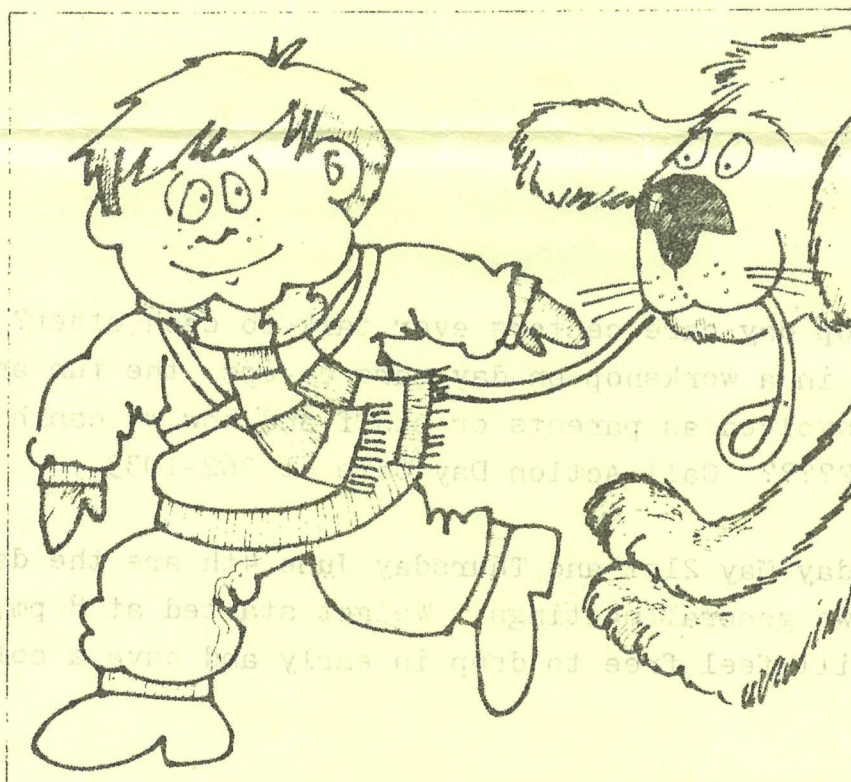


# ACTION DAY CARE NEWSLETTER

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

APRIL/MAY 1981

Y. W. C. A.  
RESOURCE CENTRE



Loris Lesynski

“a Bouvier on every block?!?!?”

ACTION DAY CARE  
NEWSLETTER

ACTION DAY CARE is an organization of parents, teachers, day care workers, representatives from community organizations, women's organizations, trade unions and interested citizens. We believe that every child in Ontario has the right to quality daycare - paid for by the government. We feel that daycare must become a universal service (although not compulsory). Daycare should be a provincial responsibility, community centered and a right of many.

Do co-op day care centers ever talk to each other? Anyone interested in a workshop on day care co-ops, the fun and problems of being involved as parents or staff and how we can help each other out????? Call Action Day Care at 362-1033.

Thursday May 21st and Thursday June 4th are the dates for our next two general meetings. We get started at 8 pm, but we hope you will feel free to drop in early and have a coffee and a chat.

# TOWARDS UNIVERSAL ACCESS

by Jane Bertrand

Action Day Care is committed to the idea of free, universal day care. We have developed a platform which suggests that day care centres offering a wide range of services be based on a hub model and be available to all young children and their families. Such programs combined with junior and senior kindergartens would be funded by the provincial and federal governments through an Early Childhood Education Division of the provincial Ministry of Education. This would be a separate division quite distinct from the public school system. Day care centres and related early childhood services operating under this division would be subject to central standards but under local community user and worker control.

We know that such changes require new policy to be formulated at the national level which would make dollars for a wide range of day care services available to the provinces through the educational system rather than through the welfare system. All this will take time.

