# NEW SUPERSTORE CONTRACT HAS BESTWAGE INCREASES IN

YEARS



THE UFCW LOCAL 832 MEMBERSHIP MAGAZINE

**NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2023** 

# TELEPHONE TOWN HALL

# GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

# Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Near year's meetings will take place in February, May, September and November.

Starts at 7:00 p.m.

Join the meeting by phone! It's easy – we'll call and invite you in!

If you don't receive a call by 7:10 p.m. on the day of the meeting, call 1-877-229-8493 and enter ID Code: 112418 to join the meeting.

The President's Report, Secretary-Treasurer's Report and the minutes will be online before the meeting for you to review.

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# AS LONG AS THE SUN SHINES, THE GRASS GROWS AND THE RIVER FLOWS.

UFCW Local 832 acknowledges that we are gathered and work each day on ancestral lands, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeq, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. Our offices are located on Treaty 1 and 2 territory and our work extends into Treaties 3, 4 and 5.

We recognize the injustices done to the Indigenous peoples of this land and are committed to supporting and collaborating with Indigenous communities in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

# **UNION OFFICES**

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Jeff Traeger President

# A Path to a Brighter Tomorrow

2023 has been quite a year here at our Local. In April, a large group of delegates elected by our membership attended the 9<sup>th</sup> Regular Convention of our International Union, where, among many other events, our International President and the entire slate of officers was elected for a five-year term.

In May, we attended the Canadian Labour Congress triennial convention in Montreal, where our former Secretary-Treasurer, Bea Bruske, was re-elected to a second term as President.

In June, we started bargaining with Loblaw, our largest bargaining unit, and we negotiated throughout the summer months, getting the tentative agreement at the end of September. Our members working at Superstore ratified the great new deal at the end of October, and we'll begin bargaining for our No Frills members right away.

Perhaps the most important event of 2023 was the provincial election, where the Manitoba NDP led by Wab Kinew swept Heather Stefanson and the PCs out of office with a significant majority.

UFCW was extremely proud to be one of the first unions to support Wab Kinew and his diverse slate of candidates – our Executive Board unanimously voted to endorse them in March.

Seven years of austerity, cuts to public services, divisive politics, the erosion of our health care system and attacks on gender-diverse people and Indigenous communities came to an end and were replaced with the first First Nations Premier in Canada and a promise of hope for the future of Manitoba.

The PCs ran an American-style campaign viciously attacking Wab and other NDP candidates to distract the public from the fact that they had no record to run on after seven years of moving our province backwards. But, Manitobans saw right through the Trump-style tactics, which clearly showed on election day.

The NDP, on the other hand, ran on a platform of progressive change. Instead of trying to divide Manitobans, they focused on working to bring us together to create a unified and inclusive province that we can all be proud of. That message resonated with the people of Manitoba, and the results of that historic night filled me with optimism and excitement for our future.

For the last seven years, those of us in the labour movement have had to contend with a government that was clearly the enemy of working people and their families, whether it was by interfering with bargaining for professors at the U of M, unconstitutionally trying to restrict public sector bargaining through the Public Services Sustainability Act or forcing members of many different health care unions to vote to pick a union when they'd already picked one.

Today, I think I can speak for those like us here at UFCW who spend their days fighting for working people – and for equity-seeking groups – through representation and collective bargaining. We look forward to working with a government that sees value in all Manitobans and is ready to work hard to make Manitoba an inclusive and welcoming province.

Congratulations to Premier Kinew and the NDP team!

# Superstore Workers Vote Yes to New Agreement with Highest Wage Increases in 25 Years



The results are in and Superstore workers voted in favour of ratifying a new, five-year collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with their employer, Loblaw.

In early September, Superstore workers voted overwhelmingly in favour of giving their bargaining committee a strike mandate. That mandate changed the tone of ongoing negotiations bringing improvements to wages, benefits and working conditions.

"We could not have achieved this contract without the strong strike vote and support that Superstore members gave to their co-workers on our bargaining committee," says Jeff Traeger, lead negotiator and UFCW Local 832 President. "This bargaining committee worked long days and late nights to ensure we had significant improvements for all Superstore workers."

The five-year CBA includes the highest wage increase percentages that the union has negotiated in a retail contract in 25 years. There are also substantial changes to scheduling that will make it easier for part-time employees to get more hours and for everyone working at Superstore to achieve a better work/life balance.

UFCW Local 832 represents approximately 3,500 Superstore workers in Manitoba. The union will now go straight into preparations for negotiating a new contract for another group of Loblaw employees: its 400 members at No Frills stores.



