

THE ADVOCATE

Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees

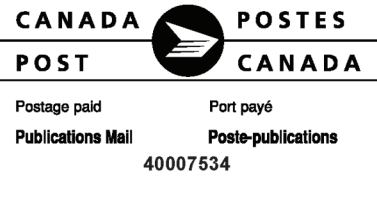
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Dear Members,

Welcome to the winter edition of *The Advocate*. We had a successful 62nd Annual Convention, held November 15 & 16, 2024 in Summerside. Delegates debated on key resolutions, approved committee reports, and worked together to determine the Union's direction.



Karen Jackson
President, UPSE

Many of the resolutions carried at Convention were submitted by UPSE's Board of Directors and focused on updating the Constitution. The Union's Constitution, by-laws, and policies are the foundation and bedrock of UPSE. They provide rules for the Union to operate by and support the accountability, integrity, and transparency of the organization which align with our new strategic plan. For a full update on resolutions see pg. 6 of *The Advocate*.

Your Union continues to be busy on the bargaining front having negotiated new contracts for Community Connections, Health PEI, Whisperwood Villa, and Morell and Area Early Learning Centre. I want to thank all the bargaining members who participated on the various bargaining teams as I know some of the tables were challenging and your commitment and dedication to obtaining a fair and reasonable deal for your fellow members was very much appreciated. Negotiations are in process with Holland College Faculty/ATHI and Holland College Administrative/Early Years Centre.

Bargaining preparations have begun for the City of Charlottetown, Community Inclusions, Strait Crossing, Civil Service and Grain Elevators. For a full update see pg. 8 of the *The Advocate*.

UPSE and the national Union (NUPGE) have launched a healthcare awareness campaign based on the input of UPSE members in PEI and component members right across the country. On behalf

of our national union President, Bert Blundon, I want to thank our members for participating in the recent UPSE/NUPGE *Healthcare Member Survey*. Our members took the time to share their firsthand experiences and insights, showing us what health professionals are facing every day. We know that the membership is committed to providing high standards of care, and values a health system that is accessible to everyone. We also know that our members are facing significant workplace challenges that jeopardize their well-being and the ability to provide the care that is needed. Staffing shortages, heavy workloads, inadequate wages and a lack of recognition are top concerns.

Staffing

- (46%) said they find themselves working with fewer co-workers than they feel is needed to provide effective care.

- Four-in-five of members (80%) reported that working short-staffed causes moderate or severe effects on their health.

- More than half (61%) report that they are experiencing heavy workloads and burnout.

Private healthcare

- (35%) have been targeted by private staffing agencies for work in private or for-profit healthcare.

- For those considering moving from public to private healthcare, (78%) say it's because of higher salary and financial incentives.

- (81%) said higher wages would keep them in the public sector and (75%) said better staffing levels / increased hiring to reduce workload/burnout would keep them in the public sector.

Members Agree

(97%) of members surveyed support a collaboration between workers, their unions, employers, governments, and educational institutions to come together and develop a detailed plan to tackle the labour shortages in healthcare today.

I am thankful that the public will get to hear and learn about the people who care for them every day. UPSE will use the data from the survey to create awareness about the critical work our members do, and we will advocate for meaningful change with employers, governments and other stakeholders.

In addition to the above noted survey, PEI UPSE will be rolling out its campaign this month on "*Workplace Harassment, Bullying and Violence*" based on the information gathered from our survey from the Fall of 2023. Again, I want to thank all the members who participated and shared their heartfelt and sincere experiences.

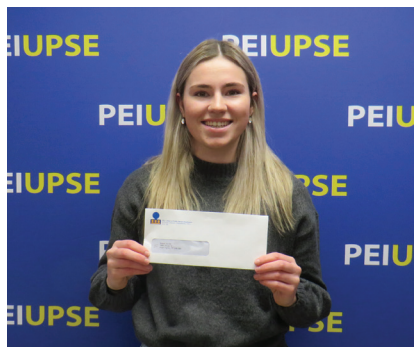
Karen Jackson,
UPSE President

UPSE Bursary Winners

Congratulations to UPSE's bursary/scholarship program winners for 2024! UPSE believes in the power of education to transform lives and help create a better society for all. The *UPSE Bursary and Scholarship Program* offers financial assistance to students who are attending a college or university. The program helps reduce some of the economic burden that students face. UPSE is proud to offer this support as part of its ongoing efforts to promote the importance of life-long learning and education.



L-R: Emma Marchbank (\$500) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).



L-R: Gracie Gaudet (\$1000, Laurie Jenkins Scholarship)



L-R: Ibrahim Abou Assali (\$500) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).



L-R: Jessie MacKinnon (\$500, Julie MacKay Bursary) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).



