



# The Sentinel



*Standing shoulder to shoulder with CUPE 2331*

## Why Solidarity Matters

*Mike Totten - President & LEO of Elementary*

The Ford Government's use of the notwithstanding clause during CUPE bargaining was nothing less than a continued attack on the bargaining rights of unionized workers. Rather than working harder to negotiate a fair deal for all, the government chose to take the easy way out and try to force a contract immediately upon CUPE using the notwithstanding clause. They could have chosen to just as easily move back to work legislation like every other government previously who wanted to look out for the best interests of students. The Ford Government decided instead to go to the extreme, hoping most certainly that the use of the notwithstanding clause would set an example of CUPE and assist in moving forward in their bargaining with the other affiliates in the education sector.

Several rallies were held following the government's announcement to move ahead with Bill 28, the *Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022*. Our Minister of Education continued to find his way to a microphone (not sure he has ever found one that he has not been able to attach his lips to) and kept spouting his ridiculous and clearly not-well-thought-out remarks each and every day. They were prepared to do whatever it took to keep students in class. What they were not prepared for though was the fight back. CUPE embarked on a powerful political protest and teachers showed up in droves to support CUPE on the protest lines. We were prepared to do whatever it took to protect our collective bargaining rights guaranteed under the Charter.

Teachers continued to do their best to support their CUPE colleagues while being unnecessarily forced back to synchronous learning. Remember, this was the method of learning created due to a pandemic; but as was quickly realized by all teachers, it could also clearly be used whenever the government saw fit to impose it. While the chaos this government created ensued in our schools, CUPE promised to stay out until Bill 28 was repealed. The government refused to try to find a resolution and instead went to the Labour Board to have CUPE's political protest deemed illegal. Throughout the weekend, the Labour Board deliberated; but before a decision could ever be made, the unthinkable happened - and with a massive show of solidarity, David (aka CUPE) was able to slay Goliath (aka the Ford Government).

This slaying could only happen because one thing the use of the notwithstanding clause could not override, one thing it could not defeat, one thing that clearly overpowered any tool the Ford Government had at its disposal, was unbreakable solidarity amongst unionized workers in both the private and public sectors across Ontario and Canada. The actions of the Ford Government even drew international attention. The threat of a general strike, an opportunity to shut down the economy and hit the Ford government where

it hurts, made Mr. Ford quickly backtrack on the government's stance. Unions who had supported the election of the Ford government now stood together on a platform with the many who did not as a united front against the reckless decisions of this government.

Monday, November 7th, 2022, will go down in history as the moment in time when workers defeated a government using the greatest tool of all: SOLIDARITY!



# CUPE Political Protest - November 4 & 7, 2022



## Bill 124 declared to be contrary to be void and of no effect

Karen Ebanks - Recording Secretary

In June 2019, the Government of Ontario introduced the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act*, commonly known as Bill 124. It limited wage increases for approximately 780 000 workers in the broader public sector to 1% per year for a three-year moderation period.

Labour organizations challenged the constitutionality of the Act in 10 separate applications. They are:

1. Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association
2. Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation
3. Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens
4. Ontario Nurses Association
5. Ontario Federation of Labour
6. Ontario Public Service Employees Union
7. Unifor
8. Society for United Professionals, Local 160 of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers
9. Power Workers' Union (Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 1000)
10. Carleton University Academic Staff Association

Under each applicant, the challenge is made in the names of members from that labour organization. I am one of two members named in the challenge from the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, who was the first of the 10 to file.

The challenge was heard September 12-16, 19-23, 2022 in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice and Justice Koehnen issued a decision on November 29, 2022. Unequivocally, labour won.

The applicants argued that the Act limits the freedom of association, freedom of speech and equality rights of their members under the *Canadian Charter of rights and Freedoms*. Ontario denied that the Act infringes on any of these rights and submitted that if the Act does infringe on any Charter rights, it is saved by s. 1 of the Charter as a reasonable limit that is demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Justice Koehnen found that the Act did infringe on the applicants' right to freedom of association under s.2 (d) of the Charter, does not violate the applicants' freedom of speech or equality rights under the Charter and that the Act is not saved by s. 1 of the Charter.



