

## Look who is putting food on your table



**FARM WORKERS**  
Thousands of migrant farm workers in Ontario are exempt from the legal minimum wage.



**RESTAURANT WORKERS**  
Average wages for restaurant workers remain below the poverty line at \$12.36/hour.



**FOOD BANKS**  
Nearly 13% of food bank users are workers making minimum wage.


# You Deserve a RAISE

**FAIR wages NOW!**


# It IS Possible.



**Strengthen the local economy!**



**Create Jobs!**



**Reduce income inequality!**

Raising the minimum wage is good for Ontario

**\$14 NOW!**

Peace

Prosperity

Justice

and a \$14 minimum wage

*Make things merry and bright in 2014!*

**\$14 NOW!**

## Symptoms:

- \* diabetes, heart disease, chronic stress, depression
- \* lagging economic growth
- \* lack of jobs
- \* strain on Ontario healthcare
- \* many cannot afford healthy food – 376,000 visits to food banks each month

**Rx Doctors' Orders:**

**\$14/hr for a healthy Ontario**

Call the Premier on January 14th at (416) 425-6777 and your MPP

**\$14 NOW!**

## Look who is lobbying to keep wages low

The Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association and The Retail Council of Canada

**McDonald's**  
**\$5.4 Billion\***  
Board Member of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association

**Toys 'R' Us**  
**\$239 Million\***  
Board Member of the Retail Council of Canada

**Tim Hortons**  
**\$402 Million\***  
Board Member of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association

Minimum Wage has been frozen at \$10.25 for 3 years

# You Deserve a RAISE

**FAIR wages NOW!**

\*Profit figures from 2012 year end annual reports \*Profit figures for 4th quarter fiscal 2012



21%

↑

Eggs

16%

↑

Frozen Meat

7.5%

↑

Fresh Fruit

-6.5%

↓

Minimum Wage

# You Deserve a RAISE

**FAIR wages NOW!**

Changes in costs between 2010 to 2012





**The Workers' Action Centre** is a worker-based organization committed to improving the lives and working conditions of people in low-wage and unstable employment – through education, support, research, policy analysis, advocacy and community action. Our work is guided by these principles: maximum involvement of the people affected, developing leadership among workers, shared learning, and action for change.

The 2013-14 year has been incredibly busy – on the frontline assisting workers to resolve workplace violations and understand their rights; supporting our members as they speak out for fair employment in their communities, with social justice allies and to the general public; and working with our provincial allies to fight for a fair minimum wage. We are excited to see the development of a provincial network working to improve

wages and working conditions, and have been providing mentoring and guidance to local activists in several Ontario communities who are developing their own workers' centre.

WAC and our members are proud to be advocates for change and thus, under current legislation, WAC cannot be a registered charity or issue tax receipts. That is why we need your support. A contribution to WAC will support our advocacy and political work .... fighting for fair wages and decent jobs for all workers in Ontario. Please consider making a one-time gift or becoming a monthly supporter by joining our Monthly Solidarity Program. If you are a union member, please ask your union local to support our work. Contact us to see how you can help.

**Together we can make change happen!**



## Protecting Workers' Rights



**Workers' Rights Information Phonenumber:** providing over 1,000 workers with information, support and referral in English, Spanish, Tamil and Mandarin



**Info Sessions & Support Clinics:** at our downtown office and in Scarborough, provide one-on-one support to workers who have called our Information Phonenumber



**Community Workshops:** educating workers about their workplace rights at over 40 community agencies across the GTA



**Frontline Trainings:** for community agency staff, increasing their awareness of workplace legislation & issues facing workers. In 2013-14, trainings were held in Sudbury and Burlington



**Factsheets & Booklets:** providing essential information on workers' rights issues and legislation. In 2013-14 two new factsheets were produced: 'Employment Standards: The Basics' and 'Human Rights in Ontario', including translations into Tamil, Chinese and Spanish