L-R: Jordyn Knox (\$500) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).



L-R: Jorja Rogerson (\$500) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President). and Sarah Galaise (\$500).



L-R: Marshall Duffy (\$500) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).



L-R: Molly Madore (\$500) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).



L-R: Olivia Dumville (\$500) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).



L-R: Sarah Galaise (\$500) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).

Missing from photos are:

Keanna Ryan (High Marks – 1,000\$)

Kailey Ryan 500\$

Aizlin Richard 500\$

Kira Duckworth 500\$

UPSE's Second Vice President and Secretary Treasurer Elected

Mike Butler, former UPSE President, called for nominations from the floor at Convention for UPSE's Executive positions of Second Vice President and Secretary Treasurer. Candidates nominated by the deadline included Mark Arsenault, for Second Vice President. Nominations were also opened at Convention for members to run from the floor and Tim Yorke nominated Kevin Gotell for Secretary Treasurer. Mark Arsenault (2nd Vice President) and Kevin Gotell (Secretary Treasurer) were elected by acclamation for a new two-year term. Congratulations to these two dedicated UPSE members!



Mike Butler, former UPSE President, calls for nominations from the floor at Convention.



Mark Arsenault, Second Vice President.



Kevin Gotell, Secretary Treasurer.

NUPGE Guest speaker: Jason MacLean

Jason MacLean, Secretary Treasurer for NUPGE, gave an inspiring talk to UPSE delegates. NUPGE is working on a new national campaign on health care members across the country. NUPGE will be researching and polling front line workers, getting their real stories told, and pressuring government to invest in the public healthcare system ... not more expensive privatization.

Jason also spoke about the anti-privatization conference that took place recently in Fredericton. He will be working on the findings of the conference report and developing a strategy to take on government and private interests who continue to sell out public healthcare in this country. Jason said we all need to get involved in politics in order to challenge governments that allow and foster privatization.



Jason MacLean, NUPGE Secretary Treasurer

Member of the Year!

2024 Recipient: Mark has served as Second Vice President on the Board, Director, Steward and Chief Steward for Local 14. He has also been a union trainer and instructor for UPSE courses, has been on the Finance Committee, Pension & Benefits Committee and was a category representative during two rounds of contract negotiations, and an UPSE member representative on the Public Service Plan.

At the national level, he has been a Champion for Change on Tax Fairness & Promoting Public Services, a Champion for Pensions and a member of the Advisory Committee on the Environment. Mark has been employed with the Province of PEI since 1993 and his experience has allowed him to work in many different environments. His varied experience helps him understand the many concerns brought forward by UPSE members. He is a steadfast union activist and is committed to helping UPSE members.

Over his lifetime, Mark has been actively involved in Scouts, Royal Canadian Army Cadets, 4-H and other like-minded groups such as Island Nature Trust and the Nature Conservancy of Canada. He enjoys teaching Hunter Safety and Firearm Safety and is always looking to promote safe work practices whether it be in the office or the wilderness. Congratulations Mark on being UPSE's Member of the Year for 2024!



L-R: Karen Jackson (UPSE President) and Mark Arsenault (Member of the Year).

Guest speaker: Big Daddy Tazz

UPSE was thrilled to have Big Daddy Tazz as a keynote speaker at Convention. Big Daddy Tazz has made a significant impact by openly discussing his mental health journey. His courage to embrace his challenges and transform them into a source of strength is truly inspiring. He shared his experiences with UPSE members through comedy and helped raise awareness about mental health issues while encouraging others to embrace their own struggles. Tazz was able to connect with the delegation at the UPSE Convention and spread a message of love and understanding. Many UPSE members were affected by his presentation and there many beneficial conversations that ensued over the weekend.

Karen Jackson, UPSE President, said "it was good timing for the membership to hear Tazz's message. We don't realize how many people are struggling in our day-to-day lives. Opening up about mental health fosters connection and helps others feel less alone. Sharing our experiences reduces stigma and encourages supportive conversations. It validates our feelings and creates a safe space for others to express themselves, leading to greater understanding, empathy, and improved mental well-being for all."



Big Daddy Tazz speaks at UPSE's 62nd Annual Convention.

Annual Convention: Resolutions

The following are resolutions from the 62nd Annual Convention.

1. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *BOARD GRAMMATICAL AND APPEARANCE EDITS*

The intent of this resolution is to allow the board of Directors to make Administrative corrections to the Constitution document at any time during the year between conventions. Administrative corrections include spelling, grammatical errors, (c) inconsistent \numbering, and any other cosmetic changes that do not impact the intent of the wording. **(Withdrawn)**

2. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *HOUSEKEEPING-1*

The intent of this resolution is to ensure that UPSE has clear, current and concise language in the constitution. **(Carried)**

3. **Submitted by the UPSE Constitution Committee** *RESOLUTION PROTOCOLS*

The intent of this resolution is to ensure that all submitted resolutions that have a potential impact on the Constitution must be reviewed, approved and submitted by the Board of Directors, not less than sixty (60) days before the date set for the convention. **(Amended, Carried)**

4. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *TEMPORARY LOCAL DIRECTOR*

The intent of this resolution is to allow the Board to appoint a Union representative to conduct and hold local meetings in the event of a Local Director Vacancy, until a replacement can be elected. **(Carried)**

5. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *FIXED DATES*

The intent of this resolution is to ensure the Constitution has clear dates in place in regard to when Directors take office, the elections of assistant director(s), steward(s), local secretary's, co-chairs, alternates, and committee appointments. **(Carried)**

6. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *EXECUTIVE MEETINGS*

The intent of this resolution is to establish that UPSE Executive meetings must be held at least eight (8) times a year. **(Carried)**

7. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *UPSE CONVENTION (NAME REFERENCE)*

The intent of this resolution is to say that there must be a convention of the Union held within 2 years of the date of the last Convention at such time and place as may be determined by the Board of Directors. Notice of the time and place for holding the convention must be given by advertising the meeting in the Union's newsletter or other electronic publications not less than thirty (30) days before such meeting. **(Amended, Defeated)**

8. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *Executive Term and Elections*

The intent of this resolution, based on resolution 7, is to clarify that the election of the executive will take place at alternating Conventions commencing with the second Vice-President and secretary treasurer in 2024 and the election of the first Vice-President and third Vice-President at the following convention. **(Carried)**

9. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors and Local 12** *UPSE CONVENTION (18 MONTHS/SESQUIENNIAL)*

The intent of this resolution is for UPSE to move from holding an annual convention to holding a convention every 18 months, to be more fiscally responsible, which would also allow the convention to alternate from a spring and fall convention period due to the 18 month intervals. **(Defeated)**

10. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *RETIREE CONVENTION DELEGATE CAP*

The intent of this resolution is to keep the number of retiree delegates consistent with the number of delegates from Active member Locals. **(Carried)**

11. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *HOLDING OFFICE IN ONE LOCAL AT A TIME*

The intent of this resolution is to limit any member employed in multiple UPSE Locals at the same time, to only being able to hold an elected position within one local. **(Carried)**

12. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *RETIREES/EMPLOYMENT IN A UPSE BARGAINING UNIT*

The intent of this resolution is to clarify that a retired member, who returns to or continues with active employment, is a dues paying member with an UPSE bargaining unit, and shall not be eligible to be a member of Local 19 while employed. **(Defeated)**

13. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *ELECTED UPSE OR COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON LEAVE*

The intent of this resolution is to ensure that any member in an Elected UPSE position, or on a UPSE Committee, on leave without pay, will be entitled to remain in their position for up to 9 months. After this time, they shall be deemed to have resigned their position. This will not apply to a member who is on WCB, LTD, Maternity Leave. Also, a member who wants to remain in their position after the nine month period, can make an application or presentation to the Executive or Board provided they can effectively carry out their duties while on leave, and provided they make arrangements to pay their union dues. **(Amended, Carried)**

14. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *WORKING IN A LOCAL TO OFFER AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL*

The intent of this resolution is to establish new requirements to ensure elected officials (Directors, Assistant Directors, Stewards) have a similar minimum requirement. **(Amended, Carried)**

15. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *POLITICAL OFFICE (WHERE UPSE MEMBERS ARE EMPLOYED)*

The intent of this resolution is to exclude members who may be in a position to influence policies or employment agencies of other UPSE members from holding a Board or Executive position within UPSE. **(Carried)**

16. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *POLITICAL OFFICE (TEMP LEAVE NOT TO EXCEED 9 MONTHS)*

The intent of this resolution is to clarify that should an elected official campaign or take a position that is contrary, or in direct conflict to UPSE's relevant legislation/policies, strategic plan, or union principles, which damage UPSE's reputation and/or credibility, or places UPSE in poor public opinion, the Board of Directors shall request the elected official to resign their elected position. **(Carried)**

17. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *POLITICAL OFFICE (RESIGNATION CLAUSE)*

The intent of this resolution is to clarify that an elected officer of UPSE, must resign their UPSE position, should that elected officer be successful in winning a political nomination, or if the campaign is planned for or exceeds nine (9) months in length. **(Carried)**

18. **Submitted by the UPSE Board of Directors** *PRESIDENTIAL SALARY ADJUSTMENTS*