The Supreme Court of Canada has granted constitutional protection to collective bargaining and the right to strike as part of the freedom of association guaranteed under s. 2(d) of the Charter. The constitutional right to collective bargaining guarantees the right to a meaningful collective bargaining process that allows workers to meet with employers on more equal terms, to put forward proposals they wish and to have those proposals considered and discussed in good faith.

Bill 124 prevents collective bargaining for wage increases of more than 1%. The restriction interferes with collective bargaining not only by limiting the scope of bargaining over wage increases, but also by interfering with collective bargaining in other ways. It prevents unions from trading off salary demands against non-monetary benefits, prevents the collective bargaining process from addressing staff shortages, interferes with the usefulness of the right to strike, interferes with the power balance between employer and employees, and more. It was found that the Act is not a reasonable limit on a right that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society under s. 1 of the Charter.



There is a line of cases that has upheld the constitutionality of certain wage restraint legislation for where the government was facing a financial or economic crisis. In those cases, set limits on wage increases were at a level that was consistent with results achieved in free collective bargaining negotiations when the legislation was introduced. In Koehnen's view, Ontario was not facing a situation in 2019 that justified an infringement of Charter rights. In addition Bill 124 set the wage cap at a rate below that which employees were obtaining in free collective bargaining negotiations.

He noted that Ontario was free in any collective

bargaining negotiation to take the position that it could not pay wage increases of more than 1%. It appeared Ontario was unwilling to take that position because it could lead to strikes. As such, they imposed a statutory limit of 1% on wage increases because they feared that taking that po-



sition at the bargaining table would lead employees to exercise their constitutionally protected right to strike. Although inconvenient, the right to strike is a component of a free and democratic society.

It was not lost on labour that education and healthcare acutely felt the detrimental impact of Bill 124, and that the vast majority of such workers, such as teachers and nurses, are women. The 1% imposed wage cap for 3 years meant that workers were forced to accept wages far below the rate of inflation for too long. No one could predict that a few short months after Bill 124 received royal assent on November 8, 2019, retroactively capturing all collective agreements that concluded since it was tabled on June 5, 2019, that the world would enter into a global pandemic in 2020.

The very same public sector workers who had Bill 124 imposed on them would be called heroes by the Ontario government for being frontline responders to covid-19. Ontario watched as

The government of Ontario continues to face numerous legal challenges, including recently by the Ontario Health Coalition over *More Beds, Better Care Act, 2022*, known as Bill 7. At the



teachers did their best to adjust to hybrid learning, online learning and accelerated quadmester models to try and create a sense of normalcy and continuity for students, helping them feel safe while battling with their own deteriorating mental health. Ontario watched as nurses continued to call on the government of Ontario to repeal Bill 124 as nurses left the profession in droves, overworked, underpaid and no longer able to remain in unsafe conditions created by this government.

time of writing, the government of Ontario intends to appeal Justice Koehnen's decision that Bill 124 is declared to be contrary to be void and of no effect. This appeal is their right under the law and will be at the expense of the taxpayers of Ontario. We will be ready. Come what may, Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association members know that we have won a decisive victory with the success of this constitutional challenge, damages to be decided in a separate hearing.



Source: [Full Decision](#)



## Focus on our Members

*Greg Bolton - 1st VP & LEO of Secondary*

Congratulations to Cynthia Bettio, who has been awarded the prestigious Canadian Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching! Cynthia is one of our very own York Catholic Teachers. Cynthia is the Department Head of the Canadian World Studies Department at Our Lady Queen of the World Catholic High School in Richmond Hill.

Established in 1993, the award was created to celebrate and promote excellence in teaching in Canada. This esteemed award recognizes the outstanding contributions of teachers who positively impact the lives of their students and communities. The selection process is highly competitive and includes a thorough evaluation of the nominee's teaching practices, achievements and impact on their students and school community. The selection committee looks for nominees who demonstrate innovation, creativity and a commitment to excellence in teaching.

Cynthia is an exceptional educator who has demonstrated a commitment to excellence in teaching and has profoundly impacted the lives of her communities' students. Her dedication to her craft and her passion for learning is evident in what she does.

The project that Cynthia was nominated for involved innovative delivery of the Grade 10 History Course curriculum. With a focus on inclusivity, Cynthia devoted the delivery to re-examining Canadian History from 1914 to the present day through the perspective of traditionally underrepresented groups, including Indigenous people, racialized Canadians and women.