Right now we have average salaries of less than \$10,000 per year and fees ranging from \$2000-\$5000 per year. Day care workers in Metro Toronto have started to unionize. We must support this action and help it to build. Day care workers can no longer subsidize the service. But we need to address ourselves to where the money for decent salaries will come from. Most full fee-paying parents would not be able to afford significant increases in their day care fees. At the same time we do not wish to do anything that will compromise our struggle for day care available for every child regardless of 'need' according to welfare indicators.

We have decided to launch a campaign calling for direct provincial grants to non-profit day care centres (group and family day care programmes) of \$5.00 per day for every child enrolled. Direct provincial grants, sometimes known as flat or maintenance grants, would not affect or interfere with the present funding arrangements for day care subsidies. They would provide a way to get money directly to centres that could be applied to upgrading workers' salaries.

Action Day Care realizes that there are centres which are individually owned and operated, offering good quality day care and not making a profit. We suggest that these centres be able to change their status to non-profit and thus be eligible for direct grants. Commercial centres which are making a profit providing day care should not be eligible for subsidy.

The struggle to win the direct grant needs your support and involvement. If you have any questions, need information, or have suggestions, please call us at 362-1033.

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## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

by Sharon Enman

International Women's Day 1981 was a successful celebration of the gains women have made, and a demonstration of women's determination to continue in their struggle. Four thousand women, children and men took to the streets, marching from City Hall through the garment district to Harbard Collegiate. The demonstration this year focused on the issues of childcare, economic independence, an end to violence against women, and a stop to the rise of the right. After the march, women continued their celebration at the Women's Fair in the afternoon and at a party for women in the evening.

WE WIN A BIT: Although women have made several important gains since the beginning of the century, all these reforms have been under attack since their implementation. Since the recent election of the Davis government, women can expect further attacks on their gains.

### WE LOSE A LOT:

\*DAYCARE: Davis' offer of \$11 million to further subsidize day care will only provide 1500 new spaces in Ontario. This only amounts to .9% of the 160,000 spaces needed. The 500 spaces allocated in Toronto have already been filled and with no guarantees of further funding, we know that it will be a struggle to keep even what we have been promised. The lack of adequate day care is yet another barrier to women's full equality and will remain so until we have won a system of free, universal quality child care in Ontario.

\*ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE: As long as women only have access to jobs in the low-paying, traditionally female sectors, they are denied economic independence. In a recent report for the Northern Woman Decade Council, it was stated that the provincial government is making it hard for women to get good jobs by promoting development policies which "perpetuate the assumption that women exist only as dependents of men". The same can be said of Southern Ontario, as evidenced by the recent campaigns to get women into Stelco, National Steel Car, and CN Rail. Women want and have the right to non-traditional, higher-paying jobs than has been their traditional lot. The Ontario government also refuses to consider reviewing the need to establish any scheme which would recognize equal pay for work of equal value.

\*VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: The government has also been stalling in dealing with the proposed amendments to laws concerning rape. Under these amendments, sexual assault would be recognized as an act of violence, rather than an act of passion. It would therefore be easier to convict rapists and it would remove the burden of guilt from the victim and reduce the humiliation and degrading experience that women rape victims are presently subjected to. This would happen by removing rape from the "Public Morals" section of the Criminal Code and instead include it as an aggravated sexual assault in the "Crimes Against Person" section. Originally scheduled to be tabled on December 19, 1980, the issue was dropped and replaced with debate on the economy and the election, so we're still waiting.

## WHY ARE WOMEN LOSING?

The dismantling of women's gains can be attributed, in part, to the rise of the 'right'. In Ontario, we see Davis and his majority Conservative government bending over backwards to hand out dollars to large corporations and support the aims of right wing groups like Positive Parents. Meanwhile, workers - women in particular - are being left behind as wages fall, social services are cut back and basic human rights come under attack.

The 75 women's organisations, community groups, political groups and trade unions who were represented at the IWD Fair show us that we are strong. Together we can fight back.

