

# CSSEA NEWS

COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

A member newsletter  
published six times a year

June 2010  
Volume 17, Issue 02

## Talking the Talk: How to Take the Sting out of Giving Constructive Criticism

Doris Sun, Communications Coordinator

When it comes to workplace harmony, it can be attractive for managers to avoid “rocking the boat.” Nowhere is workplace conflict easier to avoid than when you have to critique an employee. It gets complicated when you have a team member who is the picture of an ideal employee: prompt, courteous and hard working. Despite those attributes, there may be one performance area lacking. Should you risk offending him/her or just live with whatever irks you? The truth is, giving constructive criticism is not a zero-sum game. Your gain does not have to be their loss! Here are some tips on how to give criticism in a way that reduces your apprehension.

**Work on your “Inner Game:”** Liz Reyer wrote in the McClatchy-Tribune News that in order to manage anxiety about giving criticism, you have to be in tune with the feelings provoking that anxiety. “If you’re angry, it’ll be hard to be constructive,” writes Reyer. “If you’re nervous, what are you afraid of?” You should approach giving feedback with confidence, adds Gregg Walker from Oregon State University. “Criticism voiced out of self-interest or competition may be destructive,” he says.



**Remain neutral:** Giving criticism is about a person’s behaviour, not about assigning personal blame. Walker suggests referring to what “a person does, not her or his ‘traits,’ or ‘character.’” Reyer calls this a “situation-action-outcome” conversation. An example is, “When you were late last week, your co-worker had to double her workload by covering your clients.” There should be no judgment, emotion or blame.

**Use “I” statements:** Emphasize that you are giving feedback based on your own perceptions and feelings. Take ownership

of what you think and feel about your employee’s behaviours.

**Discuss solutions together:** Walker suggests inviting a collaborative discussion of consequences and forming a partnership to deal with problems. Working in tandem against the problem is what will help keep the working relationship strong.

**Keep it private:** The last thing an employee wants is to be criticized within earshot of anyone else. Any performance-related conversation should occur privately. ■

Readers receive CSSEA NEWS via email and through our website. If your email address has changed, please notify us at [cssea@cssea.bc.ca](mailto:cssea@cssea.bc.ca)

Executive Editor  
Kathie Best

Editor  
Doris Sun

Contributing Writers  
Doris Sun  
Lorne Rieder  
Harris & Company

To contribute suggestions, articles or photos, contact:

Doris Sun  
604.601.3113  
[dsun@cssea.bc.ca](mailto:dsun@cssea.bc.ca)

Community Social Services  
Employers' Association  
800 Two Bentall Centre  
555 Burrard Street, Box 232  
Vancouver, BC V7X 1M8

TEL 604.687.7220  
1.800.377.3340  
EMAIL [cssea@cssea.bc.ca](mailto:cssea@cssea.bc.ca)  
WEB [cssea.bc.ca](http://cssea.bc.ca)



# From the CEO

Last week marked the wrap-up of the series of Town Hall Meetings held around the province. Going on the road and connecting with you face-to-face was an important and necessary experience for CSSEA, its Board representatives and myself as its CEO. In some regions the meetings reaffirmed your satisfaction with our service while in others, they highlighted a need for change and evolution.

Our conversations with you were as diverse as the regions we visited. You raised questions about CSSEA's role and mandate, the role of PSEC, MPP funding, the status of bargaining, and the like. A universal theme running through your comments was a need for clear, accurate and timely communication. Many of you

appreciate that, as a body working with both government and member agencies, we operate in a fluid and ever-changing set of circumstances.

**TOWN HALL MEETINGS TO SPUR ACTION**  
- Lorne Reider

Nevertheless, it is our job to keep you informed through the distribution of timely and relevant information. It is, and always has been, a balancing act, and one we will continue to keep top-of-mind moving forward.

We are currently hard at work examining all your thoughts and feedback for presentation to the Board later this month. We look forward to creating an action plan that will address the key issues you raised. As a first step, we've launched a new feature series that will outline the roles of the different stakeholders involved with CSSEA. In this issue (on page 3), we profile the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC).

I thank those of you, including Board and Panel members and government representatives, who attended the meetings and allowed us to gain insight into your concerns. Your participation in our evolution will no doubt benefit all who work in our sector. ■

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice recently placed substantial restrictions on the conduct of picketers during a legal strike. Prior to this decision<sup>1</sup>, the court had issued orders regulating the picket line, including restricting the delay of vehicles entering or exiting the premises.

The employer sought an injunction to place further restrictions on the picketers' conduct. The employer alleged the union had violated the previous court orders, engaged in criminal conduct, and blockaded the employer's premises. The employer also alleged the police had failed to intervene to enforce the terms of the previous orders issued by the court.

While acknowledging "isolated occasions" when the court orders had not been followed, the union argued that the strike had been peaceful and further court intervention was not necessary.

