

Samuel Robichaud
Son of Patricia Plourde, member of the Centre de Santé de Sudbury

The Value of Unions in our Society

Note: This essay was submitted in French. This is a translation of the original.

Many Canadian citizens have jobs that maintain their living conditions and their well-being. In many cases, the well-being at work is greatly influenced by the union associated with these individuals. In fact, a union is an association that aims to defend the collective interests of the workers in many fields of work. It allows a workplace that is safe and fair axed on social justice. Many of the advantages associated with a union are presented in the following paragraphs. This determines the value of unions in our society.

Usually a union has the following mentality: "one for all and all for one". Furthermore, a union represents a strong voice for each unionized worker. It represents the workers during negotiations with their employers and helps to promote transparency for each concerned party. For example, it ensures that each worker receives a fair remuneration based on the work done and on seniority.

Also, a union takes to heart the health and safety of workers by ensuring a safe and pleasant work environment for each unionized worker. It makes sure to prevent as much as possible accidents and illnesses associated to the unionized workers' workplace by updating work standards axed on the security of each unionized employee. After that, it requires and makes each employer responsible so that their employees put into practice those standards.

Furthermore, it maintains each employee's dignity by ensuring that employers are just, egalitarian and impartial towards their employees. A union protects each unionized worker's rights and freedoms. This is a responsibility within the union that is primordial for workers who are part of a visible or invisible minority within a company or organization. For example, according to statistics presented on your website (www.metallos.org), "unionized women make up to 7\$ more an hour than the others". This demonstrates that a union plays the role of guard dog for the unionized employees by ensuring that employers valorize social justice within their company or organization.

In fact, a union provides to employees a better sense of security about their jobs. This allows putting in place a healthy workplace by decreasing the uncertainties, insecurities and stress linked to the work of unionized employees. A union also aims to diminish the perception of "one against the other" and instead promotes the collective effort of employees. By ensuring a good working environment for employees the union allows the employees' productivity to increase at work. In this sense, a union helps to obtain a "win-win" situation for unionized employees as well as for the employers.

In conclusion, a union is a work element that greatly benefits workers. The advantages that we just enumerated allow us to see the purpose of a union and also the importance of the union in our society. Personally, I am happy and proud that my mother is part of your union. After writing this essay I also see the importance of being part of a union. Also, this essay has allowed me to learn that your union highlights the importance of collectivity and that is a value that I hold close to my heart.