Have a look and listen to this article and accompanying podcast that digs further into the details of the project:



*The Governor General of Canada, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon presents Cynthia Bettio with the 2022 History Award for Excellence in Teaching.*

<https://www.canadashistory.ca/awards/governor-general-s-history-awards/award-recipients/2022/cynthia-bettio>

As a recipient of the Canadian Governor General's Award for Excellence in teaching, Cynthia joins an esteemed group of educators who are setting a high standard for teaching excellence in Canada. We are proud to recognize Cynthia for her exceptional work and her dedication to our profession.

## The Journey Towards a YCT Land Acknowledgement

Loredana Foti - Occasional Teacher Councillor

It's 8:30 am and I see two students stopped by another teacher in the hallway to pause for the anthem. They remain stopped for the anthem, but when the land acknowledgement is read shortly after, they attempt to creep stealthily down the hall to make their way to the classroom near me. As I quickly call them to a halt and invite reflection, I am suddenly reminded how important it is for us as educators to make sure our students absorb the words in the statement they hear every day to ensure it doesn't merely become "background noise". Even though the land acknowledgement has become part of our school experience and has become commonplace in an era of reconciliation, it can sometimes feel as though the acknowledgement is just a box to check off in the spirit of reconciliation.

This can certainly be true for us as teachers as well. As Catholic teachers, we are committed to reconciliation through the education of ourselves and our students, but how meaningful are land acknowledgments for us if they do not truly reflect an intentional *personal* commitment? How do we avoid land acknowledgements from becoming something superficial and performative? How do we avoid land acknowledgements from becoming something that is merely copied, pasted and read at all our meetings?

From the spark ignited by these questions came the journey towards our very own York Catholic Teachers land acknowledgement. Although York Catholic teachers has wanted our own land acknowledgement for some time, we have been using the board land acknowledgement. The Diversity committee felt the board land acknowledgement did not specifically reflect the sentiments of York Catholic teachers. It was time for us to recognize the intimate

relationship between the land we work on and its people in a new way. It was time for us to honour healing using our own voice. It was time for a land acknowledgement we could call our own.

The journey began with the Diversity Committee forming a partnership with the Communications Committee. Several reflective meetings were held to establish the criteria for the land acknowledgement, the language/terminology we wanted to include, and to share some resources that could be used to establish a template for the land acknowledgement. The committees agreed that the land acknowledgment should include an acknowledgement of the land/nations, should identify ourselves as members and our connection to the land, and should also include an authentic commitment to do our part on the path to reconciliation. Although none of us had expertise in the area of writing land acknowledgements, we shared a desire to learn and create a unique land acknowledgement of which York Unit could be proud. A writing team was then established to take on the important task of putting these ideas into words that would truly reflect York Catholic teachers' commitment to truth and reconciliation.

As someone who was on my own personal journey as I attempted to reckon with the tragic discoveries at residential school sites across Canada, I felt compelled to be a part of this opportunity to embark on a learning journey, to contribute to truth and reconciliation in a very personal and authentic way.

The writing team was composed of several York Catholic Teachers' Diversity and Communications committee members: myself, Jamal Warda, Frances Riley and Steve Vieira. We met several times



in the spring of 2022 to work through several drafts after establishing very detailed criteria. Our work was guided by the goal to create a land acknowledgement that truly connected York Catholic teachers to the land they were acknowledging and demonstrated a larger responsibility and commitment to action. It was also our priority to avoid historical revision or denial but rather, to honestly acknowledge the actions taken by colonizers and their effect on Indigenous People.

“For me, being part of the team meant moving beyond just saying words,” says team member Frances Riley. “I wanted to understand, to learn and to unlearn, all while paying respect to the original Peoples who lived on land YCDSB now calls home”.

The idea of moving beyond words was certainly the undercurrent that motivated each member of the writing team. For me, it was a way for us to collectively come together, to engage with the realities and challenges of oppression while connecting the distinct voices of York Catholic teachers to the words on a page.

Although we considered each word critically and did extensive research to make our land acknowledgement all we wanted it to be, it was the reflection, discussion and learning that took place that was most rewarding. A draft was presented to the York Catholic teachers executive for approval and we will be connecting with Indigenous partners for final consultation.