# Forum on unionizing

sponsored by CUPE Local 2484, Action Day Care,  
Unionizing Support Committee, and  
Women's Resources: OISIE

Come and find out how you and your day care  
can benefit by unionizing. Meet workers from  
other centres. Find out how to join the union.  
Call Action Day Care 362-1033 for more information

**Tuesday May 26 7:30 pm**  
**Room N202, OISIE: 252 Bloor W**

## The Quebec Scene

by Jenny Lowell

In February Penny Noll-Gordon and I attended a day care solidarity evening in Montreal. It was sponsored by the RGQ (Regroupement des Garderies sans But Lucratif du Quebec Inc.), an association of non-profit day care centres across Quebec. There were speakers from day care groups and trade unions as well as a strong contingent of organized day care workers. It was an opportunity for us to meet with unionized day care workers in Quebec. They are 350 strong in 32 day care centres across the province. They are affiliated with the CSN (Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux). It all started in March 1980 and they've just begun the fight for better wages, working conditions and better quality day care. Vive l'unité des Garderies!

# "a Bouvier on every block?!?!?"

by Julie Mathien

All levels of government seem to have been devising ways to cut costs. We've been told that our national goal is now the "affordable society" and that the wages of riotous living is economic collapse. I've listened carefully to the moans about the high cost of day care and, being as inflation conscious as the next person, I've tried hard to think of ways of providing a cheaper day care model.

I really hadn't had much success until we visited friends on a farm one recent week-end. On Saturday afternoon, it came time for our two year olds to play outside. As we gently pushed the snow-suited boys out the door, I asked, "Shouldn't an adult go out?". "Oh, don't worry," my friend, Pat, blithely assured me, "Angus will watch them". And Angus did.

Angus, I should explain, is a large black dog, known as a Bouvier of Flanders. He's strong, terrifically alert, gentle with children and will go out in just about any weather.

As I watched the boys eating snow under Angus' steady gaze, a sudden thought struck me. "Of course," I exclaimed, "the very thing we've been looking for". My mind raced as the plan became more concrete. "Why not," I thought excitedly, "why not have Bouviers provide our very much needed day care service?" "A Bouvier on every block," I thought. That's our slogan.

The first major advantage is, of course, cost. At \$300.00 per dog, you're providing roughly 1,100 Bouviers for the same price as the municipal day care centre. If each Bouvier watches 20 children, we have facilities for 22,000 kids for the same amount of money that we now spend on 100. All we need is a central spot in each neighbourhood where kids and dogs can gather. Actually, as Bouviers were used to herd cattle, we might even be able to arrange a pick-up and delivery service.

Unfortunately, Bouviers do not know how to cook, so bag lunches will be the order of the day. Luckily, kids like a picnic in any weather.

Operating costs? Fantastic. Pat told me that they spend \$3.00 a week for Angus' food. Where else could you get day care staff that exist on Kibble and table scraps?

Bouviers are generally contented and unlikely to agitate for higher wages or enter into an embarrassing collective bargaining process. There are no costly fringe benefits or frills like staff rooms.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities will be pleased. They're looking for savings at the Community College level and "a Bouvier on every block" would mean that they could dispense with all those Early Childhood Education courses.

The Anti-Inflation Board will be ecstatic. We're actually cutting costs and increasing service --- a seemingly impossible task. Do you suppose they're giving out awards?

These are only the advantages I've thought of in the first

flush of discovery. I'm perfectly happy to turn the idea over to those wonderful social planners at Queen's Park. Remember? They're the folks who brought us the proposals to change the Day Nurseries' Act back in July of '74. I feel confident that they will be able to come up with advantages that I haven't even dreamed of. Just think, "a Bouvier on every block". Universal day care at last.

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## ..... sound familiar?

Parent groups spend a year trying to organize a centre. They get a group together, find a space, locate money for renovations and equipment and get the municipality's agreement to subsidize parents who can't pay the full fee. And then a month before the centre is due to open the municipality says no, we have no money and the whole project falls flat on its face.

