

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

# 1006Alive

UFCW Canada Local 1006A • Union News  
VOL 6, NO 2, WINTER 2021



## **Union Helps Members Achieve Dream of Post-Secondary Education – page 8**



**Union Win: Toxic Receipts Out at Loblaw Stores – page 19**



**Workers Continue to Organize and Join Our Union – page 4**





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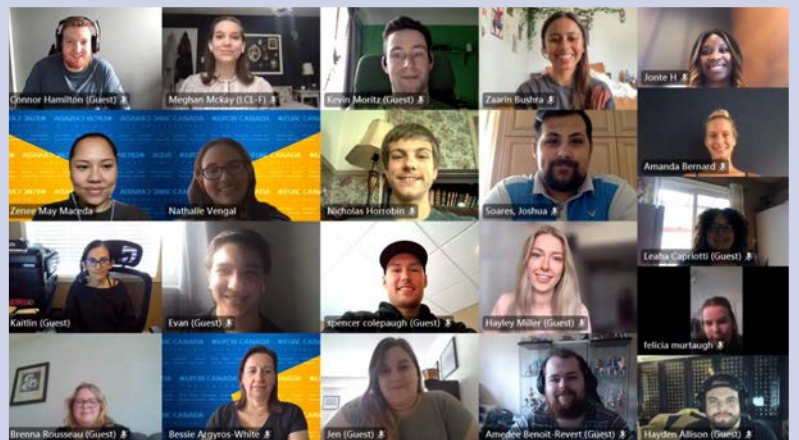


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UFCW Canada Local 1006A © 2021



Members mark the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Local 1006A is calling on the Ontario government to make September 30 a statutory holiday for all workers.



UFCW Canada’s Young Worker Internship Program was held virtually this year. Local 1006A is proud to see these members making an impact at work and in their communities!

Check out the program — @ufcwyp on social media.



Bea Bruske, a former grocery worker and member of UFCW Local 832, was elected President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). The CLC brings Canada’s unions together to advocate for all workers across the country.

Visit [www.canadianlabour.ca](http://www.canadianlabour.ca) to learn about the CLC’s important work.

# 1006A MEMBERS SHOW RESILIENCE, STRENGTH AND SOLIDARITY



**Wayne E. Hanley** (he/him)

*President, UFCW Canada Local 1006A  
International Vice-President, UFCW*

Over the last year and half, I have been inspired by the resilience and strength of our members in the face of the pandemic.

Despite the challenging and dark times, 1006A members continue to keep our communities and province running, while also finding solidarity and strength in each other.

I think of the many personal stories our members have shared through the local union's "Share Your Pandemic Story" contest.

Members, like Ruby, who lost her father and whose whole family was diagnosed with COVID-19. Through the deep sadness she faced, Ruby says she became a stronger person.

Members like Lana, who won her battle with cancer, then returned to work on the frontlines. Grateful to be alive, Lana said she helped spread "some joy and a smile" to her co-workers and the public.

I think of members like Cathy who, despite the challenges and isolation posed by the pandemic, found solidarity, comfort and a sense of community through her co-workers.

I also think of members, like Christine, who experienced the stress of the frontlines first-hand and found relief and hope in getting vaccinated.

Our members were impacted by the pandemic in different ways, many on the frontlines and others through layoffs, reduced hours and financial strain that came with COVID-19 lockdowns. I have been moved and inspired by each and every story I have heard and read.

It has been very hard for workers across Ontario, whether it has been financially, physically and also equally important, mentally. In a recent union membership meeting, 65% of members in attendance reported they experienced mental health challenges, including stress, anxiety and depression.

We are living in difficult and uncertain times – but please remember, you are not alone. If you or a loved one is experiencing mental health challenges, reach out for help. Your union has a list of resources on our website and information on page 12 that may help.

2022 will be another busy year, but there are plenty of signs, with the increased vaccination rates in our province, that we will be able to return to normal.

For members working at No Frills, we will need your solidarity and strength as we get ready for negotiations with one of our largest employers.

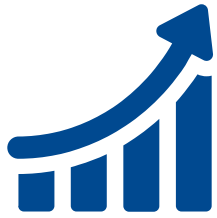
Whether it is a large or smaller bargaining unit, it's important to remember your union contract spells out your wages, benefits and working conditions. The first step in achieving improvements is by talking to your union rep, filling out proposal forms, and participating in meetings and votes.

As we look ahead to the new year, I want to thank you, our members, for being part of the 1006A family. I want to thank our union stewards, activists and bargaining committee members for their dedication and commitment on behalf of our members at work. Thank you for making a difference.

While another year will undoubtedly bring new challenges, I want you to know that you can count on your union to be there for you and to advocate to make life better for you and your family. As always, reach out to your union rep – we are here for you.







# More Workers from a Variety of Sectors Vote to Join Our Movement

UFCW 1006A is continuing to grow, with new members from a wide range of sectors recently voting to join the local union.

In the last six months, workers from Indigo (Kennedy Commons and Yorkdale Mall), Tokyo Smoke (Scarborough and downtown Toronto), Sessions (Hamilton), and TruHarvest have become part of the 1006A family.

“These victories are a testament to the exceptional unity, strength and activism of the workers, who took proactive action to make their workplaces and lives better,” said President Wayne Hanley. “We are proud to welcome our members to the UFCW 1006A family and congratulate them on winning union representation.”

At Indigo (Yorkdale), members were proud to join the growing number of unionized bookstore workers at Kennedy Commons in Scarborough, Woodbridge and Square One in Mississauga.



“This whole thing has been about bringing each other up and bringing each other along, equalizing and not leaving people behind,” said Greta Whipple, who works at Indigo Yorkdale.

“Honestly, it was one of the most exhausting and rewarding experiences in my whole life,” Whipple said. “I cannot believe how fast minute to minute, everything changed, it would have been literally impossible to do without the UFCW organizers and the support of the CERs (Customer Experience Representatives) of already unionized stores.”

At Indigo (Kennedy Commons), workers also prevailed.

“Our unionization is nothing if not an expression of the deep love we have for our team,” said one of the Indigo (Kennedy Commons) Scarborough workers. “It’s each and every one of us taking a stand for a safe and more equitable workplace where our voices matter. What do we want to see? Change. Safety. Respect. And policies that reflect our diverse needs and concerns.”