The court found approximately 40 instances when existing court orders had not been complied with, amounting to incidents of trespass, property damage, harassment, intimidation and violence on the picket line. While freedom of expression is a protected right, the court said consideration must also

**COURT IMPOSES SUBSTANTIAL RESTRICTIONS ON PICKETERS' CONDUCT**  
by Harris & Company

be given to: (1) the right of the employer to access its property and carry on its business should it so choose; (2) the safety of persons who are crossing picket lines, and their right to pursue their livelihood;

and (3) the community interest in upholding the law.

In balancing these interests, the court concluded that further restrictions on the right to strike were necessary in this case. As a result, the court ordered limits on the number of picketers in each location and prohibited the picketers from hiding or concealing their identities at or near the employer's premises. In addition, the court ordered sheriffs to take all reasonable steps required in the circumstances to prevent or stop breaches of the order.

This case is helpful for employers faced with striking union members who engage in conduct that undermines safety and interferes with the employer's ability to access its property and conduct business. The expressive activity involved in picketing must be balanced against consideration for the interests of the employer, persons crossing the picket line and the community at large. ■

1. Vale Inco v. USWA Local 6500 et al, 2010 ONSC 1774

# New Series: You Asked, We Listened

During the recent town hall meetings, some members expressed their desire for clarification about the roles played by key stakeholders. To address these inquiries, we have launched a special series to look at the “who, what, why and how” of those stakeholder organizations. This series will continue through the next few issues of CSSEA News and begins with an overview of the Public Sector Employers’ Council.

## Who is PSEC?

The Public Sector Employers’ Council (PSEC) is a structure created under the Public Sector Employers’ Act, whose mandate is to coordinate strategic labour relations across the broad public sector.

### Who Comprises PSEC?

- 6 employers associations
- BC Public Service Agency
- Ministers

### The Public Sector Employers’ Act?

- Created PSEC structure
- Created 6 employers’ associations
- Established roles and responsibilities for each

### What is PSEC’s Role?

- a) coordinates labour relations aspects of public policy decisions made by Ministries responsible for the sectors covered by employers’ associations
- b) works with public sector employers’ associations, the Ministry of Finance and sectoral funders to assist in the development of proposed mandate
- c) advises government on human resource issues that affect the public sector
- d) assists public sector employers to resolve human resource issues that are most cost effective and allow for the effective delivery of services

### Why PSEC?

- With over 50 per cent of government spending going towards public sector employee compensation, government needed a body to coordinate labour relations across the broad public sector
- Enables government to develop consistent and fair compensation and engagement practices throughout the broad public sector
- Provides a link between those who manage public sector employees and those who provide funding

## Key Factors in Setting PSEC’s Fiscal Mandate

The criteria considered when setting a proposed bargaining mandate are:

- 1) the ability of taxpayers to pay
- 2) government policy priorities and service delivery
- 3) recruitment and retention priorities

# In Profile: Dana C. Gorbahn on the Evolution of HIGH ROAD Services Society

We spoke with the Executive Director on how a small, grassroots organization became an important advocate of the developmentally disabled in the northwestern BC town.

## A History of HIGH ROAD Services Society

HIGH ROAD Services Society is an organization that provides services for individuals with development disabilities.

**2005:** A group of parents came together in May with a resolve to enhance the services in the area. Eventually, they started to be noticed both locally and provincially.

**2006:** On February 28, the parents initiated a society called SMITHERS PARENT/SELF ADVOCATE COALITION SOCIETY.

**2007:** Members resolved they would become service providers. In the spring of 2007, they were awarded service contracts for five programs.

**2007:** On July 1, 2007, the agency was officially opened. HIGH ROAD currently employs 39 staff and has an annual revenue of \$1.1 million.

## What do you tell friends about working in the social services sector?

We know there are many different kinds of employment opportunities in the world; however, we know the gratification and satisfaction that comes from working with this population. We know this is essential to our own quality of life. We love what we do!

## What is the hardest part about your job?

Going home! This could be viewed in two ways. First, I love our work, I really do!

We have such wonderful employees and individuals in our workplace that it is sometimes like you are at home with people that you care about. But second, it is sometimes difficult to go home because of the volume of work we find ourselves needing to do. We are stretched to our capacity and if we do go home, the amount of work continues to grow.

## How do you maintain a great sense of team?

I think that we have been successful in developing an overall sense of teamwork for the organization because of the common goal that we have and the personal satisfaction and reward that comes from that. However, we certainly have a greater sense of teamwork within our different programs because of the closeness of the work that we do with each other. I do believe we can expand upon our abilities to strengthen our whole organization with inter-program activities and collaboration.



Dana speaking at the grand opening of HIGH ROAD in 2007.

## What approach do you use when offering team members constructive criticism?

We endeavour to validate with our staff that they are doing an important job and that the work that they are doing is making a difference in the lives of the individuals we serve. That being said, we offer our staff what we

believe to be necessary suggestions for improvement in whatever areas that are needed. We reinforce that this is work we endeavour to do together, and that we are available to assist them in any way they need. We also try to give specific concrete examples of the activities which we would like to see. Another approach is through observation of associates and an immediate feedback of their actions, with constant positive reinforcement.