When we read our very own land acknowledgement for the first time, I will feel immensely proud of the work we will have done and the contribution we will have made to truth and reconciliation. Yet, I am also cognizant of the fact that this comes with a much larger responsibility. As Justice Murray Sinclair said at the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report: “It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people and mis-education of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation.” We are called upon to learn and unlearn and to inspire action alongside learning.



## Yes or No?

*Michael Oyston - Councillor*

As we move into the holiday season we are no doubt feeling the pressure that comes with getting ready for Christmas. Whether it is last minute gift purchases, planning for travel, large family get-togethers or just trying to get all of our students' work marked before jumping into the two-week "break", we are faced with a number of responsibilities. These responsibilities are often coupled with a multitude of initiatives in our classrooms as we work to ensure our students are set for the break and ready to return to more engaging learning experiences. As teachers, we give of ourselves time and time again, often at the expense of our own time and well-being. Many of us, whether through choice, external pressures, guilt or a combination of all of the above, will pile more and more onto our plates. Eventually though, we will run out of room on those plates, which leads to stress and burnout. Unfortunately though, a character trait of teachers tends to be that we are people pleasers. We generally put the needs of others before ourselves in an attempt to ensure that everyone else is taken care of and the idea of saying no to something is simply unacceptable for us. However, it is important to realize that the concept of yes and no are not one or the other. Yes and no work together. When we say yes to something we are saying no to something else. Conversely, and possibly more importantly, when we say no we are really saying yes to other, likely more important aspects of our lives.

There are countless examples of teachers being asked to coach a team, run a club, or take on yet another initiative within the school. By all means, these can be very worthwhile pursuits which enrich and enhance the learning experience for our students. In fact, many teachers get just as much fulfillment from these activities as the students themselves. However, it should not be lost on us that when we say yes to multiple responsibilities we are saying no to just as many opportunities. Saying yes to coaching a team may mean saying no to spending time with friends and family. Saying yes to running a club may mean saying no to picking up your kids from school. Saying yes to taking on a role within the school may mean saying no to personal time for self care. We have to allow ourselves permission to say no. Saying no may in fact provide us the opportunity to finally

get around to many of the important elements in our lives that often take a back seat to our lives in the classroom.

It is also important to ensure that our commitments align with both our personal and professional goals that we have set for ourselves. If your goal is to work on self care, then think about if the commitment to run a class trip aligns with that goal. Many of us often put off taking an AQ course as we just can't find the time. But if one of your professional goals was to increase your knowledge in a particular subject area, then setting aside time to take an AQ course may align with your professional goals. Allow yourself to say yes to your goals. When saying yes it is also important to think about your annual learning plan. Is the initiative you are about to agree to something that was stated as part of your learning plan? If it is, then go for it. If it is not, then perhaps you may want to seek out initiatives that align with the goals you have set out for yourself.

Even with all this information, we are still often left with a pit in our stomach that comes with saying no. It is often just far easier to say yes than face the idea that we are letting someone down, especially our students, when we say no. With this in mind, it may be helpful to reframe just what the idea of no actually looks like. Perhaps next time you are faced with a proposal that you really cannot see yourself getting involved with, try one of the following:

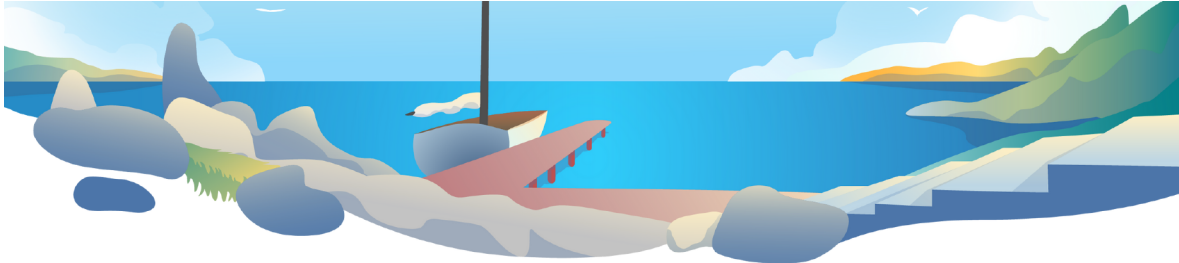
- Thank you for asking, but that isn't going to work out for me.
- I would like to do that but I'm really not available until \_\_\_\_\_, can you ask me then?
- I really can't fit anything into my calendar this month, can you follow up with me later?
- I really appreciate you asking me but my time is already committed.
- I wish I could, but it's just not going to work for me right now.
- Right now I'm working to create more balance in my life.
- I can't take on that entire task right now, but let me tell you what I can do.