UFCW 1006A’s organizing success also extended to the meat processing sector.

At TruHarvest, members knew first-hand the advantages of belonging to a union and having a union contract. They believed winning this vote was the quickest way to reaffirm their membership in the union and start negotiating their union contract. Many members have been a long part of the UFCW 1006A family, through Ryding Regency, working in the same space now operated by TruHarvest.

“We deserve dignity and respect, we wanted benefits, secure hours, scheduling, better wages and a way to end favouritism,” said Luis Abarca, who works at TruHarvest. “The only way to achieve this is by having a collective agreement, this is why overwhelmingly, workers voted yes.”



UFCW 1006A is also increasingly representing workers in the cannabis industry.

“It feels great to be unionized,” said Olivia Lu, a worker from Tokyo Smoke (Scarborough). “I am really proud of what we have accomplished – the solidarity was moving. It’s inspiring to see everyone stand up for one another.”



Local 1006A represents cannabis workers at five retail stores across Ontario.

## UnionYes

If you know someone who is interested in improving their workplace through unionization, contact:

Lesley Prince, Organizing Director  
gounion@ufcw1006a.ca | (647) 518-3973



# Union Win: Loblaw Agrees to Recognize National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

**UFCW 1006A won its arbitration against National Grocers Co (Loblaw's Maple Grove Distribution Centre), paving the way for the recognition of The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30, as a statutory holiday for our members at the distribution centre as well as at Loblaw Great Food & Real Canadian Superstore (RCSS).**

"This is a tremendous victory for our members at Maple Grove, Loblaw's Great Food and RCSS," said President Wayne Hanley. "We fought hard to ensure the union contract and the history and struggles of Canada's Indigenous people would be honoured. We are pleased with the arbitration decision at Maple Grove, which upheld our members' rights under their union contract and paved the way for our members at Loblaw and RCSS."

Leading up to the arbitration, the company had repeatedly refused to recognize this important day despite the strong clear language in these specific union contracts that automatically recognizes the addition of new statutory holidays, including those declared at the federal level. In response, UFCW 1006A had filed the grievance against National Grocers at the Maple Grove Distribution Centre and then subsequently against Loblaw's Great Food & RCSS.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is important for Canadians because of its significance to our country's history and future, and UFCW 1006A repeatedly urged Loblaw, as a national company, to do better and do the right thing by living up to their commitments in the union contract.

As a result of the union's successful arbitration win, Loblaw has conceded to the decision in the Maple Grove case and will be recognizing September 30 as a paid holiday for our members who are covered under a collective agreement with similar language. This means, our members working in Loblaw Great Food and RCSS locations will receive September 30 as a paid holiday.

The new developments affect 900 workers at the Maple Grove Distribution Centre and 14,000 workers at Loblaw Great Food and RCSS.

The local union utilized the expedited grievance process in the Maple Grove case in an effort to have an arbitrator hear the case quickly.

On October 26, 2021, the arbitrator ruled, "Having regard to the foregoing it is my determination that the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation should have been recognized as a paid holiday under Article 12.01(b) of the collective agreement and that the failure by the Employer to do so constituted a violation of the collective agreement. It is further my determination that the Employer be ordered to compensate all affected employees for any losses resulting from this violation."

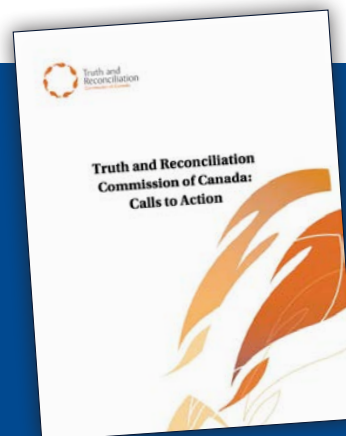
Established recently by the federal government, this new statutory holiday is an important time for all Canadians to remember and reflect on the shameful legacy of residential schools.

Canada's residential school system devastated families and communities, aimed to erase Indigenous people and culture, and unleashed a cycle of pain and destruction that continues to this day.

**This holiday was observed for the first time this year and UFCW Local 1006A is calling on the Province of Ontario to make September 30 a Provincial Statutory Holiday for Truth and Reconciliation.**

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact your union rep.

[www.ufcw1006a.ca/unionrep](http://www.ufcw1006a.ca/unionrep)



*In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released their Calls to Action in 2015 – call number 80 is the establishment of a statutory holiday.*

The full report is available at [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca)

# MEMBER STORIES

## FROM THE FRONTLINES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

From the loss of loved ones to getting diagnosed with COVID-19, UFCW 1006A members opened their hearts to discuss how the pandemic impacted their lives, as part of our 'Share Your Pandemic Story' contest.

"It has been a privilege to read many of your stories over the course of the last few months. We thank all the members who made submissions and shared their journey through this pandemic," said President Wayne Hanley.



**Brianna Valle, Swiss Chalet**

"The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us in our own ways. Personally, I missed out on my Grade 12 year, resulting in no graduation, prom, and those last cherished memories with my friends. This had caused stress for me as I had already not been able to go to work due to the pandemic and then was forced to do online learning. It took a toll on my life mentally and physically as each day began to feel the same. It had also put stress on my family as we had not been able to see my extended family members. I would have to say the hardest thing was not being able to see my grandparents. Sadly, my grandmother had to complete a heart surgery where she was in recovery for three months without any of us being allowed to visit her room due to COVID. It has changed us all. We are more aware of things around us which allowed us to appreciate the life we were all living before the pandemic. With the stressful days that COVID-19 has brought, I can say that the union has been there to support us with any concerns and to make sure we can all go back to the lives we lived before the pandemic."

"When the COVID-19 virus was first discovered in China, I didn't think much of how much that location would end up impacting my family and I. However, when politicians around the world started coining the terms - 'Chinese Flu' and 'Kung Fu Virus' - I, along with many others in the Asian-Canadian community, started becoming uneasy and worried. It didn't help when barely a week after the pandemic started, anti-Asian hate crimes started appearing on the news, about how normal people were being harassed for no reason but the colour of their skin. I started growing concerned for the safety of both myself and my family, and how this would affect me at work. However, thanks to the union's continuous fight against racism and the support that I've received from all my colleagues at work, I know that I will never have to worry about being discriminated against."