The intent of this resolution is to clarify that the UPSE President will be paid the annual salary based on the last adjusted increment as per the PEI UPSE Staff - UFCW-864 Collective Agreement prior to being elected. **(Carried)**

19. **Submitted by Local 12** *PRESIDENTIAL BASE SALARY*

The intent of this resolution is for UPSE to amend the annual salary of its President to be comparable to the highest levels of the UPSE Civil and Health contracts (average of highest salaries in both contracts). This change shall take effect as of the first pay after the 2024 Annual Convention, and will be a one-time adjustment to the base salary. **(Defeated)**

20. **Submitted by Local 12** *HYBRID-ELECTRIC MILEAGE RATE*

The intent of this resolution is for UPSE to lobby the provincial government to have a separate mileage policy for hybrid/fully electric vehicles. Electric vehicles are more expensive, but are better for the environment. Employees who use hybrid/electric vehicles should receive a higher rate of mileage. **(Defeated)**



21. **Submitted by Local 9** *MILEAGE RATE CALCULATION*

The intent of this resolution is to lobby the provincial Treasury Board to review the current formula for mileage and make necessary changes to ensure fair compensation for the membership. The current formula for mileage doesn't appear to be in lock step with the increased cost of vehicle service. Travel costs should not leave members in a financial deficit. **(Carried)**

22. **Submitted by Local 14** *EARLY RETIREMENT OPTION FOR CORRECTIONS OFFICERS*

The intent of this resolution is for UPSE to strike a committee to investigate early retirement pension options for correctional officers, as is offered through CRA as an option. **(Carried)**

23. **Submitted by Local 19** *PSGIP RETIREE REPS*

The intent of this resolution is for UPSE to support the interests of its Retirees in being able to participate in the management of the PSGIP. The PSGIP provides medical insurance to both active and retired public sector employees, and the retired employees make up twenty-five percent of the participants in the plan. However, there are no representatives of the retired employees involved in the management of the plan. Local 19, through this resolution, is seeking to have the Parties amend the Trust Agreement to require the appointment of at least two retiree participants in the PSGIP, as members of the board of Trustees. **(Amended, Carried)**

24. **Submitted by the UPSE Young Workers Committee** *CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON FOOTPRINT*

The intent of this resolution is for UPSE to continue their environmental efforts by researching and implementing additional eco-friendly and sustainable initiatives to further reduce the Union's carbon footprint. UPSE has made great strides in becoming more energy efficient by investing in renewable energy with the installation of solar panels at the office, and has been working on ways to shrink the Union's carbon footprint by reducing waste, and going digital. **(Carried)**

Bargaining Update

Health PEI

Bargaining update

UPSE and Health PEI have signed a new collective agreement. Karen Jackson, UPSE President, said "that while the Union was not able to move the employer on every issue, it did obtain a fair wage and benefit package that reflects the hard

work and dedication of the members. She said, "UPSE remains committed to continuing its advocacy efforts to seek further improvements that will enhance the working conditions and benefits for all members."

Pic L-R: Ali Christie (HR Director, Health PEI), Andrew Jack (LRO, UPSE) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).

City of Charlottetown

Bargaining update

The collective agreement between UPSE and the City of Charlottetown expired on December 31, 2024. UPSE sent an intent to bargain notice in January and demand forms have been returned. The bargaining team is now working on their package and aims to start bargaining in March.

Community Inclusions

Bargaining update

The collective agreement will expire on March 31, 2025. A meeting to select the bargaining team will be held February 24, 2025. Member proposal forms may be submitted until March 7, 2025 through the website at <https://www.peiupse.ca/community-inclusions-proposals/>

Strait Crossing

Bargaining update

The collective agreement between UPSE and Strait Crossing expired on December 31, 2024. UPSE sent an intent to bargain notice in January and demand forms have been returned. UPSE aims to begin bargaining by the end of February or early March.



Whisperwood Villa

Bargaining update

UPSE and Whisperwood Villa signed a new collective agreement until July 2027. Karen Jackson, UPSE President, thanks the bargaining team for their hard work in achieving a fair wage and benefit package for the membership.



Pic L-R: Jason Lee (CEO, PEI Seniors Homes), Andrew Jack (UPSE LRO), and Karen Jackson (UPSE President)

Grain Elevators

Bargaining update

The collective agreement between UPSE and Grain Elevators will expire on March 31, 2025. A notice to bargain was mailed out to the employer in January. Proposal forms will be mailed to members in March.