And what about the individual parents' lives? I heard about one single parent who wanted to get off family benefits and get a job, so she found a space for her child and started job hunting. After a few weeks she found one, but just as she started it, the child broke his leg and she had to stay home with him and give up the job. Just as the leg healed she located another job but the space in the day care was gone. So now she is back on family benefits. After that kind of experience I'm certain we'd all go crazy or just give up trying to get off welfare.

## Join the fight!

Response to the Action Day Care newsletter has been really terrific! A special thank-you to those people who sent in their money for membership. We want to continue to keep you in touch with the day care movement. If you would like to continue to receive our newsletter on a regular basis, please complete this form and enclose \$3.50. Our mailing address is Action Day Care, 19 Carr St., unit 100, Toronto, M5T 2V7.

Name.....Phone.....

Address.....

Enclosed \$3.50 cash..... cheque.....

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# Tell the Truth !!!

by Kathleen Lannan

Remember the television game show To Tell the Truth? Four panelists were invited to question three contestants, each an alleged ' Mr. or Ms. So and So'. The object of the game was to determine and identify the 'real one', the contestant who had written the affidavit verifying his or her identity. Wouldn't it be great if elections were this cut and dried? Three candidates would present themselves, swear to tell the truth (pretty unlikely, eh? ) and then we'd get to ask questions.

During the recent election campaign the majority of the electorate never seemed to receive answers to unspoken questions and as a result were at the mercy of the media for the information they received. The media stressed the leadership issue- every day we heard about them in great detail. And that's no accident of course. The last thing the Conservatives want to discuss is the issues. And the same people who give the Conservatives money for elections buy ads in or actually own the newspapers and television stations.

So what happened to the day care issue in the campaign? All three parties issued policy statements which were outlined in last month's column. Briefly, the Conservatives showed a touching nostalgia for the good old days of two parent, one income and extended families, but no sense of reality, the Liberals tried to fence straddle, and the N.D.P. called for quality accessible care.

Single issue groups like Action Day Care and the housing movement tried to make these issues relevant to the campaign by holding public meetings around them. But it was very difficult to cut across the prevailing atmosphere. The Conservatives refused to send a speaker, stating that "day care is not an issue in this election". At the same time the media highlighted Bill Davis as a leader who could 'keep the promise'. What can that possibly mean when he refuses to institute any responsible policy for the care of children?

The Liberals sent a non-candidate to the meeting but the N.D.P. sent Michael Cassidy, the provincial leader. Throughout the day Cassidy and the N.D.P. staged several media events around day care which gave the issue the only publicity it got during the campaign. Nevertheless, the N.D.P. did not put forward the policy of the party as adopted at its provincial convention. That convention called for "access to universal (non-compulsory) free child care". At the election meeting the N.D.P. women's co-ordinator insisted that Cassidy would not speak in front of a banner calling for free universal day care. We were forced to take it down.

When you examine the election results it becomes clear that the N.D.P. got clobbered from two sides. On the right there was a boost of support due to the backlash on issues such as gay rights..

Also, in uncertain economic times people tend to vote for the

traditional and familiar. To the left, the N.D.P. lost its traditional support when it refused to speak out strongly enough on the hospital workers, the gay rights struggle and day care.

We have to find other ways of affecting the political process. The unionization drive currently underway in Toronto and the Ontario Federation of Labour regional conferences on day care are just two of the current attempts being made to increase the pressure on the government. We have a long struggle ahead fighting for free universal day care. But it is certainly worth fighting for. For all of us it is a promise worth keeping.

## Ontario Needs Day Care

Pat Shultz

Applause swept the room at the Ontario Federation of Labour Day Care Conference in Toronto when Stew Cooke, a middle-aged steel union director credited the women's movement for the current involvement of the unions in the day care issue. "Indeed, when the social history of the latter part of the century is written, the story of the women's movement will be properly underlined as a major step forward for humankind. And no matter how often all of us rightly refer to day care as a 'people issue', the women's movement deserves the political credit for transforming day care from a background issue into a central item on our social agenda". I think the women there were startled initially and then enormously pleased to get credit where credit is due. Unions haven't always been so responsive. I remember about six years ago the Day Care Reform Action Alliance sent two women down to the OFL convention in Niagara Falls to set up an information table on day care. They came back pretty discouraged having been bombarded with such witticisms as "day care eh - what I need is a little night care baby."