Dana (back row) and others rooting for the Canucks during their recent playoff run.

## How do you keep employees engaged?

We want our staff to feel they are heard. We want them to have fun. During our regular staff meetings, we ask our staff how can we best support them. It is crucial to us that the staff understand that they are supported in their positions. They understand they can have access to us at any time they need. We also take time together to discuss any difficulties they might be facing and try to brainstorm those together. Planned events are also held for staff to feel appreciated at their work sites. These include Christmas parties, days at the lake, etc. We also find our Satisfaction Survey and Strategic Planning Surveys can be helpful to gauge what staff feel are important. ■

## Funding Available for Employee Training

A new provincial program, known as the **Workplace Training for Innovation Program**, is offering both businesses and not-for-profit employers the chance to receive funding for workplace training. To be eligible, employers must be:

- Small organizations (less than 50 employees)
- In good standing with the BC Corporate Registry
- In existence for one year or more
- Able to certify that they would not undertake the training without financial assistance from the province.

The maximum funding available per employer is \$5,000 and the maximum funding available per employee is \$1,500.

For more information go to: [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/workplace\\_training\\_program/welcome.htm](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/workplace_training_program/welcome.htm)

### Bargaining Update



CSSEA's bargaining team met recently to prepare for upcoming bargaining meetings with the Community Social Services Bargaining Association.

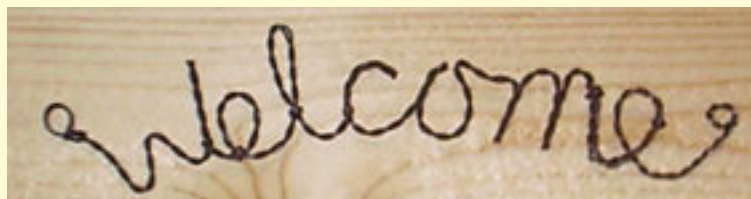
### The New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) and You

The governments of BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan recently signed an agreement that will effectively "remove barriers to trade, investment, and labour mobility..."

#### How this affects you

- Inter-provincial expansion opportunities
- More competition within our sector
- Larger talent pool can improve recruitment and retention efforts

For more information, contact the Trade Initiatives Branch of the Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development at 250.952.0635 or [tilmabc@gov.bc.ca](mailto:tilmabc@gov.bc.ca)



CSSEA welcomes three new members: **An Association Advocating Women & Children, Prince George, Squamish Helping Hands Society and Willowbrook Services for Community Living Ltd., Kelowna.** We look forward to working with you!

## Sectoral Case Updates

**Continuity of Service Grievance** – Arbitrator Germaine upheld CSSEA's position that the matter is within the jurisdiction of the Labour Relations Board.

**Use of sick leave by part-time employees** – Hearing dates are being set. In order to ensure the issue is heard as quickly as possible, the parties are canvassing Arbitrator Vince Ready's cancellation dates as they arise.

**Job Evaluation** – A hearing date with Arbitrator John Steeves has been set in June subject to any conflicts with bargaining.

**Labour Relations Board Applications** – CSSEA has filed an unfair labour practice complaint based in part on the failure of the CSSBA to bargain in good faith due to the internal dysfunction created by the Articles of Association. CSSEA has also applied for interested party status in the CSSBA's applications.

**Class 4 Driver's License Issues** – These files are being consolidated before a single arbitrator for adjudication. Arbitrator selection is underway.

## Surveys to Come

We had a brief hiatus, but will soon be resuming our survey efforts! Watch for the **Management and Excluded, Executive Director/CEO and Turnover Surveys** in the coming months.

Currently, we are tweaking our survey format to allow you to complete the surveys with greater ease. We will fill you in when they are ready but in the meantime, thank you in advance for your participation!

## Bits and Bites

The **Healthcare Benefit Trust (HBT)** has hired Jan K. Grude as their new CEO. Prior to this assignment, Jan worked for a human resources consulting firm in New York City.

Carol Metz-Murray, a member of CSSEA's General Services panel and Executive Director of Tri-City Women's Resource Society, has been re-appointed an HBT trustee for another three-year term.

## What to Expect at the 2010 AGM and Fall Conference

Your agency will be receiving this year's AGM and Fall Conference brochure soon. We worked hard to bring you a well-rounded selection of courses, which we're confident you'll enjoy!

*The Green Initiative returns, as we continue to do our part to eliminate waste!*

*Launch of a provincial association showcase*



*Lunchtime keynote speaker!*

*Fun social events like a Tuscan dinner!*

*Limited Member Subsidy program, which offers financial assistance for members to attend the AGM and Fall Conference!*

**We look forward to seeing you in Kelowna from October 5-7!**