Holland College Admin / Early Learning Centre

Bargaining update

The collective agreement between Holland College Administrative and Support / ECE, and UPSE expired on March 31, 2024. The bargaining teams met numerous times over the past year to try

and find a mutually agreeable resolution at the table. The parties have not been able to reach a tentative agreement due to a number of outstanding matters including wages, and the inclusion of the Holland College ECE staff in to the agreement. The union remains positive that a fair contract can be reached for all members. The team intends to meet with UPSE staff in the coming weeks to develop a strategy to move forward and will provide an update to the membership shortly thereafter.

Morell and Area Early Learning Centre

Bargaining update

UPSE and Morell and Area Early Learning Centre have signed a one-year collective agreement. Karen Jackson, UPSE President, thanks the bargaining team for their work in negotiating a fair wage and benefit package for the membership.



L-R: Karen Jackson (UPSE President), Wilma Ramsay (UPSE Labour Relations Officer), Whitney MacDonald (Chair, Board of MAELC), and a former graduate of MAELC.

Holland College Faculty/ATHI

The collective agreement between UPSE and Holland College Faculty/ATHI expired on March 31, 2024. Members voted in favour of a merged agreement and the team now plans to begin negotiations for enhancements (including wages) on February 20 & 21, 2025.

Civil Service/IRAC/WCB

Bargaining update

The collective agreement will expire on March 31, 2025. UPSE mailed proposal forms to members for input on upcoming negotiations, as well as for selecting the UPSE bargaining team. Stay tuned for further information including bargaining dates ... when they become available.

Community Connections

Bargaining update

UPSE and Community Connections have signed a new four-year collective agreement. Karen Jackson, UPSE President, thanks the bargaining team for their hard work in achieving a fair wage and benefit package for the membership.



Pic (top L-R) Blaine Birch (Community Support Worker), Jackie Somers (Community Support Worker), Troy Warren (LRO, UPSE), Krista Murphy (Residential Support Worker). (bot L-R) John Smallman (Executive Director, CC), Karen Jackson (UPSE President), and Scott Mollins (President, CC)

UPSE Members Helping Those in Need at Community Connections

Community Connections Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides a range of employment, residential, and support services to adult persons with disabilities. Jackie Somers (*Community Support Worker*) gave Karen Jackson (UPSE President) a tour of the facilities.

The first stop was the well equipped kitchen where Jenilee Thompson (*Food Program Facilitator*) was hard at



Support Services: Assistance for individuals with disabilities, including personal care and life skills development.

Community Integration: Programs designed to help individuals engage with the community and develop social connections.

Employment Services: Support for job readiness, skills training, and job placement for those seeking employment.

Advocacy: Helping clients access resources, navigate systems, and advocate for their rights and needs.

Recreation Programs: Organized activities and events that encourage social interaction and physical activity. These services aim to enhance the quality of life for individuals and promote inclusivity within the community.



Pic L-R: Jenilee Thompson (Food Program Facilitator) and Toni Geary (Program Coordinator).

work having just prepared a batch of delicious cookies. Jenilee manages the food preparation including, but not limited to the lunch program for clients from Tuesday to Friday each week providing healthy home cooked meals for 30-35 clients.

Toni Geary supports staff by developing and maintaining all programming and case planning for clients. Community Connections offers a wide range of services for their clients including:



Pic L-R: Jackie Somers (Community Support Worker) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President).

The gym area (above) has a wide variety of exercise equipment. At Community Connections both staff and clients can participate in the wellness program. The social area is a large well organized room off the kitchen where clients attend dances and can watch movies on the big screen as well as socialize.

Community Connections also has bathing facilities and a quiet room for clients who need a rest or a quieter environment during the busy day.

Karen met Dylan Miller in the Rise Room which is a separate area equipped to handle clients with more complex needs. Community Connections also offers residential services which provides housing for up to fifty clients. Not all clients in Residential Services participate in the Day Program.

Karen extends her heartfelt thanks for the opportunity to tour the Community Connections facility and meet the dedicated UPSE members who are making a tremendous impact in the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Jackson said “witnessing the commitment and compassion with which you provide support services was truly inspiring. The work you do—offering assistance with personal care, life skills development, and job readiness—is invaluable. Your programs that promote community integration and advocacy not only help individuals access essential resources but also empower them to engage with their communities meaningfully. The various recreation programs you organize foster social connections and contribute immensely to the quality of life for those you serve. It is clear that the work being done here is of great importance, and I am grateful for your unwavering dedication to promoting inclusivity and support for all individuals and their families. Thank you for the remarkable work you are doing to make our community stronger and more compassionate.”