**Cathy Yang, Loblaw Great Food**

**1006Alive is featuring five of the 20 winning entries from the contest. Each contest winner received \$250.**





**Emina Mahmutovic, No Frills**

“This pandemic has changed the lives of many people, including myself in a way that we were not prepared for. The one thing that has stayed consistent throughout this entire journey has been my workplace and my union — Local 1006A. I wasn’t the only person who felt alone and scared. I was personally affected by COVID-19 when my family and I contracted the virus, including my mother who is high-risk. It was a very dark time for my family and I. The union has ensured me and my workplace were supported throughout this entire pandemic, whether it has been by sending resources to help with my mental health, or reminding us that we and all our hard work matter. They have helped me by sending me countless resources that encourage me to stay strong and continuously advocate for our rights and safety which I will forever be grateful for.”

“My experience during COVID was sad. It was started on February 12, 2021 when my dad was admitted to the hospital, then the doctor told us they are going to test for COVID. On Sunday, February 14, the doctor called us that my dad was positive for COVID and that everyone in the household should go to be tested. On Monday, my mom, my husband, and my two kids (who are 8 and 4) went to get tested. The next day, Toronto Public Health called and said all of us were positive. Then, the hospital told us that my dad was admitted to the ICU and he was in a coma. On February 24, 2021, my dad passed away. All my family was positive for COVID and my dad passed away – I was so sad during that time. But through this experience, I become more stronger, closer to God and a better person.”



**Ruby Bittner, Maple Leaf Poultry**

“I was hired by Frulact on April 7, 2020. It was a rough year for a lot of people but losing my father-in-law suddenly in January 2020 was the start of a rough year. I moved to Kingston in March 2020 but was fortunate to find work and when a union was formed, my girlfriend at the time, now fiancée, were expecting our first child. The job security became a big priority to provide for my family. In a year where there were some lows, there was some highs as well when I got engaged to my girlfriend of 8 years and our daughter, Audrey, was born in February 2021. I will be forever grateful for obtaining the job at Frulact and having the union to ensure our security within the company.”



**Kevin Butler, Frulact**

Read all the winning stories on our website, [www.ufcw1006a.ca](http://www.ufcw1006a.ca)



# Union Scholarship Program Helps Members and Families

Miaoer Song was “absolutely thrilled and grateful” when she found out she was selected as one of the winners of the 2021 UFCW 1006A scholarship program.



Song, who is enrolled in an accounting program at Sheridan College, is the daughter of 1006A member Huaping Zhou, who works at Homewood Suites by Hilton Toronto-Oakville.

“As the daughter of a 1006A member, I saw first hand how tough the pandemic has been on the people all around me and how inspiring it was for them to still rise to the occasion, and this scholarship is a definite example of how UFCW Canada Local 1006A is right there with them,” Song said. “As I enter my third year, the financial pressures have ramped up, so this scholarship came at the perfect time to alleviate my and my family’s worries.”

Every year, Local 1006A awards 42 scholarships worth \$1,006 each to members and/or their dependents. The program, which has run for more than a decade, is aimed at helping members and their families cope with the escalating costs of tuition in Ontario.

“Our scholarship program is about making a difference for our members and their families, and helping them achieve their dreams of post-secondary education,” said President Wayne Hanley. “I know the pandemic has been very difficult for workers across Ontario, and this is another way we are helping make life easier and better for our members. Thank you to everyone who participated.”

For Shivai Bhakhri, the son of 1006A member Mamta Bhakhri from Real Canadian Superstore, the scholarship meant a lot for the whole family.



“As a first-year university student, the first-generation member in my family to attend post-secondary education and the eldest child, this scholarship will certainly provide some financial assistance in covering the overall

expense for the academic year,” said Bhakhri, who studies at York University. “As a proud son of my mother, who has been a UFCW Canada member for past 24 years, this scholarship means a lot to her and me.”



Sammy Brezovsky, who is studying Sports Media at Ryerson University, was excited to receive news of the scholarship.

“I was thrilled to receive this scholarship – not only will it help me achieve a degree in the industry of my dreams but it’ll also help pave a path to my future career,” said Brezovsky. “This scholarship, to me, proves how much the union cares about its workers.”

Emily Hewgill, who is studying Nursing, hopes to make a difference in her career, like the union does.

“I am so humbled to be a recipient of the 2021 union scholarship,” said Hewgill, who works at Rome’s YIG. “This union works to better the lives of its members across Ontario, I hope to do the same when I graduate as a nurse. This award will truly help to alleviate the financial cost and allow me to focus on my studies.”

Jacqueline Cortes, who is studying to be a Social Service Worker at Seneca College, was also named a scholarship recipient.



“As a member of UFCW Local 1006A, I am deeply thankful to this union who is an ally for its members, who aims for people’s successes and resilience,” said Cortes, who works at Swiss Chalet. “During these times of hardship, I can proudly say that I can count on an organization that backs me up with my studies as well as my safety in my workplace. Thank you so much UFCW Local 1006A for making this possible.”

Thank you to everyone who applied. For those who weren’t selected this year, we encourage you to apply next year.