These responses may be a little more palatable for some of us, yet still convey the message that you

have other commitments and priorities in your life to which you have dedicated time.

As we head into the holiday season take some time to think about yes and no and how you can create opportunities for what is most important in your life. It is my hope that you absolutely say YES to a wonderful and relaxing holiday season with all the best for the new year.

Merry Christmas.



Hi there,

We are delighted to announce our partnership with Starling Minds, a digital mental health program to help you build resilience to stress, anxiety, burnout and depression — **anytime and anywhere.**

1

### Take a Check-Up

Uncover insights into how you're doing.

2

### Build your skills

Your training sessions adapt to you. Providing you with the skills and tools to improve your mental fitness.

3

### Connect with Peers

Share your story and find support from peers in our anonymous community.

## Is it private and secure?

The program is 100% secure. We do not sell any of your personal health information to anyone. You'll select an anonymous codename for posting in the community.

## How to get started

Visit [member.starlingminds.com](https://member.starlingminds.com) and gain access with your access code: **OECTAMEMBER**  
If you have any questions, reach out to [members@starlingminds.com](mailto:members@starlingminds.com).

In good health,  
**OECTA and Starling Minds**

## Who are you? What do you do?

*Peter Sciacca - Certified Worker Member*

Greetings and salutations! My name is Peter, and I am the Certified Worker Member you never knew you needed (but now can't live without). Don't worry, I promise not to let my shyness get in the way of sharing a little bit about myself with you. I hope you enjoy this article filled with pop culture references and perhaps even learn something new about me and my role.

Teaching is my second career and my true passion. I may have been the oldest person in my Faculty of Education cohort, but age is just a number (right?). My first teaching experience was in a Kindergarten class, and let's just say I was a little bit nervous at first (to quote Gloria Gaynor, "I Will Survive"). Thankfully, my mentor was fantastic and helped me realize that I was meant for this rewarding career path.

I officially joined our Board as a French Immersion teacher in 2018, and I most recently taught Grades 4 and 5 French Immersion at St. Anthony. Throughout my teaching career, I have been fortunate to work with and be supported by an amazing group of colleagues. I'd like to give a shout out to all of the teachers out there who have helped guide and encourage me along the way.

In addition to teaching, I have also been heavily involved with our local unit, serving on numerous committees such as New Teachers, Young Authors, Professional Development, and Health and Safety (to name a few). Prior to teaching, I spent nearly twenty years in Human Resources, including a focus on health and safety for the world's largest wire and cable manufacturer. I was responsible for worker safety, ensuring ISO 9001 compliance, managing building maintenance, and providing worker training.

**So, what do I actually do** as your Certified Worker Member? It's simple, I represent all Unionized work-

ers (OECTA, CUPE, and OSSTF) within our Board and advocate for your rights as outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). I conduct inspections of schools and workplaces, oversee the Designated Worker Program, investigate instances of work refusals, critical injuries in the workplace, and incidents of workplace violence. I am also available to be present for any Ministry of Labor inspections.

Over the past few years, I have made it my mission to ensure that all workers within our Board have a safe and healthy workplace. I will continue to work towards upholding and respecting your rights as outlined in the OHSA. My office is located at the CEC (Catholic Education Centre), and I can be reached via the [ycdsb.ca](mailto:ycdsb.ca) or [yctoecta.com](mailto:yctoecta.com) email address. Don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns, especially regarding incidents of workplace violence (which, unfortunately, seem to be on the rise).

Thank you for allowing me to share a little bit about myself with you. As the Rembrandts so eloquently put it, "I'll be there for you..." (you know the rest).