Pic L-R: Jessica Kilcup, Eve MacLeod and Blaine Birch (Community Support Workers)



Pic L-R: Emily Larsen and Jack Ellsworth (Community Support Workers)



Pic L-R: Dylan Miller and Jackie Somers in the Rise Room (Community Support Workers)



Pic L-R: Sam Compton (Residential Program) and Jackie Somers (Community Support Workers)

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Jill MacMicken-Wilson, Research and Policy Analyst

Jill MacMicken-Wilson joined UPSE on secondment from the Provincial government in July 2023 and became a permanent staff member in January 2024. Jill was employed in the archival field since 1997 and was Provincial Archivist for 17 years. As Provincial Archivist, legislation and policy development was a major focus of her work. She was responsible for the development and implementation of policies, procedures and programs to ensure that the mandate of the Public Archives and Records Office, as set out by the *Archives and Records Act*, was effectively and efficiently fulfilled. Jill developed policies and procedures which govern the acquisition and care of archival materials as well as those governing the government-wide records management program.

Jill received an Honors Degree in History from the University of Prince Edward Island and a Masters Degree in History from Queen's University. She taught sessionally for the History Department at the University of Prince Edward Island for over 15 years. Her educational background is in History, which by its very nature is research and analysis based.

After over 30 years researching, writing, and teaching, Jill brings her skills to the role of *Research and Policy Analyst* at UPSE. If you have questions about your collective agreement or are in need of help from a *Labour Relations Officer* or *Steward*, Jill can point you in the right direction. During contract negotiations, she provides support to the chief negotiators and researches relevant labour topics. She also writes and maintains UPSE policies and prepares submissions on labour issues for government and other unions.

When not at work, Jill likes to read, travel, watch British detective shows, and spend time with her three amazing granddaughters.



Pic: Jill MacMicken-Wilson, Research and Policy Analyst

Brian Fudge Memorial Scholarship

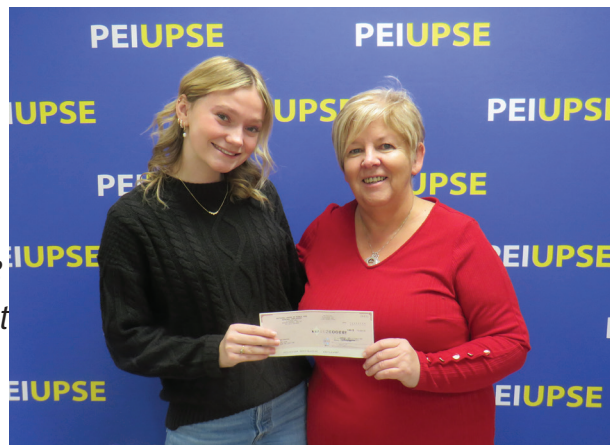
Andi-Lee Reardon is the winner of the Brian Fudge Memorial Scholarship worth \$2,500. Andi-Lee's parent is Andrew Reardon, a member of UPSE/NUPGE (Local 12). Each year, the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) offers 9 scholarships that reflect its pursuit of equal opportunity for all workers. They are offered to members, the children/grandchildren, and the foster children/grandchildren of current or retired UPSE/NUPGE members enrolled in a Canadian post-secondary public institution.

"Each year we are impressed with the quality and thoughtfulness of the submissions for NUPGE Scholarships. We appreciate everyone who took the time to make a submission. It is always a difficult decision to choose the winning essays because the competition is so strong," said Bert Blundon, NUPGE President, "It's our hope that these scholarships will, in a small way, help these students follow their dreams."

Karen Jackson, UPSE President, congratulated Andi-Lee Reardon on winning the Brian Fudge Memorial Scholarship. "Your dedication to the healthcare field and your commitment to ensuring universality and equal access is truly inspiring. At a time when our healthcare system faces unprecedented challenges, your passion and vision for service to Canadians will undoubtedly make a significant impact. We are proud to support you on this important journey."

In commenting on the importance of her chosen area of study – health care, Reardon wrote:

At this critical time with the Canadian health care system being stretched beyond measure, it is of utmost importance now, more than ever, to keep the vision of universality and equal access alive and well. My chosen field of study in health care and my goal to deliver this public service to Canadians could not be more important than it is now, for my generation.



Pic (L-R): Andi-Lee Reardon (UPEI Student) and Karen Jackson (UPSE President)

Our Health Professionals are Speaking Out!

UPSE's national union (NUPGE) released the findings of a new, nationwide survey, the first of its kind, revealing that approximately 9 out of 10 health professionals in communities across the country report the system is in crisis (89%). The survey, conducted by Abacus Data, reveals more than half of workers (55%) say the system is understaffed. Four out of five workers (80%) report that working short-staffed causes moderate or severe effects on their health. And more than half (61%) report that they are experiencing heavy workloads and burnout.