[www.ufcw1006a.ca/scholarships](http://www.ufcw1006a.ca/scholarships)







## Congratulations to our 2021 Scholarship Recipients

- Kaitlyn Allen
- Shivai Bhakhri \*
- Sammy Brezovsky
- Laurence Cabalquinto\*
- Tina Do\*
- Samantha Emery
- Tomike Famutimi\*
- Cassidy Ferguson-Cox\*
- Cadence Harrison
- Emily Hewgill
- Erkan Hurmuzlu
- Sven Huycke
- Daniel Jaffe
- Robel Kebede
- Kathleen Kellas\*
- Makenzie Maludzinski
- Erica Marion
- Ethan Martire
- Kari Matikainen
- Priscillah Naderi
- Asha Natkunaseelan\*
- Landon Nicholls
- Jonathan Ononiwu
- Krupa Patel\*
- Jacqueline Peralta Cortes
- Rachel Phiri
- Navreen Randhawa\*
- Aydin Reid
- Julia Ricketts
- Rena Rivera
- Brooke Roussy\*
- Maizie Schwets
- Sabrina Shah
- Griffin Shaw
- Zoha Siddiqui \*
- Miaoer Song\*
- Santiago Villegas
- Zoe Walker
- Duncan Workman
- Tony Zidan
- Alexander Zolis\*

\*child/dependent of Local 1006A member



*"I am so humbled to be a recipient of the 2021 union scholarship. This union works to better the lives of its members across Ontario, I hope to do the same when I graduate as a nurse."*

*- Emily Hewgill, Rome's YIG*





*Many families struggle to find good-quality, affordable childcare.*

## 1006A Women Advocate for Change

As a mother to two boys, Kallisha Hoyes knows universal affordable childcare would be life-changing.

“Working in a job that is often seen as ‘precarious,’ it would be impossible for me to work full-time and still be able to afford childcare in addition to the rent or mortgage, food, and clothing,” said Hoyes, a 1006A steward. “It is very hard and a lot of stress thinking about childcare.”

Currently, Hoyes’ in-laws, who are retired, watch her youngest son, who is 2, as the eldest one, 10, goes to school.

“If I didn’t have my in-laws helping me, my pay cheque would just go to childcare,” said Hoyes.

Hoyes is among the millions of Ontario parents, who have been facing astronomical childcare costs for years. In Toronto, daycare costs can run upwards of \$1,600 a month.

Currently, Doug Ford’s Conservative government is refusing to act on this issue, despite the federal government’s proposed partnership to implement a \$10-a-day childcare program in Ontario.

“Having universal affordable childcare would make a huge difference in my and all women’s contribution to the work force,” said Hoyes. “It is unfortunate how many women are forced to stay home with their children instead of working because childcare is too expensive. Even families with two incomes find it extremely hard to afford childcare.”



**Kallisha Hoyes with her children.**



Childcare is one of the wide range of issues that women across 1006A are urging action on to make our communities and province better for families. Other issues include universal pharmacare and 10 paid sick days for all workers in Ontario.

For 1006A steward Nancy Prout, the presence of a universal pharmacare program would make a difference for members of her family who have to pay out of pocket for medication.



**Nancy Prout**

“Universal pharmacare would provide myself and my family with what we need to live a healthier and longer life, without financial restrictions and social inequality,” said Prout.

Currently, Prout said her nephew is facing challenges with the costs of necessary medication.

“It’s creating a very heavy financial hardship to carry,” she said. “It also leads to difficult decisions when your family member’s health is being jeopardized—decisions no one should be forced to make.”

In Canada, millions of Canadians do not have access to drug benefits, which are often tied to conditions of employment. This means they have to pay out of pocket for life-saving medication.

“I’ve seen first-hand what it could do to a family or a single person who had to take permanent time off from work due to health issues and didn’t have benefits or enough benefits to help them buy the medication that they need,” said Tachani Bishop, a 1006A steward. “I feel, as a country, we all will benefit if we achieve universal pharmacare.”

UFCW Canada reports the pandemic has led to the loss or reduction of many drug benefits for workers and in fact, that one-in-four Canadians in 2020 could not renew or refill a prescription as directed due to cost.



**Did You Know?** UFCW Canada is advocating for 10 paid sick days, universal pharmacare and universal childcare for all workers.



**Tachani Bishop**

As for Prout, she said universal pharmacare would ensure patients can access the same level of care and would eliminate financial barriers.

“Universal pharmacare would ultimately lead to a healthier workplace and to a longer and healthier life expectancy.”

1006A women are also calling for 10 paid sick days for all workers in Ontario.

Valrie Francis, a 1006A steward, said the pandemic has made it difficult for so many women, who do not have access to paid sick days.

“Many women are thinking, if I do become sick, I can’t afford to call in sick and not get paid,” Francis said. “Having 10 paid sick days would be greatly beneficial for women and their families, particularly children.”



**Valrie Francis**

Currently, workers in Ontario are entitled to three sick days. The program is temporary and set to expire at the end of the year.

“Having 10 paid sick days will make a difference for me and all workers, because it is a weight off our mind, knowing that we can take care of ourselves, and keep our workplaces and communities safe.”

# A MENTAL HEALTH PANDEMIC IN CANADA



Nearly 70 per cent of Canadians believe the country is in the midst of a mental health pandemic, according to a recent poll conducted by Ipsos.

Canadians have been caught in the perfect storm with multiple factors leading to a mental health crisis, including the length of the pandemic, the long periods of isolation from friends and family, financial stress from reduced hours and lost jobs, increased childcare responsibilities and fear about the virus.

While the vaccine has provided a lot of relief, the pandemic continues, worsening people's anxiety and depression.

"I want our members to know you are not alone and there is a lot of help and resources available to help you through the challenges you are facing," said President Wayne Hanley.

1006Alive joined Rick Young, the local union's Health and Safety Representative, for his insight into the mental health crisis in Canada.

## Q What impact has COVID-19 had on people's mental health?

A The pandemic pushed the topic of mental health to the forefront as it created or intensified crises that we were experiencing simultaneously.

Our members and the general population continue to experience an unprecedented global health, social and economic crisis that has affected every area of our lives.

Collectively, we have been struggling with fear and uncertainty about our health and the health of our loved ones. We've been concerned about employment and finances, and the social isolation that comes from the necessary but difficult public health measures such as quarantining, lockdowns and physical distancing.

With all that we have experienced over the last two years, more and more people are feeling anxious, depressed, fearful, hopeless and traumatized.

It's important to note that the end of the pandemic will not end this crisis. It's been shown that the impact on mental health outlasts the physical impact of traumatic events when they occur. As a result, the response to the impact on our mental health must be long term.



**Q What are the issues people are facing that is worsening their mental health?**

**A** The Canadian Mental Health Association recently released a poll that found that 50% of Canadians reported worsening mental health since the pandemic began with many feeling worried and anxious.

Canadians are concerned about their finances, concerned with being able to put food on the table, and concerned about being safe from physical or emotional domestic violence.