# Remembering Bruno Zimmer

Written by Jeff Traeger

On September 18, 2023, Bruno Zimmer – the former President of UFCW Local 111 and the former Secretary-Treasurer of UFCW Local 832 – passed away peacefully after a brief illness.

Bruno immigrated to Winnipeg in the summer of 1954 and began working as a meat cutter at Swifts in St. Boniface. It took him only a year to be elected as a Shop Steward and it wasn't long after that he became a rep at Local 111, representing packinghouse workers in the thriving industry in Winnipeg.

At the first opportunity, Bruno put his name forward in the Local elections and became President – a position he would hold for nearly three decades. In 1989, that Local merged with Local 832 and Bruno became Secretary-Treasurer, working with former President Bernard Christophe.

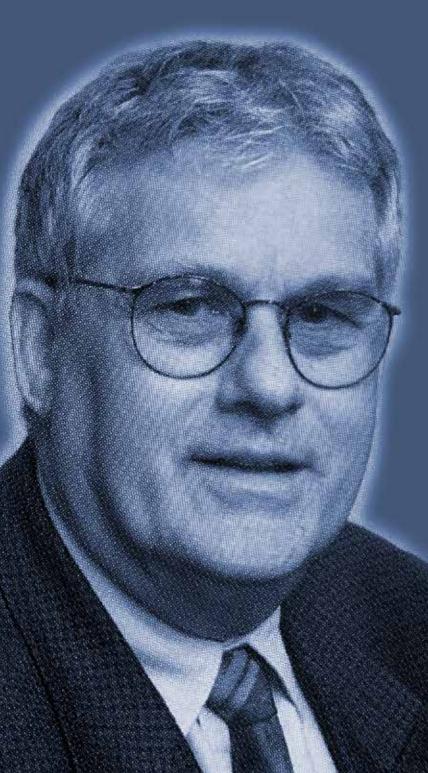
I first met Bruno in 1994 when I started working at Canada Packers. I was instantly impressed with his great passion for equity and fairness and with his depth of knowledge about health and safety and workers' compensation.

He was the first person at Local 832 that I did relief work for when he went away on vacation in 1998. While I was too green to do a good job, Bruno was extremely kind. Rather than being angry with me, he took me under his wing to teach me the ins and outs of health and safety.

His passion came from representing members he had worked with who had suffered debilitating injuries on the job, leaving them unable to have the respect and dignity they deserved in retirement.

He was a friend and a mentor throughout my career and someone that many will not forget. He left a great legacy in the Manitoba labour movement that will only continue to be strong if we remember the passion of people like Bruno Zimmer.

Rest in peace my friend.





# From Celebrations to Strike

Written by Carson Mauthe - former Celebrations member

Celebrations had sold the message that we were a "family" that worked for the love of joy and performance throughout its 25+ year history. We provided a happy place where people could be transported to another world. For many of us at the theatre, that visage disappeared in 2017 when the company provided us with an unwelcoming environment through years of understaffing, stagnant wages, and the removal of a yearly bonus. We all considered quitting at the same time, however, we ultimately decided to rebuild that world for ourselves – we unionized.

Of course, there were growing pains, but through each resolution and negotiated contract, we created a structure that both workers and managers could refer to when maintaining a fair work environment.

VUFCW JEN 132

In 2023, we were once again facing understaffing, eroding wages, and the removal of access to the company's wardrobe — after we had worked without a contract for three years as a good-faith gesture to the company to help it regain its footing after the COVID pandemic. The new ownership was unwilling to negotiate a new contract, to which we came together and unanimously voted to strike. Three days into our strike, the owner closed down the business.

Some may see this as a loss for us, but it wasn't. We were a workforce that built a happy place for our loyal guests, that created a welcoming environment in the face of hostility, that created a family. A workforce willing to stick our necks out for one another during an era of financial insecurity. We remain a family, and Act Three Entertainment lost us. We will be back – they won't.



# **Imposed Collective Agreements:**

# How does the Labour Board Decide?

This article was written and submitted by Tony Dempsey who is currently articling at UFCW 832 with the oversight of Debra Malmquist, UFCW 832's in-house legal counsel.

UFCW 832 negotiators are focussed on negotiating collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). They specialize in building bargaining commitees and negotiation with employers to get CBAs that benefit our members.

It's rare, but if your union and the employer cannot agree on what a new CBA should look like. Then the workers can end up on strike or locked out.

