



# Community workers from not-for-profit agencies striking Monday

December 7, 2012

## Comox Valley Record

North Island community workers will strike in Campbell River and Courtenay on Monday.

Professionals from not-for-profit agencies that support vulnerable families on the North Island will be on strike Dec. 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 Dec. 10 in the Comox Valley.

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

Instead, striking HSA members will gather at 1625 McPhee St. in Courtenay to serve hot chocolate, chili or soup and collect 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 10 years ago. That's a wage cut of one-fifth, factoring in inflation.

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

The BCGEU and HSA are a part of the Community Social Services Bargaining Association, which includes 10 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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