

**“Taking Unions to the Next Generation”**  
**CLC Summer School**  
**July 20-25, 2014, Port Elgin UNIFOR family centre**  
**Submitted by Sister Geneviève Burley**

This summer I had the great opportunity to attend the CLC summer school in Port Elgin with my fellow Sisters and Brothers across Ontario. 29 different unions were in attendance, and almost 300 participants.

There were so many good courses being offered it was hard to narrow it down to just one. But as a young worker, the “Taking Unions to the Next Generation” seemed to be a good fit. There were about 25 people in my course from various unions, mostly from OSSTF and CUPE.

Our week long course explored a lot of the stereotypes of various generations in the workforce (Generation Z, Generation Y a.k.a. millennials, Generation X, Baby boomers, and the traditionalists) as well as the milestones throughout history that these Generations put into action.

We took part in various group discussions to examine the generational make up of our unions and how trends in the labour movement correspond with the changing generations.

Our course also painted a stark reality of what we can expect from our unions in the face of austerity and precarious work and how unemployment and underemployment of young workers has become a standard to expect from employers and the impact that this has on people entering the workforce.

There were many theoretical discussions on where unions have been and what we can expect in the future.

We also learned about the value of a good campaign and how a good message can make or break your campaign followed by a brief exercise on public speaking

Our last exercise was to set up a mock meeting for a young workers committee. My group worked within realistic budget and time constraints and were able to present our proposal to a mock panel of executives. It made for an interesting exercise as I had never been aware of the things needed to plan such an event and in working with members of other unions who have young workers committees, they were able to put forward ideas that some of us would have never considered a possibility.

All around a very interesting course. I look forward to next summer in hopes to be able to participate again in this wonderful educational.

Videos to watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gl0mlC2vaXo&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4IJTUXZORE>