Only 21% of respondents reported feeling hopeful which suggests that 79% are feeling hopeless.

**Q What are signs that your mental health is suffering?**

**A** It's important to remember that we are all different and we all have different windows of tolerance. It should be noted that it is absolutely normal to see increased mental health suffering during an abnormal situation. Being hard on ourselves or judgmental towards others will not be helpful.

One of the obvious signs of a deterioration of one's mental health is an increase in alcohol consumption or substance use (including prescription pills or cannabis).

Difficulty sleeping or conversely oversleeping are also signs that your mental health could be suffering. Overeating or loss of appetite are also other signs.

New ongoing physical ailments or chronic conditions, especially stomach problems can also be signs of deteriorating mental health.

**40%**  
**OF CANADIANS SAY THEIR MENTAL HEALTH HAS DETERIORATED SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN\***

During times of stress, our bodies produce large quantities of cortisol and adrenaline which can affect organs negatively especially when stress or anxiety is ongoing with little recovery time.

A lack of interest in activities you previously enjoyed can be a sign of depression and intrusive thoughts or feelings that are persistent, frequent or interfere with your day-to-day life can be symptoms of anxiety or depression.

Finally suicidal thoughts must be taken seriously. If you or anyone you know are experiencing suicidal thoughts, professional assistance should be sought out immediately.

**Q Was there a mental health crisis in Canada before the pandemic?**

**A** Before the pandemic, there was a societal shift occurring over a number of years in the way we viewed mental health. It was a positive one as we began to dismantle the stigma that surrounded the topic of mental health. It's fair to say that Canada was already in the midst of a mental health crisis prior to COVID-19 with 1 in 4 people experiencing some form of mental health issue at some point in their lives.

**Q What are some ways to alleviate mental health challenges?**

**A** It's important to be kind to yourself, talk regularly to friends and/or family, exercise regularly and eat balanced meals (with fruits and vegetables), and unplug from social media and your devices. Visit [ufcw1006a.ca](http://ufcw1006a.ca) for more strategies, tips and resources.

\*The Canadian Mental Health Association

## IMPACT ON EQUITY SEEKING GROUPS



The impact of the pandemic on the mental health of equity seeking groups has been profound. Equity seeking groups were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and were already experiencing stigma, exclusion, racism and discrimination.

**Equity Seeking Groups Report Above Average Decline in Mental Health Due to the Pandemic:**

- 54%** of Indigenous peoples
- 54%** of LGBTQ2+
- 50%** of people with disabilities
- Nearly of **50%** women



## Steward Spotlight



# 1006A Steward Steps Up for Members

As a UFCW 1006A steward, Tony Jaber always lets members know he is there for them.

"I tell them that the union is here to represent you – if you have any issues, give me a call," said Jaber, who works at Rob & Tina's No Frills in Amherstburg.

A steward for three years, Jaber has helped members with issues ranging from scheduling of hours to availability to harassment. Being friendly, open, prepared and understanding has been vital to his success as a steward.

"I want to make sure people are treated fairly and equally, and that no one is afraid to come forward if they have an issue at work," he said. "You don't want people getting picked on. When members know they have support from the union, they are stronger and the union is stronger."

When new members join the store, Jaber introduces himself and lets workers know they belong to a union.

"I explain to them their rights, hours and benefits," he said. "I let them know as the union steward I am here to support them and answer any questions."

***"I want to make sure people are treated fairly and equally, and that no one is afraid to come forward if they have an issue at work."***

**Tony Jaber  
Union Steward**

Jaber directs members at his store to the union board, informs them about the latest union news and encourages them to feel comfortable reaching out to the union and speaking out about the issues they face.

Greg Penner, the Union Rep for the Amherstburg No Frills, commended Jaber on his work as a steward.

"He does a great job and I can always count on him," he said.

Jaber loves the sense of satisfaction that comes from successfully helping others.

"I feel good when I see they are happy, when we are able to take a burden off their shoulders, when they don't have to walk on eggshells or feel like they are being pushed around."



**Local 1006A is home to over 700 union stewards who volunteer their knowledge and expertise to help their co-workers on the job!**



# COVID-19: RACIALIZED WORKERS SUFFER EXCESSIVE IMPACT

Sheela Sivanesan saw first-hand the impact COVID-19 had on racialized workers at her workplace.

As shutdowns escalated and fear spread, East Asian workers, at the laundry facility where Sivanesan works, became targets.

Co-workers would distance themselves from them, strictly because they were East Asian. She saw her co-workers experience hatred and rudeness, with some being blamed for the virus.

“I felt upset for my co-workers who faced this situation and wanted to help them,” Sivanesan said.

As a local union steward and a woman of colour, Sivanesan supported her affected co-workers and took the lead in educating others and correcting misinformation.

“I let others know – that this pandemic is no one’s fault, especially not the fault of our peers and that we are a family,” said Sivanesan. “With a month of proper communication, we were able to revert back to a good working environment where everyone was comfortable with each other like the good old times.”

Sivanesan’s story illustrates some of the many experiences that racialized workers in Ontario have had to deal with since the start of the pandemic.

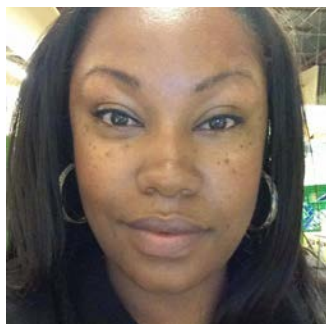
Racialized workers have disproportionately been affected by the pandemic, from facing increased incidents of racism and discrimination to experiencing higher levels of layoffs and financial stress to dealing with higher infection, hospitalization and death rates from COVID-19.

As a woman of colour and a frontline worker, Natasha Grey was devastated when her sister, another frontline worker, contracted COVID-19.

“I was so worried about her,” said Grey, a Vice-President on the Local 1006A Executive Board who said the pandemic has affected her mental health as well.

While her sister recovered from COVID-19, Natasha ended up losing her beloved godson to the virus.

“I get emotional because my last words to my godson was ‘make sure you go and take your shot,’” said Grey, whose grief was compounded by not being able to attend the funeral.