# An Update From Your Occasional Teacher Representative (OTR)

## Anna Polisco

The last few years have been busy but very rewarding. Since our amalgamation in 2019, the sheer strength in our numbers as York Catholic Teachers, permanent and occasional together, makes sure our voices are heard. I welcome when occasional teachers reach out to me and ask me to share what I do in the office and how occasional teachers can get more involved.

As the Occasional Teacher Representative and Release Officer, my role is to address the concerns of occasional teachers. Most day to day problems can typically be resolved immediately with HR or the different school Superintendents when brought to attention. In this role, meetings are attended on behalf of occasional teachers and assistance is provided with issues such as working conditions and collective agreement clarifications, health and safety matters, workplace injuries, benefits, personal leave, sick and maternity leave, the attendance management program, SFE issues, staffing concerns, professional development, as well as social engagement events and other matters to support Occasional Teachers. I encourage occasional teachers to reach out at any time if assistance is needed.

With the help of our yearly Interview workshop which takes place in May, and the daily cross-referencing of job postings and eligible candidates, over 300 OTs have received permanent positions since our amalgamation. The Unit continues to work with HR to facilitate training and mentorship for OTs who have not been successful in obtaining a permanent position and remain committed to identifying and removing any barriers.

Occasional teachers continue to be invaluable additions to many committees. I am pleased to introduce our **OT Committee**: *Fiorella Elia, Loredana Foti, Thomas Frattaroli, Pamela Mariano, Julie Pauletig, Anna Polisco (Chair), Stephanie Rea, Maria Santella, and Sarah Welk*. We have had two very productive meetings where committee members brought forward a number of issues for discussion that pertain specifically to OTs - some of which will be included in our bargaining priorities survey and discussions with the Bargaining Committee and Team.

Our **OT Bargaining Committee**: *Patricia Dabrowski, John Fitzpatrick, Loredana Foti, Larisa Julius, Julie Pauletig, Antonio Piccone, Anna Polisco (Chair), Stephanie Rea, Maria Santella, and Sarah Welk* already worked hard on drafting our bargaining survey. In the new year, we hope to hit the ground running with the survey as well as an information meeting to prepare for local bargaining. Please take the time to fill out the survey as this will guide the Bargaining Team during our upcoming collective agreement negotiations. I want to thank both the Bargaining and OT Committee members for volunteering their time to better occasional teachers' lives and work experiences. All occasional teachers are encouraged to apply to any York Catholic Teachers committee with the exception of the Collective Bargaining Committee for permanent teachers.

That being said, the only way for OTs to receive current, as well as critical information regarding Union business and bargaining, is to activate and use their YCOT union email accounts. Please share this information with new members and urge them to reach out to the union office to assist with the setup, as we are unable to communicate via the employer's YCDSB email account.

If you ever wondered about the role of your Association, the election of your Provincial Executive, how your collective agreement was negotiated, and what you can do as part of the planning process to effect positive change, then you will want to attend the OECTA Annual General Meeting (AGM) on March 10-13, 2023 at the Westin Harbour Castle in Toronto.

The ultimate control and destiny of the Association is in the hands of its members. The AGM is important to the success of the Association because it offers an opportunity for delegates to review the inner workings of the Association. It facilitates the pooling of ideas and opinions, provides increased engagement, transparency and accountability, a shared sense of purpose as well as personal growth for delegates and leaders. As one of twelve Occasional Teacher AGM delegates, you will represent and vote on behalf of 70+ OTs. You have a chance to highlight the obstacles that Occasional Teachers face daily. You have the floor to voice your concerns, debate and clarify issues, present resolutions for consideration to overcome these obstacles, and solidify or change by-

