important part of the local economy. Low-paying and insecure jobs do not lead to a decent standard of living anymore; instead, they perpetuate poverty.

“After all, a decent, stable job is the best way to end poverty, and that’s what we should strive toward,” urges Giroux.