If a strike or lockout happens in Manitoba, there is a system by which the Labour Board can be asked to impose a collective agreement. This is imposed through binding arbitration, or what is often called Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR). This process can be trigged by either the employer or the union after 60 days of being on strike, and members do not get to vote on the final contract.

When this happens both sides put forward their best argument on what should be in the CBA and both sides agree that the Labour Board will determine what makes it into the finalized agreement. The Labour Board will only look at the outstanding items that were not already agreed to at the bargaining table.

To help them determine what a fair collective agreement should look like, The Labour Board uses a number of tests, guides and principles.

To the right are the big three values used to guide their decision:

# 1. FAIRNESS

The Labour Board's duty is to replicate negotiations between union and employer. It should ask: what would a CBA look like if the parties had not reached a standstill? The Labour Board will try to replicate the theoretical CBA that would have been agreed to if negotiations had not broken down. It will ask: What would a fairly negotiated and mutually-acceptable CBA look like?

# 2. MARKET

The Labour Board compares the theoretical CBA to others involving similar work and market conditions to ensure there are no breakthrough provisions unusual to the industry. They attempt to respect historical relationships and will only compare apples to apples.

# 3. BALANCE

The Labour Board needs to decide between union and employer arguments based on objective and reasonable criteria, as opposed to just finding a middle ground between both sides. You may have heard of the term "splitting the difference." If, for example, the employer argues for an hourly pay rate of \$16, and the union argues for \$20, it would make sense for the Labour Board to go with \$18. The final decision has to be within an objectively reasonable range. If the employer argues for \$16 and the union argues for \$100, the Labour Board will not "split the difference" for a \$58 hourly wage because the union demand here would be unreasonable.

While these are useful as guidelines, each case is unique and is considered on an individual basis according to its specific details.



In 1973, when Harold was 16 years old, the minimum wage was \$1.65. He wasn't even looking for a job when he went shopping with a friend and his friend's mother came and told them both that the store was looking for people and they should apply.

So, Harold went to 313 Pacific (an old Safeway location) for an interview. He was asked how much he expected to make, and nearly fell off his chair when he was offered the starting union wage of \$2.45 an hour.

He spent the next two years finishing school as a part-timer at the store, but after, he decided the money was good enough to stay. Harold was making \$3 an hour, while his dad was making \$4 an hour in construction. And. Harold didn't have to work outside!

"When Harold started, the wheels used to be square," one of his former managers used to say.

Harold has spent the majority of his time at Safeway in File Maintenance and he really enjoys the work of taking care of all the pricing, ensuring the tickets are correct, and the extra multitasking that comes with the position.

Harold has only recently scaled his hours down to three days a week now and jokes that he can work forever at this pace. June 15, 2024 will be his 51-year anniversary, and he plans to retire on or before then. Harold says his wife keeps laughing at him, telling him, "You keep saying that you could have retired five or six years ago."

A memorable moment for Harold was when his previous store was closing. It was an emotional time because he was helping with File Maintenance at the new Madison and Ness location, so he was away and wasn't able to say goodbye to many of his co-workers, who were either moving to new stores or moving on to new opportunities.

Harold ended up staying on at the new Madison and Ness location, working the night shift at the busy store. He eventually ended up in the freezer department. It wasn't ideal and Harold wasn't happy at first, but he accepted it on the condition that he would get two days off in a row every week. They made it work and Harold eventually got Sunday and Monday weekly, which has worked out great because that meant he had the time to work on his '69 Camaro and go to car shows.



As a shop steward over the years, Harold was able to have a lot of authority in the stores and go "head to head" with management, but minutes after, he was able to have a coffee with them and keep the grudge matches as "just business."

"At the end of the day, everything has worked out. I have nothing to complain about with Safeway. My family grew up with Safeway, food on the table, a roof over our head," said Kozeluh. "Sure, I have some stories, but I've worked with many good people."

Thank you for your many years of service, Harold!



YEP attendees for bargaining



From October 20 - 22, UFCW 832 once again gathered a crew of young workers for its second annual Young-Worker Education Program!

The weekend started on Friday as members met over a meal to start getting to know each other.

On Saturday, they got a full-day session: a crash course in union activism, UFCW history and union engagement in politics. They were fortunate to have Jelynn Dela Cruz talk about her experience being the youngest woman elected as a Manitoba MLA. She talked about her path to politics, her life as president of the student union at the University of Manitoba, dealing with people doubting her and the extra pressures that women in the spotlight face that men don't.