These consequences are felt not only by health care workers, but by patients and their loved ones. "These are the professionals who keep the health care system running – they take your blood work, book your appointments, clean your hospital rooms, and do so much more to ensure patients receive quality care," said NUPGE President Bert Blundon. "Their roles in health care are as diverse as they are critical, and all are routinely understaffed and under compensated. This is a health human resources crisis and it calls into question the long-term viability of Canadian health care."



In addition to chronic staffing shortages, close to three in four survey respondents are facing financial pressures (72%). Many are struggling to cover basic living expenses while others are forced to take on a second job to make ends meet. More than four in five workers (88%) feel their efforts are overlooked, despite being necessary to patient care. Because of these conditions, health care workers are considering leaving their roles — in fact, nearly 40% of survey respondents are considering leaving health care entirely within three years.

NUPGE/UPSE health professionals play a supportive role within health care or deliver direct care. Workers who are classified as supportive roles within healthcare include administrative, security, maintenance, cleaning, supply chain and food services. Jobs related to the direct delivery of care include diagnostic roles, paramedics, rehabilitation, therapeutic care and community care. Nine in ten workers believe there are two key steps to resolving the crisis: increasing staffing levels and enhancing wages, benefits and pensions. Almost all workers (97%) strongly support governments, unions, employers, and educational institutions collaborating to address the labour shortages. "NUPGE is committed to fighting for better conditions for all workers. Better conditions will directly contribute to better health care for all through Canada's public care system," said Blundon. "These health professionals have shared sciences that show how urgent the situation is across the country. It's time for governments to take action."

UPSE Donates \$12,478 Through the UPSE Has a Heart Campaign

Over the past forty years, UPSE members have donated more than a quarter of a million dollars to non-profit community organizations in PEI through the UPSE social fund. The social fund was adopted at the 1984 Annual Convention to demonstrate the Union's caring and active involvement with its members and the community. In 2001, the Union decided that the annual donations made through the social fund would be called the UPSE Has a Heart campaign. This year, the Union donated \$12,478 through the campaign.

Karen Jackson, President of UPSE, said "The UPSE Has a Heart campaign is dedicated to supporting community organizations that make a significant impact for Islanders - organizations like the Air Cadets, Santa's Angels, Kits of Kindness, Joy Riders Therapeutic Riding Association, and the PEI Special Olympics, to name a few."

Jackson expressed gratitude to UPSE members for their contributions to the campaign, explaining that a small portion of their union dues goes directly towards these charitable efforts, enabling the Union to give back to communities throughout the province. She remarked, "Unions play a vital role in helping others and strengthening our communities."

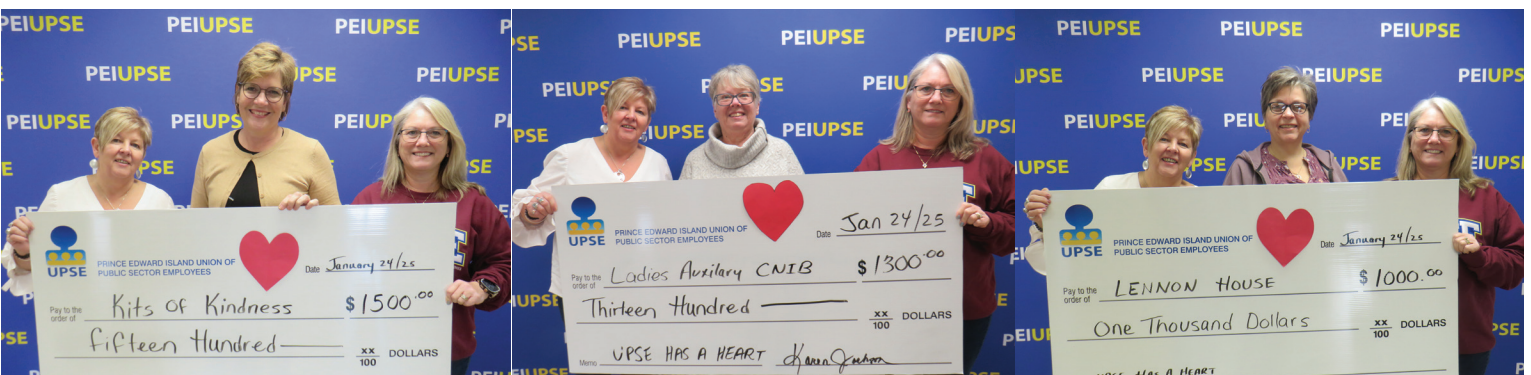
UPSE supported fifteen organizations in this year's campaign with donations ranging from \$250 to \$1,500. "These organizations engage in remarkable work, often driven by volunteers who include our members. UPSE is proud to assist these outstanding groups that provide essential support to Islanders," Jackson added.