**Online & Social Networking:** providing up-to-date information, resource materials and analysis on issues affecting workers in low wage and precarious employment. You can find WAC on the web, friend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter – or sign up to receive our regular email alerts



WAC Community Leader graduates honoured at AGM

## WAC Members on the Frontline

2013-14 has been an incredible year of action for our WAC membership. Our members were instrumental in shaping WAC's role in the Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage and taking the "\$14 NOW" message out onto the streets. WAC members were there every step of the way – on the frontline of the monthly "14th Days of Action" rallies, visiting their local MPP's, networking with labour and community allies, getting signatures on postcards and petitions, speaking out at community events, rallies and in the media. Our members are a force to be reckoned with!

In addition, WAC members continued to support the work of our social justice and union allies – attending coalition meetings, community events, information fairs, and marching in solidarity.

Thirty-five members attended one of three WAC Community Leader training programs presented in 2013-14. Members attended 3 days of classroom training, and then took up the challenge to organize and deliver two community workshops or events on workers' rights in their local communities. Work has begun on the development of a more advanced training and membership structure to further develop their skills as community organizers.

WAC is a place to share, make friends, support each other – and organize for change!

"We all deserve decent work and decent lives. Ontario is stronger when we all thrive."

Lorraine

## Media Moments



### Member interviews:

#### Radio

CIUT FM  
CBC  
Metro Morning  
Voces Latinas

#### TV

CP24  
CBC news  
CTV News  
OMNI 2

#### Print

Toronto Sun  
Our Times  
The Toronto Star

#### Online

Rabble.ca

## Public Speaking



### Members spoke to:

**100 neighbours** in the Davenport riding of Toronto

**150 activists** at the "Stitching the Social Safety Net" OCAP event

**300 community members** at the "Fight for Fair Wages" rally

**400 activists** at the OCAP Raise the Rates Rally

**500 women and their supporters** at International Women's Day

**600 union members** at the OFL Rally to Raise the Minimum Wage



# Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage Resonates Across Ontario



On March 21, 2013 the province-wide “Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage” was officially launched. From the beginning, WAC has been in the forefront and on the frontline of this campaign. WAC is a member of the Steering Committee, as well as co-ordinator of the provincial network. Our core demands are a \$14/hr minimum wage to bring workers 10% above the poverty line, with guaranteed annual increases indexed to inflation. To reinforce our message, monthly “themed” actions around the province on or about the 14th of each month were organized. In addition, thousands of postcards and petitions were collected by allies from all corners of the province.

*THIS PAGE: Surprise visit, Eaton Centre NEXT PAGE LEFT: Street carnival, Dufferin Mall NEXT PAGE RIGHT: Outreach blitz, St. Lawrence Market*



In solidarity with our allies from the union movement, social justice organizations, faith movement, anti-poverty groups, student movement, healthcare community, and local activists in communities across Ontario ... Barrie, Belleville, Brampton, Brantford, Burlington, Chatham, Cobourg, Cornwall, Guelph, Hamilton, Kenora, Kingston, Kitchener-Waterloo, Leamington, Lindsay, London, Markham, Newmarket, Niagara Region, Oakville, Oshawa, Ottawa, Peterborough, Sarnia, Sault Ste Marie, Simcoe, St. Catharines, St. Thomas, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Toronto, Welland, Whitby, Windsor, Woodstock, and York Region. **Together we are strong!**

## DAYS OF ACTION

### Aug 14, 2013 – actions in 10 cities

*“Let’s send a message to Queen’s Park”*  
WAC Action: Pop-Up Street Party in Flemingdon Park

### Sep 14, 2013 – actions in 12 cities

*“Look who’s lobbying to keep wages low!”*  
WAC Action: street carnival in front of Dufferin Mall

### Oct 12, 2013 – actions in 14 cities

*“Look who’s putting food on your table”*  
WAC Action: outreach blitz at St. Lawrence Market