That afternoon, the group got into everyone's favourite workshop: **Mock Bargaining.** The group was split up into union and management and both sides are given a mandate. They gather their wits, calm their emotions and push to gain all that they can at the bargaining table.

On Sunday, the group went to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights for a tour and workshop on labour rights, human rights, social justice activism and making change. Then they met with Local 832 leadership to talk about their experiences and provide feedback on how the local can get more young members involved.

UFCW 832 has a blast hosting these young worker events and getting to learn more about our young members. We look forward to next year's YEP!



# Workplace Profile: Bunge



Driving just a few kilometres west of Russell, you can see the Bunge plant as you come over the hill on the other side of a large valley. Inside the vast plant, you can find just over 50 UFCW members working hard to ensure that canola oilseed and grain products are processed for supply and tested for quality.

Our members work in multiple departments and areas, including the warehouse, elevator transfer facility, production, refinery, extraction, laboratory and maintenance.

At the end of July, Union Rep Dustin Rogers, and Communications Coordinator, Chris Noto were able to tour the facility and learn more from our members about their work.



Bernice Clunas and Brent Kempthorne work in the warehouse doing shipping and receiving while managing the stock and supply of parts for the rest of the plant. They share most duties in the warehouse, but Bernice specializes in handling the purchasing that "nobody else can do," and Brent does the majority of the unloading. Brent is also on the Health and Safety committee and is technically a warehouse support as part of maintenance.

Brent also trains on the various equipment used at the plant: forklift, boom truck, skid steer, zoom boom, etc.

Gordon Mushumanski has been at Bunge for over 20 years and is a journeyman millwright doing everything in the plant from greasing to fixing. Keeping the plant running is his number one priority. He's the most senior worker in the maintenance department and one of the most experienced and knowledgeable millwrights in the plant because he has worked in almost all areas of the plant.



Sheldon Degreef and Olarte Patel have important jobs as production technicians. They work in the lab as quality assurance. Sheldon has been with Bunge for five months and Olarte has been there for almost a year.

They test the canola samples for free fatty acids (FFAs), phosphorous and moisture to ensure the products meet customers' expectations.

If a mistake is made and the canola is not as expected, the current batch will either be held for another customer or it will all be remixed back into the system and they'll have to start over.



Chris Sawchuk is a prep operator, monitoring the equipment and making sure everything is running smoothly.

He watches on the monitors as the canola seed comes from the elevator, goes through the cookers and the press. Then, he sends it over to extraction where they'll remove the remaining oil.

Tania Lambe (not pictured) is the refinery operator who runs the canola through the final stages of refining and de-odourizing to turn everything into a final sellable product.



Gino Banal has worked at Bunge since 2021. He was recently transferred from production, and when we met him, he was filling in as a grain buyer. The grain buyers receive grain, sample and grade it to check for impurities and look for green seeds. Green seeds are not mature like the yellow ones and its important to maintain a high percentage of mature seeds.

When you look at each task that UFCW members working at Bunge accomplish, you can see how talented and hard working each of them are. The science and understanding that goes into running a plant like this is impressive.

The workers at Bunge in Russell have been members of UFCW 832 since 1986. Earlier this year, they ratified and renewed their collective agreement for three-year term.





# Light the Night Walk **BACK IN PERSON!**

On September 23, the Light the Night walk returned as an in-person event after three years of hosting virtual events! This came with a new location, some new faces and a welcome change for survivors, family members and supporters.

UFCW locals across Canada take part in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's (LLSC) Light the Night campaign to help fundraise for research that will lead to a cure.

Today, many kids and adults with leukemia and other blood cancers are living longer or are in remission because of new therapies that have led to higher survival rates and a better quality of life. That's why we're asking you to donate to this year's campaign to help further the research and work done by the LLSC.

### You have until the end of this year to make a donation!

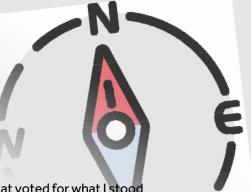
Visit www.UFCW832.com/lightthenight for the link to our team page where you can make your donation







# What About the North?





**Board Member Profile: Roger Siemens** 

Roger Siemens is one of 18 UFCW 832 Executive Board members and unofficially holds the role of representing members in the North. He has lived in the Flin Flon area his whole life and is passionate about sticking up for the little guy.