**Natasha Grey**

“It has been a hard road from last year but I worked hard to keep strong.”

For many racialized workers, existing structures of racism and discrimination have made it more difficult.

Workers of colour often faced barriers to good-paying, secure jobs where they could have worked from home. Instead, racialized workers were often on the frontlines of the pandemic, working in precarious jobs, with little-to-no job security or sick days and greater exposure to other workers and the public.

Racialized workers are more likely to have multiple people living under one roof which means increased exposure.



**Sheela Sivanesan**

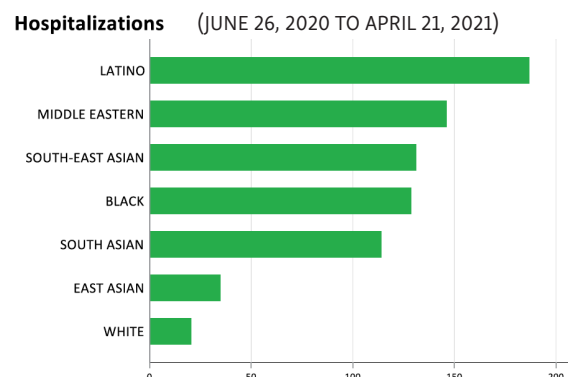
As for Sivanesan, she also saw the financial impact of the pandemic among her co-workers, who were new immigrants.

Without paid sick days, workers were struggling when they were forced to isolate for two weeks. “It was an extremely difficult time for immigrant families, because they had no other family to rely on in

Canada. So, I did what I could and would buy groceries and leave it for them on their doorsteps,” said Sivanesan.

“Overall, the pandemic was hard for the workers of colour in our company, especially in the beginning but we were able to get through our problems,” she said. “At the end of the day, we realized we are in this together and this too shall pass.”

## AGE-STANDARDIZED PER CAPITA RATES OF COVID-19 HOSPITALIZATIONS BY RACE IN ONTARIO



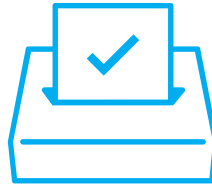
Tracking COVID-19 Through Race-Based Data, Wellesley Institute & Ontario Health

# A Conversation with Andrea Horwath



*"People deserve to have hope for a future where their parents can have good quality of life as they age, their kids get a good public education, their healthcare system is there for them when they need it, and they don't have to juggle several part-time jobs to keep up with the bills."*





*The stakes are high as Ontarians head to the polls next year to vote in the provincial election.*

*NDP Leader Andrea Horwath could be on the verge of a breakthrough, with an opportunity to become Ontario's next Premier.*

*Ontario's Official Opposition Leader shared her thoughts heading into next year's election with 1006Alive.*



**What is at stake for workers and their families in the provincial election next year and what will an NDP government in Ontario stand for?**

There's a lot at stake in the next election. Working folks are working hard to build a good life for their family in our province, and it just keeps slipping further and further out of reach — whether it's not being able to afford a home that fits their family or fewer opportunities for their kids.

Ontarians will have a choice between Doug Ford, who bends over backwards for his big business buddies, and an NDP government that fights for everyday working folks and their families. Doug Ford has spent the last four years making big cuts to services families count on and taking hard-fought gains away from workers.

An NDP government will give people hope again. We can have world-class public health care and education. We can help people find homes they can afford. We can make sure workers are well-paid and well-protected. We need to invest in people, not cut the services they need and rely on.



**What are some key lessons you have learned from your years in politics and how would you apply those lessons as Premier of Ontario?**

My time in politics has reaffirmed how important it is to connect with and listen to everyday folks. It's the voices of regular Ontarians who should be driving our decisions. It's the mom who waited hours with her sick child in a crowded hospital ER. It's the worker who couldn't access the PPE they needed to stay safe on the job during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's the young couple who can't find a home they can afford. As Premier of Ontario, those are the voices I will carry with me in my fight to end hallway medicine, to better protect workers, and to make life more affordable. I love this province, and the people who live here, and I will never give up on us.



**What is one thing you can share about yourself with our readers, that most Ontario voters wouldn't know?**

I am a big Hamilton Ti-Cats fan, and when I get the time to do some baking, I can turn out a pretty good pie.

### **What will an NDP government do on the issue of paid sick days, which many UFCW Canada Local 1006A members and frontline workers have been advocating for?**

The pandemic has only added urgency to the NDP's fight for paid sick days for workers. Essential workers like those who kept our grocery shelves stocked, cleaned, and cared for our loved ones literally put their lives on the line to keep our province running. But they faced a greater risk than they should have because many of them, or their co-workers, couldn't afford to stay home when they were sick. That's why the Ontario NDP's Labour critic, Peggy Sattler, put forward a bill to give workers 14 paid sick days during infectious disease emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as 10 permanent paid sick days. Doug Ford doesn't want to spend the money, but we won't give up. An NDP government will make sure workers get the protection they deserve, including access to the permanent paid sick days they need.

### **Good-quality and affordable childcare is out of reach for many workers and their families, how will an NDP government change this current reality?**

Young people eager to start their families shouldn't have to ask themselves if they can afford to or if they'll have to give up their career ambitions. But that's something that's happening more and more as childcare fees go through the roof — saddling parents with mortgage-sized monthly fees.

The Liberals and Conservatives have just stood by and watched. Now, Doug Ford is dragging his feet on getting a deal done with the federal government on \$10-a-day childcare. The NDP would have signed on long ago, and we'll get this across the finish line if Mr. Ford doesn't. We are completely committed to universal, not-for-profit and public, high-quality \$10 per day child care.

### **Many UFCW Canada Local 1006A members worked on the frontlines during this pandemic, while others in hospitality and service suffered job losses or reduced hours during the pandemic? What is your message to them?**

To all the workers who remained on the frontlines in the face of a dangerous virus so the rest of us could stay safe at home: thank you. But you deserve more than gratitude — you deserve respect. You deserve better wages. You deserve not just to be called a hero, but to be treated like one.

To all those who suffered job losses or cut hours, you deserve more support than you've gotten. While Doug Ford was watching out for his big fish buddies, many everyday folks got left behind.

