



North Island community workers striking in Campbell River and Courtenay on Monday

December 7, 2012

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Caring professionals from not-for-profit agencies that support vulnerable families on the North Island will be on strike Monday, December 10.

Community workers want to send a clear message to the B.C. government: stop putting vulnerable families last!

Since 2004, the B.C. Liberal government has cut \$300 million in funding for programs that support vulnerable families, the developmentally disabled, at-risk youth, and children and infants in community-based programs across the province.

The following not-for profit community agencies will be on strike on December 10:

The Campbell River and District Association for Community Living (CRDACL) provides services for people with special needs and their families, including group homes and day programs, infant development and more.

There are around 130 CRDACL workers represented by the B.C. Government and Service Employees Union (BCGEU). **The BCGEU will be picketing the head CRDACL office at 301 Dogwood Street in Campbell River from 8:00am to 4:30pm.**

In Courtenay, Health Sciences Association (HSA) members from the **Comox Valley Transition Society and John Howard Society** will be on strike December 10, but there will be no picket lines.

Instead, **striking HSA members will be gathering at 1625 McPhee Street** to serve hot chocolate, chili or soup and collecting warm clothing for those in need while leafleting the public.

The **Comox Valley Transition Society** (CVTS) provides supportive programs for women and children fleeing violence, including transition housing, counseling, education and advocacy as well as a thrift store.

The **John Howard Society of the North Island** offers youth support services, including rehabilitation, education, and prevention programs.

After a decade of cuts and neglect, community workers believe the B.C. government needs to re-fund community-based social services programs.

The caring professionals in the sector have faced a decade of declining wages, with starting wages now below the living wage. Residential care workers start at \$15.54 an hour, down from \$16.83 ten years ago. That's a wage cut of one-fifth, factoring in inflation.

Since October 16, rotating strike action in community-based social services have impacted agencies around British Columbia, including in Vancouver, Kamloops, Prince George Victoria, Nelson, Vernon, Williams Lake, and many others.

The BCGEU and HSA are a part of the Community Social Services Bargaining Association, which includes ten unions representing 15,000 workers in the sector.

Further job action will be announced in Nanaimo, Parksville and Victoria later in the week.

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