Pic: Air Cadet League of Canada (Karen Jackson, Howard Bassard, Lyn Higginbotham) 1,000\$

Pic: Camp Abegweit (Karen Jackson, Alex Corbett, Lyn Higginbotham) 1,000\$

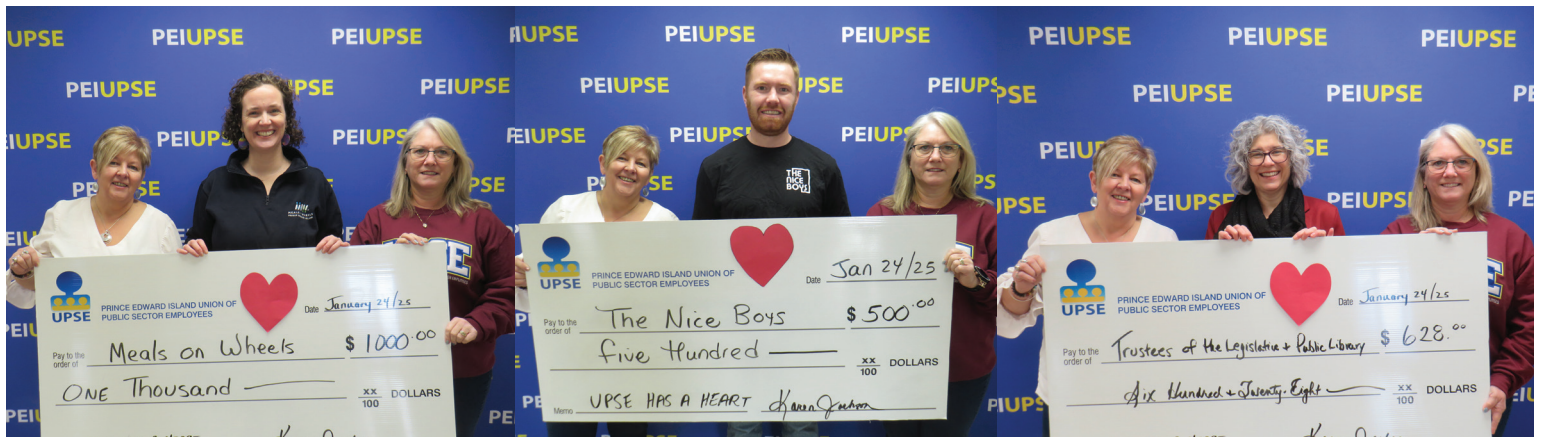
Pic: Joyriders Therapeutic Riding Association (Karen Jackson, Linda Stewart, Daphne Davey, Lyn Higginbotham) 550\$



Pic: Kits of Kindness (Karen Jackson, Cyndi Proude, Lyn Higginbotham) 1,500\$

Pic: Ladies Auxiliary, CNIB (Karen Jackson, Marguerite Connelly, Lyn Higginbotham) 1,300\$

Pic: Lennon Recovery House (Karen Jackson, Sandra MacNevin, Lyn Higginbotham) 1,000\$



Pic: Meals on Wheels (Karen Jackson, Haley Zavo, Lyn Higginbotham) 1,000\$

Pic: The Nice Boys (Karen Jackson, Cody Dawson, Lyn Higginbotham) 500\$

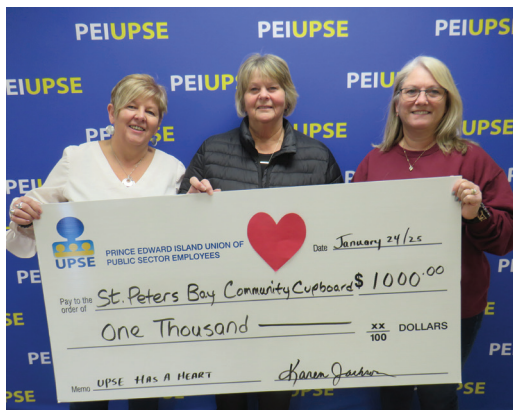
Pic: The Trustees of the Legislative and Public Library (Karen Jackson, Beth Clinton, Lyn Higginbotham) 628\$



Pic: Southern Kings Air Cadets (Karen Jackson, Steve Martin, Lyn Higginbotham) 750\$

Pic: PEI Special Olympics (Karen Jackson, Sarah Proffitt-Wagner, Lyn Higginbotham) 1,000\$

Pic: St. Peters Circle Club (Karen Jackson, Carol McGrath, Lyn Higginbotham) 500\$



Pic: St. Peters Bay Community Cupboard (Karen Jackson, Cathy MacKinnon, Lyn Higginbotham) 1,000\$

Missing from pics:

Santa's Angels \$500

Silver Threads Seniors Club \$250

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