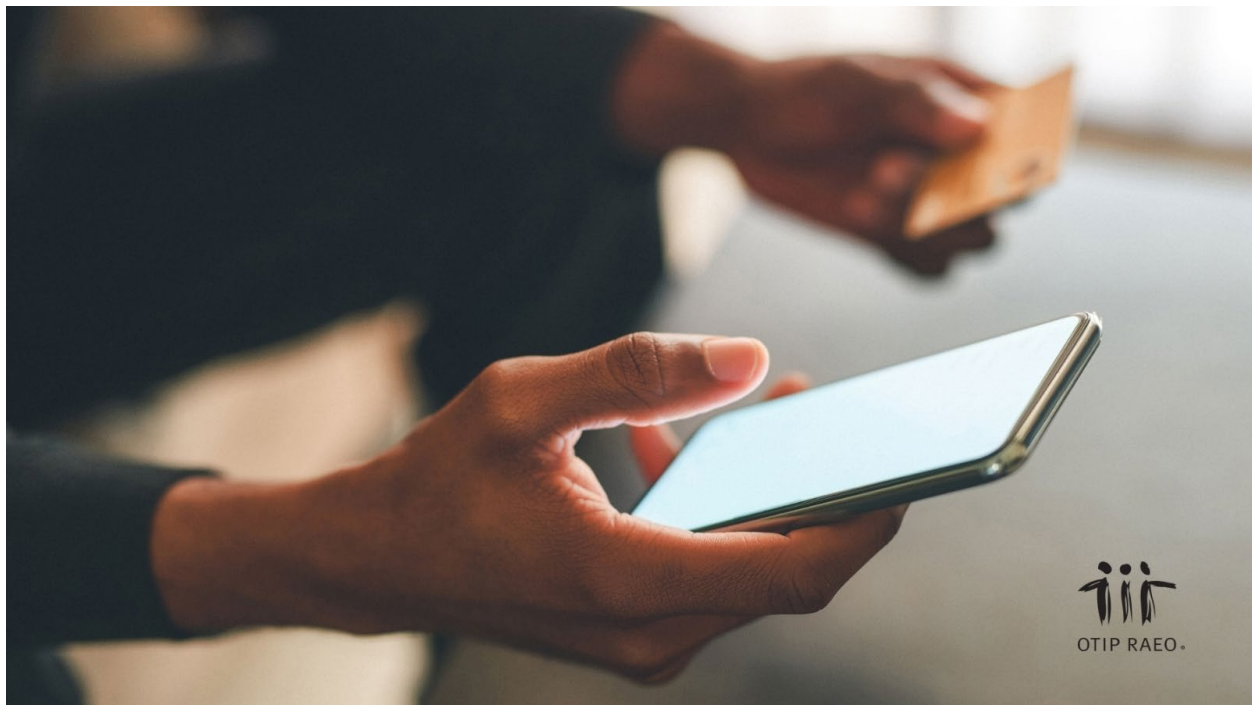
laws, policies and procedures in the Association handbook. It is also an opportunity to meet other members and expand your circle. If you are interested in being that change and exercising your right to vote, please contact me at the union office for further details.

As part of the York Unit motto of **giving back to members**, the **Social Committee**; *Pat Chiarella (Co-Chair), Devon Dimney, Fiorella Elia, Amanda Gervasi, Anna Lollino, Heather Manassis, Mary Marchello, Julie Pauletig, Anna Polisco (Co-Chair)* worked hard to produce a number of contests and events. Through these events, many OTs have won prizes; they also attended the Montreal Shopping Trip last October, the hugely successful Children and Adult Christmas parties, as well as signing up for the Ugly Christmas sweater contest. Over the next few months, other events such as the Marlies Day planned for March 29, the Ottawa Hockey Trip April 1, the YCT Volleyball Day planned for April 21, the Niagara Shopping Trip and Wine Tour taking place on April 29 and 30, and the Hamilton Musical at the Princess of Wales Theatre, on May 3 are already lined up. Occasional teachers are welcome at these events and should join in on all of the fun. They are excellent ways to meet, interact and share ideas with other occasional and permanent teachers.

Over the last few years, I have met and helped numerous occasional teachers and I am happy to continue to do so. I'm only an email or a phone call away, and my door is always open! I would also like to hear from you regarding any other opportunities or issues that you would like me to address or consider. Should you have any questions, feedback, opinions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

**May this Christmas and New Year bring peace, blessings, love and happiness to you and your family.**

Shop safely online this holiday season



Online shopping has become a big part of many Canadians' lives. As an online shopper, you get to avoid checkout lines, scout for the best prices and shop whenever you want – all from the comfort of your home. Here are nine online shopping safety tips to help prevent scams and protect yourself and your family this holiday season.

Read more at [www.otip.com/article157](http://www.otip.com/article157).