Roger works full time in the bulk fuel department at the North of 53 Co-op, where he is also a shop steward. He jokes that he only stops moving when he's sick. He also runs a mechanic shop, does handyman work and is the co-owner of the local computer/IT tech business. On occasion when the local junior hockey team needs a driver for their bus, Roger steps in. And, he provides security and maintenance for a mine that's been shut down, making sure no one's tampering with it.

How Roger prioritizes time may be a mystery, but his commitment to helping others through his work on Executive Board shows. He appreciates the new friendships, the learning and the support from his fellow Board members and all union members who re-elected him in 2021.

"When I'm at a board meeting, I see that many of my problems aren't unique to the North," he says.

At work, Roger uses his voice to stand up for himself and his colleagues. When he goes into the store off shift, his boss jokes that it's always to bring forward an issue. His boss often comments that Roger knows the CBA better than him, to which he replies: "Why wouldn't I? I negotiated it."

Last fall Roger also ran in his municipal election and was beat out by only about 400 votes.

"I had a lot of people that voted for what I stood for and liked my platform," he says. "I'll run again next time."

In spring 2023 when Wab Kinew came to a board meeting to seek endorsement for the Manitoba NDP in the provincial election, Board members grilled him on everything from 2SLGBTQ+ rights to health care. When Wab talked about his party's commitment to improving health care, Roger spoke up.

"What about in the North?" he asked.

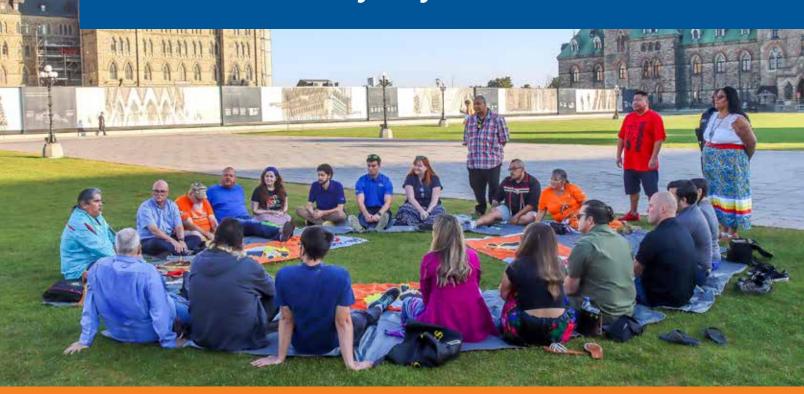
The driving force for Roger for speaking up was that he has first-hand experience of how broken the health care system is, particularly in the North.

In September 2021 he went to the ER in Flin Flon with severe stomach cramping. Doctors determined he needed a CT scan so he was brought by ambulance to The Pas, approximately an hour-and-a-half drive away. There, they determined he needed an emergency appendectomy, but the surgeon was on vacation. As a result Roger was flown into Winnipeg on an emergency flight.

One day later, he was discharged from St. Boniface Hospital with the clothes he flew in with and very little else. The Northern Patient Transport Program (NPTP) said they'd book him a flight to go home in two days' time, but covering his room and board and transportation while he waited was on his own dime. After a lot of back and forth with the NPTP, Roger reached out to his union rep, Mike Howden, who was able to re-arrange his schedule to drive Roger home and tie it into servicing he had planned in that region.

We're hopeful that with the NDP in power, Roger's story will slowly become a thing of the past. Our union is made stronger by the diversity of experiences and people that make their voices heard! We thank Roger for all he does to support the union and his community.

# UFCW Canada's Indigenous Sub-Committee Government Lobby Day



Steve (pictured right with the red shirt) and members of the committee participate in a pipe ceremony with UFCW Canada Elder Eric Flett (pictured in the teal shirt at the far left).

Tansi.

I am Steve McGillivary, and I was born and raised in Winnipeg. I'm Indigenous, a Cree Aboriginal from Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN), also known as The Pas. Growing up in the city had its ups and downs. I, for one, have had my share of experiences along with poverty as well as homelessness.

I've had several interesting jobs, including deliveries for the Winnipeg Free Press and as a roadie at the MTS Centre. I met a lot of celebrities and great people over the years and really enjoyed when we welcomed back our Winnipeg Jets, as it led to an opportunity to set up the arena and clean the hockey glass for home games.

I'm a Shop Steward at Westburne Electric in Winnipeg, where I've worked for nine years. Shortly after I started, I realized that I wanted to get more involved with our union. Since that time, I have been asked to be on the UFCW Canada Indigenous sub-committee, made up of 14 Indigenous members from across Canada. It's been interesting to see what our committee brings to the union in advancing Truth and Reconciliation.