The NDP fought for more financial support for people who lost income because of the pandemic, and we haven't stopped fighting for more support for hard-hit industries like the hospitality sector. When your hours get cut, it's not your fault. You shouldn't be paying the price for this pandemic.

*"The politicians we elect have the power to shape our lives, from reducing the cost of post-secondary education to protecting the quality of our health-care system, to legislating 10 paid sick days for all workers. This election is the time to make your voice heard and get out and vote."*

*— Wayne Hanley, President*





# UNION WIN: TOXIC RECEIPTS OUT AT LOBLAW STORES



After four years of advocacy, UFCW 1006A is proud to announce toxic receipt papers is no longer being used at Loblaw Company stores. This means that Bisphenol A (BPA), Bisphenol S (BPS) and other bisphenol papers will no longer be used for receipts, signage or scale paper.

The company informed the union this October that thermal paper being used is now phenol-free and there is no phenol paper remaining in the network.

“This is a tremendous victory for our membership, who no longer have to be exposed to these harmful toxic receipts,” said President Wayne Hanley. “We welcome Loblaw’s commitment to follow through on this vital issue and will continue to urge other employers to follow suit and also ban these toxic receipts for the safety of all workers.”

For years, 1006A has been vocal in the campaign to end the use of these harmful receipts. 1006A advocated and raised awareness among our membership, through telephone town halls, email newsletters, provincial Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings, *1006Alive*, our Stewards’ Conference, and posters in all local union units across Ontario.

Our partnership with community allies including Environmental Defence, Breast Cancer Action Quebec and Mind the Store has demonstrated the power of solidarity and collaboration throughout the campaign.

The risks of BPA and BPS papers are high for workers. Simply touching thermal receipt papers, which are widely used at workplaces throughout Ontario, exposes workers and consumers to the harmful hormone disruptor, BPA. The presence of BPA has a huge impact on our health, affecting male and female reproduction, breast development, risk of cancer, obesity, thyroid, metabolism, and cardiovascular endocrinology.

BPS is believed to not only have the same adverse health risks as BPA, but is also suspected to be more easily absorbed by our bodies. Switzerland has banned BPA and BPS as a substitute.

While BPA is no longer used by Loblaw, BPA and BPS papers are still being used at other workplaces throughout Ontario. Toxic receipt papers can be found at other grocery retailers, restaurants (order slips), movie theaters

(tickets), public transportation (tickets and transfers) hotels and warehouses.

“We must continue to advocate on this vital issue to ensure no workers across Ontario are exposed to the hazards of bisphenol receipts,” said President Hanley.

The amount of BPA in receipts can be

**1,000x greater**

than the amount put into the lining of a food can.

Union negotiating committees are making a difference in the lives of members and their families, through achieving gains at the bargaining table. While many agreements have been ratified, others are still in the bargaining process.

*“On behalf of Local 1006A, I want to thank our incredible committee members for volunteering their time and expertise to participate in negotiations – through their dedication and participation, they are building better workplaces for all. The success of our union negotiating teams depend on the strength, unity and participation of our members, and I encourage all members to consistently engage with their union.”*



**Wayne Hanley**  
President

## MAPLE LEAF CANNING



Wage increases were among the gains achieved by UFCW 1006A members at Maple Leaf Canning in their new union contract.

Union Representative Joe Blythe led negotiations with committee members Uspender Brar, Duncan Barristo and Eduardo Diaz with support from Union Representative Dustin Magee and Executive Assistant to the President Frank Ragni.

***“We worked really hard for the members and we want the best for the members,” said Diaz. “We faced difficulties with the company but overall, the contract was okay and acceptable.”***

Gains included significant wage increases, increased company’s contribution to the pension plan and improved contract language.

The contract term is from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2026 and covers 66 members.

## HOLIDAY INN & SUITES MISSISSAUGA WEST

1006A members at Holiday Inn & Suites have ratified a new union contract.

Gains include wage increases (12 per cent over term of union contract), increases to benefits and new language ensuring right to representation during WSIB return to work meetings.

The term of the union contract is from July 15, 2021 to July 14, 2025 and covers 39 workers.

Negotiations were led by Union Rep Joe Blythe with support from members, Maria Magno and Vina Callado.

## BROADBENT INSTITUTE

Members at the Broadbent Institute have ratified their new union contract, with gains from wage increases to flexible work-from-home arrangements post-pandemic.

*“I’m super proud of my coworkers who all believe sincerely in the role of labour unions and the idea of workplace democracy,” said Luke LeBrun, Editor of PressProgress. “This deal leaves us with important gains in terms of pay, but we also used this process to push for better structured working conditions and improve our overall workplace culture.”*

The term of the union contract is from June 2, 2021 to July 1, 2024 and covers 17 members.

Gains also included increases to the retirement saving bonus and increases to the wage scales. Members also won negotiated language covering a flexible work-from-home arrangement. Once the pandemic ends, office workers can work remotely during the summer.

Union negotiations were led by Union Representative Daiana Dumitru, with support from member Luke LeBrun, Executive Assistant to the President Paul Docherty and Union Representative Jackie Graticola.

## CANADIAN RAIL CAR CLEANERS

UFCW 1006A is proud to congratulate our members at Canadian Rail Car Cleaners on ratifying their new union contract.

***“I was very happy we were able to reach an agreement especially during times like these,” said Matt Hill, a member of the negotiating committee. “Times are tough but I feel positive about the contract.”***

Gains included wage increase of 16 per cent over three years, improved contract language and the addition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to the list of holidays.

Negotiations were led by Union Representative Frank Mensah, with support from members, Matt Hill, Kyle Newton and Ryan Hamilton.

The term of the contract is from September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2024 and covers 15 workers.



## ASSELIN'S YOUR INDEPENDENT GROCER



Members at Asselin's Your Independent Grocer (YIG) in Hawkesbury voted to accept a new contract.

***"It is one of the better contracts I have been part of the negotiations for," said Susan Macgregor Dennis, a member of the negotiating committee. "I loved the experience of being part of the negotiating committee and I like the challenge."***

Improvements included wage increases for full-time and part-time, shorter and improved wage progression for part-time, improved bereavement leave language. 1006A also achieved improvements to wage scales for Department Deli Manager, Bakery Manager (Bake off), Night Crew Chief and Service Manager to bring them in line with other managers.