# Children's Christmas Party - December 3, 2022



## Union Representation

*Reg Shepherd - 3rd Vice President*

In a Unionized environment, workers have the right to representation when they feel the need arises. It is the job of the Association to ensure workers rights are protected and therefore members need to be aware that their protection is OECTA, not the Employer.

Often members are called to impromptu meetings with their Admin. We have an agreement with the Employer that teachers must be given advance notice of what the meeting is generally about and offered to bring Union representatives, if the member feels the need. In any case, where there might be a concern, this is a mandatory step. OECTA would always encourage you to seek out guidance from the Unit office and if needed, have a release officer be present during this meeting. This type of meeting should never involve the Staff Representative. This would also include any meetings or conversations with the Employee Disability and Wellness department and/or Attendance Management.

Alternatively, there are situations where a member is filing a complaint to the Employer. Whether you are the complainant or the respondent, your Administration or Manager should be notifying you that you are entitled to Union Representation, which is a release officer. The Association can assist in making sure the

proper steps are taken and your rights are followed.

Members need to be aware that Administrators are agents of the Board and, therefore must protect the interest of the Employer. Whether you have a positive relationship with your Admin, they have a duty to the Board and in some instances, may not be a positive outcome for your situation.

When a member is in a meeting, the release officer would be in attendance to ensure multiple steps occur. For example: Board Policy is followed, accurate notes are taken, the meeting stays on course, etc. As the Admin, Sr. Management and/or board personnel are there to investigate. They are unable to protect your rights.

The further benefit of having representation is if the situation were to proceed, extend or escalate, you would already have a representative in place, with detailed information.

If you are ever called to a meeting or contacted by the Employer, make sure you are aware of the issue and make an informed decision if you need representation.



**YORK CATHOLIC**  
TEACHERS



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## Births & Adoptions

Laura Innamorato, LTO at St. Charles Garnier on the birth of her daughter Layla.

Alex Konar, teacher at Sacred Heart CHS on the birth of his daughter Layla.

Lindsay Matthews, LTO on the birth of her son Austin.

Anna Polisco, OT Representative at the OECTA Office on the birth of her grandson Matteo.

Vanessa Riolo, LTO on the birth of her son Nathan.

Natasha Talamo, teacher at St. M. d'Youville and Daniel Talamo, teacher at Sacred Heart CHS on the birth of their son Marco.



## Condolences & Sympathy

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**The family of Carol Vanderberg**, OT who passed away.

**The family of Peter Sekirin**, teacher at St. Joan of Arc CHS who passed away.

Lisa Berardi, teacher at St. Patrick-Markham on the passing of her father.

Sonia Bovolini, OT, on the passing of her grandfather.

Patricia Brizzi, teacher at St. Augustine CHS on the passing of her husband's grandmother.

Grace Calamusa, teacher at Blessed Trinity on the passing of her brother.

Teresa Carvalho, LTO on the passing of her father.

Rita Conti, teacher at St. Stephen on the passing of her mother and grandmother to Alessia Conti, LTO at Holy Cross CHS.

Gianmarco D'Astoli, LTO on the passing of his grandfather.

Linda De Acetis, teacher at Christ the King on the passing of her father.

Loredana De Fazio, teacher at Holy Jubilee on the passing of her mother-in-law.

Isabella Gallo, LTO on the passing of her grandfather.

Vilma Haxhillari, teacher at St. Clare & St. Michael the Archangel on the passing of her father.

Tamar Jamjekian, teacher at St. Joseph-Markham on the passing of her grandmother.

Rick Lombardi, teacher at St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the passing of his father-in-law.

Elia Loschiavo, OT on the passing of her father-in-law.

Patricia Mamiani, teacher at Guardian Angels on the passing of her father and father-in-law to Paul Mami-ani, teacher at Holy Cross CHS.

Clara Mangiardi, teacher at Christ the King on the passing of her father.

Vera Marchese, teacher at St. Gabriel on the passing of her brother-in-law.

Sandra Mascarenhas, teacher at Fr. Bressani CHS on the passing of her mother.

Paul McBeth, teacher at St. Mark on the passing of his mother.

Teresa Romeo, teacher at Pope Francis on the passing of her mother.

Linda Tucciarone, teacher at St. Gabriel on the passing of her brother-in-law.

Annalisa Wilski, teacher at St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS on the passing of her father.