Well things sure have changed. And the credit does belong to the women who fought it out on the floors of countless meetings and conventions. I've been told that at the first OFL and Canadian Labour Congress conventions when women's issues were raised it was hard to get resolutions on the floor, only women spoke on them, they were heckled and often the resolutions were defeated. No longer. All of those things have changed. And the unions aren't just passing token resolutions. The day care resolution came complete with a plan of action that has now been partially implemented by OFL members, female and male, with competence and enthusiasm. Boy they sure know how to organize.

The OFL women's committee initiated the process with their Sharing the Caring conference last fall. The policy statement adopted there was also passed at the provincial convention and the eight regional conferences just completed were the first stage of that plan of action. A panel composed of the leadership of the OFL, Ontario Teachers Federation, Ontario Welfare Council, Association for Early Childhood Education and Action Day Care toured the province hearing briefs from about 200 individuals

and organizations. The media coverage was excellent except in Toronto where the Saturday timing of the conference eliminated newspaper coverage. All of the press conferences were well attended, it got national and local TV coverage and OFL people were on about a dozen radio talk shows.

The hearings began at 2 pm in most cases so shift workers could attend and ran until 8 pm. The content was fascinating partly because people were so open about their lives.

Some of the problems that emerged from the briefs were predictable: lack of spaces, the high cost of care and the inadequacy of the subsidy system, insufficient funding to provide high quality care and low wages. In addition, the number of workers stressing 24 hour care was striking.

Action Day Care presented a brief in Toronto and addressed itself to the strategy issue rather than a description of the problem and its platform. The group felt the latter two issues had been dealt with and their views were known. They urged the building of a provincial coalition of day care activists, the unionization of day care workers, collective bargaining for employer funding of day care and a \$5.00 direct grant per day per child as a step along the road to universal free care.

The Ontario Welfare Council defined its position as favoring the provision of universally affordable available and accessible quality day care and defined affordable as by people using day care or by the society's ability to carry it.

The Association for Early Childhood Education in Ontario called for improved quality of care, expansion of facilities and higher salaries for staff. Their brief didn't deal with the controversial issue of putting day care into the education system although their representatives across the province did pick this up. This issue was raised consistently by people from the Ontario Teachers Federation. Basically they favored putting day care under the Ministry of Education, expanding the system to provide free universal care and retraining teachers to fill the need for more staff. It seemed to me that while there were some issues to be ironed out between the two groups such as the qualifications for working under such a system, the ratios to be applied, and the question of parent involvement or control those issues could be negotiated. The exciting aspect of the conferences was the prospect of a provincial coalition around day care uniting all of the groups that participated on the panels. The process of building that coalition will begin around the writing of the brief, and its presentation to the Ontario government. The conferences were an auspicious first step.

free mom  
free dad  
free me  
free day  
care



# any bright ideas ?

We have now produced a couple of newsletters and we are interested in what you think of them. Are there any improvements we could make? Do you have any general comments on what is happening in the day care movement, or any suggestions for future articles? Have you written any articles that might interest others in the movement? In other words, we'd like to hear from you. Please feel free to write or call us with your ideas and each month we will try to answer any comments/queries we receive. Help us produce a better newsletter. Address your letters to: Action Day Care Newsletter  
19 Carr St., Room 100  
Toronto, Ontario. M5T 2V7

Action Day Care  
19 Carr St  
Toronto, Ontario M5T 2V7  
Tel: (416)362-1033



Y W C A  
Women's Information and  
Referral Services  
15 Birch Ave  
Toronto, Ontario

"Q"