

UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS

*Dignity@***WORK**

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It has often been said that you cannot rob an individual of personal dignity. But some employers continue to try.

Whether it is a single union member in central Ontario denied washroom breaks despite his disability, or hundreds of workers labouring behind barbed-wire in southern Alberta at an employer that flies a banner, "Proud to be Union Free", UFCW Canada has a role in fighting on behalf of those workers.

UFCW Canada has adopted Dignity at Work as a central theme in all that we do. It is not a change of direction, or a radical new program. Rather, it is a reminder of the importance of considering the dignity of every worker in everything we do.

The dignity of workers begins at the workplace, and continues at the bargaining table. We cannot allow employers to continue the merciless gutting of collective agreements in an effort to improve their already significant "returns of investment". There is no respect for workers' dignity when wages and benefits are slashed while corporate profits rise ever higher.

In the workplace, the dignity of workers demands respect from the employer. Front-line managers need better training in areas of interpersonal and supervisory relationships, as well as in how to work with and in a collective-bargaining environment. UFCW Canada has broken new ground in developing union training for managers in these areas, and we continue to extend the availability of that training to wherever it is needed.

Our experience in helping workers to organize, too, demonstrates the need for respect of people's dignity. UFCW Canada organizers talking to workers who need a union find that, more often than not, it boils down to a matter of simple dignity. It may begin as a desire for better pay, or an end to favouritism, or the elimination of dangerous working conditions, but personal dignity is at the root of most workers' concerns.

In all areas in which UFCW Canada fights on behalf of members – collective bargaining, organizing the unorganized, servicing, communication, education and training, political action – the personal dignity of workers is paramount. Now, as in the years ahead, UFCW Canada will continue to keep the dignity of working people foremost in all that we do.

In Solidarity,

Michael J. Fraser
National Director,
UFCW Canada