### Nov 14, 2013 – actions in 25 cities

*“It is possible! Raising the minimum wage is good for Ontario!”*  
WAC Action: WAC & allies delivered \$5 billion cheques to 17 MPP’s

### Dec 14, 2013 – actions in 18 cities

*“Peace, prosperity, justice and a \$14 minimum wage”*  
WAC Action: Santa and elves at Yonge/Dundas Square

### Jan 14, 2014 – Province-wide ‘call in’

*“Doctor’s orders: \$14 for a healthy Ontario”*  
WAC action: Thousands of postcards delivered to the Premier

### Feb 14, 2014 – Province-wide ‘text in’

*“Ontario families deserve \$14”*  
WAC action: rally at Yonge/Dundas Square, with “surprise visit” to the Eaton Centre

### Mar 8, 2014 – IWD

*“Low pay is a women’s rights issue”*  
The Fair Wages Now Campaign led the International Women’s Day march in Toronto.

## Media & Social Networks Buzz

One of WAC’s major roles in the campaign has been to develop and manage its social networking presence. Building on the website launch in March 2013 (with 63,493 visitors in 2013-14), a Facebook page (3,072 followers) and Twitter feed (421 followers) were developed, as well as an e-alert with 1,442 subscribers. Our January urgent action info graphic was shared via Facebook and viewed by 17,320 people!

## \$11 Not Enough

In January 2014, the Liberal government announced a raise in the minimum wage on June 1 to \$11/hour and introduced legislation to increase minimum wage with the cost of living each year. While this is an important step forward, \$11/hr still leaves full-time workers 16% below the poverty line. This is legislated poverty. We will continue the fight for a fair minimum wage in 2014-15.

“Any increase in the minimum wage is a good thing for workers... but the raise to \$11 doesn’t go far enough. It still leaves people in poverty. And that’s why I’m working – to get out of poverty.”

Amelia





## On the Policy Front

### **Closing the Employment Standards Enforcement Gap: Improving Employment Standards Protections for People in Precarious Jobs**

In 2013-14, WAC became involved in a 5-year research project with seven Ontario universities and 16 partner organizations, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The research will be looking at ways to improve enforcement of our basic labour laws. For non-unionized workers, the Employment Standards Act (ESA) lays out the basics of our working conditions such as wages, work hours, vacations and leaves. In Ontario, where only 28% of workplaces have unions, over six million workers rely on the ESA as their only workplace protection. The research goals are to:

- Explore the types of violations workers are facing;
- Document current enforcement policies and practices such as inspections, complaints investigations, and dispute resolution;
- Identify different models of enforcement that could be helpful to Ontario.

### **Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO)**

WAC has continued its involvement in the PEPSO research project, also funded by SSHRC. This project is looking at the impact of poverty and unstable work on workers, their families and communities. This project will be releasing its second report in 2014-15, based on survey results of working conditions of people in Southern Ontario.



## On the Legislative Front

In the fall of 2013, the Ontario government introduced a series of five bills which would have improved employment standards for many Ontario workers. These improvements are long overdue and were introduced, no doubt, as a result of the work of WAC members and our allies from communities across Ontario calling out for change. WAC worked hard to support these bills, while pushing for the inclusion of improvements to further strengthen protections for Ontario workers. Unfortunately, the call for a 2014 spring election took all of these bills off the legislative table. Some of the important changes which had been introduced were:

- Make temp agencies and the client company jointly responsible for paying workers' unpaid wages and overtime pay;
- Ensure that the client company is responsible for workplace injury and accident costs involving temp agency workers;
- Calculate annual increases to the minimum wage by the rate of inflation each year;
- Ban recruitment fees for all migrant workers and require recruiters to be licensed;
- Extend the time limit for workers to complain about wage theft from 6 months to 2 years;
- Extend the time limit for workers to claim unpaid wages from 6 months to 2 years;
- Eliminate the \$10,000 cap on the amount of unpaid wages that can be claimed;
- Make it easier for workers to form unions and have a voice at work.



In the coming year, WAC will push to have these legislative improvements reintroduced and strengthened.



