

Historic agreement ratified at PriceSmart foods

NEW WESTMINSTER, BC, February 15, 2017 UFCW 1518 members working at PriceSmart foods ratified an historic collective agreement that increased wages by 11 percent for the company's most vulnerable workers. On February 10, members at the Richmond and Metrotown stores voted 71 percent in favour of accepting the contract.

The bargaining committee, composed of Pauline Green, Claire Chai, Carrie Cheng and Stephen Chou, unanimously recommended the agreement, which addresses systemic low wages of workers in the food retail sector.

"It was a very challenging set of negotiations," said Secretary-Treasurer Kim Novak. "But we're confident we got the best possible contract. And we couldn't be more pleased at the significant wage increase for our members and the improvements to their benefits."

Overnight, the hourly wage of food clerks will jump from \$11 to \$12.20, with the start rate rising to \$12 and then to \$12.50 in the last year of the contract. In addition to the immediate wage hike, Novak pointed out that food clerks will have the chance to continue to enjoy wage increases up to \$20/hr. In another important win, they will also receive MSP, dental and extended health benefits, as well as a lump sum payment of up to \$1500. The vacation entitlement, which had been three weeks, now increases to up to five weeks.

Said Novak, "This is an important day for food retail workers. Our members told us what they wanted and we delivered. Thanks to the leadership and hard work of the bargaining committee, the path to a living wage just got easier."

UFCW 1518 fights for fairness for more than 20,000 workers in the food retail, food processing, health care and professional sectors in British Columbia.

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