This year we took a trip to Ottawa. It was my first time being on a plane and I wasn't sure what to expect. I had a great time. We met with a group called the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada. They're a knowledgeable group that creates awareness and shares their stories on how Truth and Reconciliation has impacted their lives.

We also attended a Canadian Labour Congress Indigenous lobby day with other Canadian unions, where we were broken into small groups to meet with Members of Parliament (MPs) and discuss and encourage action on three issues. As an Indigenous person, these are things we've been dealing with for what feels like years already.

- 1. Safe drinking water
- 2. Justice for MMIWG2S
- 3. Honouring residential school children and their families.

This experience helped me understand how the political process works and how issues are discussed with our government.

My group also had the opportunity to be involved in a pipe ceremony in front of Parliament Hill led by UFCW Canada Elder (and former UFCW 832 member) Eric Flett. It was an awesome experience and felt like our ancestors were there with us.

I then had the honour of taking a short trip across the provincial border to Gatineau, Quebec, to a place called the Native Women's Association of Canada. This place had great people, the art was absolutely stunning and I would definitely recommend it to anyone who likes art or wants to learn more about Indigenous people. During that visit, my group and I were able to use an Indigenous drum to play a song, led by Elder Flett. For some in the group, playing the drum was a first-time experience. It was an honour for everyone involved and I will remember it forever.

I learned a lot on this adventure. Overall, I had a great experience with my committee members and I know that we will remember this trip for a long time. I encourage anyone to take a trip to Ottawa as there is a lot to see, visit and eat.

Chi-Miigwetch.







# Diageo Scholarship Continues to Help with Post-Secondary Education

Seven Manitoba students received scholarships to help with post-secondary education through a scholarship fund for Diageo workers and their children. The fund was created when UFCW Local 832 merged with UFCW Local 200D and members

at the Gimli plant can apply for themselves or their children in June each year.

Pictured are three UFCW 832 members from Diageo with their children who are some of this year's recipients.







# If you or someone you know is experiencing gendered violence or is in an abusive relationship...

Call Manitoba's 24-hour domestic violence information/crisis line: 1-877-977-0007

Ten things to say to someone experiencing domestic violence:

- 1. I believe you.
- 2. This is not your fault and you don't deserve to be abused.
- 3. I'm afraid for your safety.
- 4. I'm afraid for your children's safety.
- 5. If [the abusive person] doesn't get help, the abuse will probably continue and may get worse.
- 6. I am here for you whenever you need me. OR I am here to listen and support you.

- 7. You are not alone. There are shelters and other services that can help you.
- 8. What can I do to help you?
- There is no excuse for family violence.
   People can feel angry, but everyone has a choice in how they respond to the situation.
- 10. If you don't have a safety plan in case of emergency, you can get help developing one by calling 1-877-977-0777 (the toll-free domestic violence information/crisis line).

Source: Government of Manitoba

# SPEAK UP AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

# DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE November 25 - December 10

The 16 days of activism against gender-based violence is an annual reminder to take collective action in ending violence against women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people. It runs from November 25 – December 10.

Manitoba's rate of gender-based violence is higher than the national average.

Rates are twice as high in rural areas compared to cities, mainly due to a lack of financial and human resources. Violence also disproportionately affects Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people. In 2020, the number of calls to crisis hotlines in Manitoba increased by 231%.

Source: Government of Canada

# November 25 - International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

This day was chosen to commemorate the Mirabel sisters from the Dominican Republic who were violently assassinated in 1960. On this day, you can wear purple to show your commitment to ending gender-based violence in our community.

# December 6 - National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Wear a white ribbon to honour the 14 young women we lost during the violent act of misogyny that took place at Polytechnique Montréal in 1989.

# **December 10 - Human Rights Day**

This day marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which sets out fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

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Attention employees working at Safeway locations, Red River Cooperative Ltd., CMS (formerly Safeway Gas Bar), Red River Coop Gas Bar, Grupo Bimbo and Agropur Coopérative Laitière in Manitoba, who are members of the Manitoba Safeway/UFCW Local 832 benefit plan.

# Get the most out of your new benefits

Effective October 1, 2023, plan members transitioned from the previous group benefits carrier to Manitoba Blue Cross. The trustees of the plan and Manitoba Blue Cross are committed to providing members with sustainable and comprehensive benefits.



# Easily manage your plan online at mb.bluecross.ca with mybluecross\*.

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Publications Mail Agreement # 40070082

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