# Supporting the Migrant Worker Community

WAC has been working closely over the past year with our allies - the Caregivers' Action Centre, the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change and Justicia for Migrant Workers. It's critical that we raise the floor of standards for all workers, and build solidarity and alliances to fight together for decent work for all workers in Ontario.

WAC has supported the "Make It Right" campaign launched by Migrant Workers Alliance for Change. No longer should workers be treated as second-class citizens, with weak protections, few benefits, and precarious status. Legislation introduced by the provincial government in the fall of 2013 proposed to extend the ban on recruitment fees from live-in caregivers to all migrant workers. This is a small step forward, but nowhere near the major improvements needed. What real change looks like:

- develop a system to license recruiters and register employers;
- require recruiters to put forward a security deposit before being licensed;
- make recruiters and employers jointly and severally liable for any and all exploitative recruitment practices;
- prohibit employers from charging any fees to migrant workers and that the onus of fee non-payment be on the recruiter, not the migrant worker;
- increase the time limit on complaints to at least five years;
- ensure all migrant workers coming into Ontario have access to full immigration status & social benefits, protections from reprisals and meaningful labour protections.

Caregivers march at IWD



## A Big Thank You to our 2013-14 Project Funders

CAW Social Justice Fund

City of Toronto

Freedonia Foundation

The Law Foundation of Ontario

## A Special Thanks to:

- our Members, who make all our work possible
- our union brothers & sisters, social justice allies, and community partners, for your commitment and spirit to improving the lives of all workers
- our law students, lawyers and volunteers, who give their time, energy and support
- our individual Solidarity Program financial supporters.

## We would like to especially acknowledge the following organizations for their support, guidance and commitment to social justice:

The Atkinson Charitable Foundation

The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation

The Maytree Foundation

Ontario Employment Education & Research Centre

Parkdale Community Legal Services

## Financials

March 31, 2014

March 31, 2013

### Revenue:

Professional services	\$412,680	\$350,388
Project funding	\$252,672	\$193,003
Supporter contributions	\$47,620	\$25,186
Honorariums and misc	\$25,311	\$15,068
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$738,283</b>	<b>\$583,645</b>

### Expense:

Salaries and benefits	\$516,330	\$417,681
Facilities and administration	\$91,328	\$88,371
Publications and resources	\$38,330	\$24,198
Volunteers and participants	\$24,411	\$17,851
Meetings, workshops and events	\$17,456	\$15,519
Communications and outreach	\$10,650	\$9,327
Staff travel	\$6,902	\$6,107
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$705,407</b>	<b>\$579,054</b>

### Surplus for the year

**\$32,876**

**4,591**

*Excerpt from audited statements prepared by Cowperthwaite, Mehta Chartered Accountants. Full statements available upon request.*



# WAC By the Numbers 2013-14

1,154

workers  
attended an  
employment  
standards  
workshop

2,132

union sisters  
+ brothers  
heard a  
presentation  
about the  
campaign

6,782

allies + community  
members  
inspired by a  
minimum wage  
presentation

71

community  
workshops  
on workplace  
rights

1,070

workers  
called our  
Workers' Rights  
Information  
PhoneLine

13

language  
communities  
can access  
our materials

384

workers  
attended a  
support clinic

17

marches +  
rallies  
supported  
by WAC

75

media  
moments

6,620

factsheets +  
booklets  
distributed  
across Ontario

21

meetings  
with MPP's  
and govt  
representatives

58

support clinics  
connected  
workers with  
one-on-one  
support

31

member  
meetings +  
events

958

Facebook  
"likes"

50

frontline staff  
attended a  
train-the-  
trainer  
session

43

community  
agencies  
hosted a  
workshop

1,195

Twitter  
followers  
listen to our  
message

19,853

visitors to our  
website

## WORKERS' ACTION CENTRE

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### 2013-14 Board of Directors

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Lilliane Namukasa (George Brown College)  
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