

2009-2011 REPORT OF THE AFL YOUNG WORKERS' COMMITTEE

At the 2009 AFL Convention Alyson Williams (TWU) and Adriane Nowicki (PSAC) were elected Vice Presidents representing the concerns of young workers. The alternate elected at convention was Michelle Cahill (UFCW). Adriane Nowicki was appointed Council Liaison.

Like any committee, membership is vital and although the Young Workers had only a few members, the quality of membership was very high: in addition to the VPs and Alternate, the Committee includes Jullie French (CUPW); Whitney Lorentz (UUWA); and Chelsea Nypiuk (UNA). Both IBEW and CAW put forward members; however the members did not become active. The AFL YWC thanks the unions who supported the Committee by nominating members and encouraging these members throughout the term.

As one of the first orders of business, the Committee changed its name with the permission of Council. Youth, a term most often associated with adolescents, is not an accurate reflection of the committee's membership or target audience. As such, the committee became the AFL Young Workers Committee (YWC) and introduced itself as such at the AFL's 2009 Open House where YWC helped hostess in order to raise funds for the Youth Emergency Shelter Society in Edmonton.

YWC set objectives for itself in this term surrounding the concern of sustainability as a committee. There was not a committee in the past term (2007-2009) due to lack of active membership. And being a committee where membership is

limited to a small span of years does not necessarily encourage natural membership maintenance. This term's YWC introduced clarification regarding eligibility and term of members through a resolution proposed at this Convention. Additionally, the Committee adopted a program of education and increased participation in the labour movement and community. The plan was that through building networks and increasing the committee's presence in the community by involvement in the labour movement, sustainability as a committee would be realized. Of course, things don't always go according to plan.

YWC developed ties with the BCFL Young Workers, even attending their "lobby camp" in September which teaches young union activists the basics of getting involved in the labour movement, concentrating on lobbying.

In addition, the Committee worked with the CLC Young Workers and participated in meetings by teleconference. One of the benefits from this relationship was the opportunity of the Young Workers in Action (YWIA) course that is facilitated by the CLC. The Education Committee graciously agreed to offer the CLC's Young Workers in Action (YWIA) course during the 2010 AFL/CLC School in Jasper. The course provided a great learning and networking opportunity. The Committee provided a \$1500 total subsidy to the program participants.

In Spring/Summer 2010, YWC was invited to participate in a number of different activities by other AFL Equity Committees.

At least one member of YWC was able to participate in Human Rights & International Solidarity's initial trip to Little Buffalo to visit with the Lubicon youth; and one member was able to march with the Pride & Solidarity Committee and AFL in the Pride Parade in Edmonton in June 2010. With such a small committee, YWC was not able to participate in all the opportunities offered but remains very thankful for the invitations and hopes to work with more AFL committees next term.

Not being able to participate and become more involved in the community and the labour movement was discouraging and frustrating. Was it that we were not willing? No. Just that with so few committee members and those members being very busy individuals, it was difficult to organize and commit outside of regular meetings and attend events without notice well in advance. This challenge is the main reason, YWC propose the resolution to encourage all unions able to fund at least one young worker to future conventions.

It is without a doubt that the labour movement needs active, willing young activists. After making numerous unsuccessful pleas for more members from affiliate unions, YWC is proposing to do something about the common response from affiliates: **but how do we get young workers involved?** YWC has an expanding cross-Canada network and is hoping to create a survey/study asking that very question to young workers who are already engaged in the labour movement. The combined results should prove enlightening for all unions.

YWC discussed the need to rally behind a common goal, a longer-term project requiring different levels of participation, in order to renew the committee's drive and focus. Longer-term projects will also provide direction for meetings, something with which, at times, the committee struggled. The idea of developing a scholarship program was discussed as a method of advertising unions to young workers and would offer a consistent focus for YWC.

This term's YWC committed to being involved with the CLC Young Workers' Minimum Age campaign which is concentrated on lobbying different levels of government to implement a universal minimum age of work. This campaign offers an excellent opportunity to become part of a long-term project, continue developing networks, and educating youth in the community and young workers. The campaign is multi-layered and offers different levels of involvement for members. This term's committee has prepared much of the foundation for the AFL YWC to be involved in the main phase of the campaign to start in mid-2011. The Committee hopes next term chooses to continue involvement.

This small group of young workers has learned much. The path may have been bumpy, but the journey worthwhile. To look back at our accomplishments, we believe the Young Workers Committee (YWC) members should be very proud of themselves. It has truly been an honour to be a part of the AFL Executive and it is with much pride that we say we are members of this term's AFL Young Workers Committee.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of,

AFL YOUNG WORKERS COMMITTEE, 2009-2011

Jullie French, Co-Chair	CUPW
Alyson Williams, Co-Chair	TWU
Adriane Nowicki, Secretary & Council Liaison	PSAC
Michelle Cahill	UFCW
Chelsea Nypiuk	UNA
Denise Sirois	CAW
Jerry Toews	AFL Resource
Nancy Furlong (information)	AFL
Gil McGowan (information)	AFL

Committee members who served a partial term:

Whitney Lorentz	UUWA
Brendan Thompson	IBEW
Jim Selby	AFL Resource

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