Negotiations were led by Union Representative Gord Albert with support from members, Guy Bastille, Susan Macgregor Denis and Sophie Vaudrin and Union Representative Jackie Graticola.

Ratified on July 25, 2021, the three-year union contract covers 123 workers.

## ALSCO

1006A members at AlSCO have voted to accept a new union contract.

Improvements included 9 per cent wage increase over three years, increases to the pension annually and improved return to work language.


"It was a great contract, the best one we have had," said Terri Leitenberger, a member of the bargaining committee. "I really appreciate all the help we got from our union representatives who did a great job explaining and communicating. I know everyone is very happy with the contract."

The term of the contract is from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2024.

Negotiations were led by Union Rep Rick Del Fiacco, with support from members, Laurie Westermann and Terri Leitenberger and Union Rep Daiana Dumitru.

**To read about more contract negotiations, please visit [www.ufcw1006a.ca](http://www.ufcw1006a.ca)**

## NO FRILLS 2022 NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

With No Frills contract negotiations set to begin in 2022, UFCW 1006A thanks members for completing their proposal forms. 

1006A received nearly 600 submissions.

"Our goal, as always, is to achieve the best possible contract for our members," said President Wayne Hanley. "Member participation and solidarity is vital in making this a reality—Thank you for sharing your ideas and suggestions with us."

The union bargaining committee, which is in the process of being formed, will be reviewing the proposal forms for members' input and insight on improving the union contract.

"When negotiations begin next year, we need each and every one of our members working at No Frills to engage in the process," said President Hanley. "Your union contract affects your life, from your wages to benefits to working conditions and negotiations is your opportunity to be involved in shaping your future."

Please visit our union website regularly for updates.



**Who is negotiating the agreement?** The union's negotiating committee which is made up of union officers, staff, and members that work part & full-time at No Frills.

**How many members are covered by these negotiations?** Approximately 12,000 members are employed at 146 No Frills locations across Ontario. Moore's Valu-mart is also covered by the No Frills collective agreement. Most No Frills are franchises, and are part of Canada's largest grocery retailer, Loblaw Companies Ltd.



Kiranjeet Kaur's winning entry from our "Share Your Pandemic Story" contest highlights the challenges faced by students during the pandemic

## LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC

*The current pandemic has taught me a lot. It is something which I've never experienced my life and hopefully never would in the future.*

*Being a full-time university student, things were definitely difficult for me as the transition to online learning and school was extremely challenging.*

*My first near experience with COVID-19 was when my roommate got sick with the virus. I had to get tested and had to go through the 14-day self-isolation following the public health guidelines.*

*It was hard to stay locked up in the house along with managing my final term exams at the same time. It was really stressful and there have been a lot of times when I thought of giving up everything.*

*But still there was some tiny little hope, some optimism in me which led me to move forward with life.*

*I still continued to work at Loblaws. I've met a lot of different people throughout the whole pandemic, was able to learn a lot from them by hearing their stories and experiences.*

*Times were tough in the beginning since I was constantly worried about my health, the risk of getting COVID while working and also my family back home. Fortunately, everything turned out fine at the end.*

*This whole situation has definitely made me see the world from a very different perspective, made me learn how to prepare for the worst and always be positive.*

*A year and a half have passed, we all are still in a pandemic, but with increasing vaccinations, I'm very hopeful that we are very near beating COVID 19, and for sure a time will come very soon where we'll be able to continue with our old lifestyle.*

**See page 6 for more member stories.**

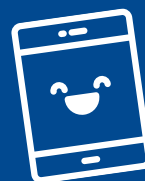


# YOUR UNION IS CALLING

**January 18  
at 7 pm**

Telephone Town Hall General Membership Meeting

Join us for the latest news and information.



+ Members can enter our contest to win a Tablet Computer

Members will have the opportunity to hear about initiatives of the local union and ask questions.

We will call members' home and/or cell phone numbers to connect you to the meeting.

**Our call will come from  
"UFCW Your Union"  
1.800.637.5936.**

**Simply pick up to participate.**

If you miss the call, dial in, 1.877.229.8493 and enter ID Code 118307.





# THE LAST MILE

Is this the last mile in Canada's fight against COVID-19?

With more than 85% of Canadians (12 and up) now vaccinated, many Canadians hope this is the case.

Barring any new variants, we may be on the final leg of a journey that began in March 2020, when COVID-19 turned life upside down across the globe.

We are almost there, but there is still work to be done.

Even though more than 28 million Canadians are fully vaccinated, more than 5 million eligible Canadians are not.

Now is the time for the final push, to ensure our loved ones, co-workers, workplaces and communities are safe.

Being vaccinated is not only about thinking of yourself but thinking about the well-being and safety of others.

The last mile is also about getting children, under 12, vaccinated so they and their classmates are protected. Currently, Health Canada has recently approved vaccines for those between ages 5 and 12.

More than ever, it's about listening to our doctors and public health experts, and not the fake news and misinformation videos on social media.

As we move forward, we must learn from the failures of the Conservative governments in Alberta and Saskatchewan. They refused to listen to public health experts, did not believe COVID-19 was a serious concern and failed to reach high levels of vaccination rates before removing safety restrictions, such as mandatory masking. As a result, Alberta and Saskatchewan have seen COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths spiral out of control. We have seen the exact same result in the United States, with premature celebrations when mask mandates were rolled back resulting in skyrocketing cases and deaths.

In Ontario, Premier Doug Ford also needs to do better. Rapid tests, which are readily accessible and affordable around the world, are hard for regular citizens to access in this province. These tests are vital to early detection and reducing the spread of the virus.

*Now is the time for the final push, to ensure our loved ones, co-workers, workplaces and communities are safe.*

The Canadian federal government gave Ontario millions of rapid tests and what did Ford do with them? He gave them mostly to Shoppers Drug Mart, which is now charging \$40 for a single test to people without symptoms. Who gets priority access to these tests for a lower cost? Ford's friends – owners of businesses.

Ontario residents, who have suffered with COVID-19 or died, have paid the ultimate price for Ford's mismanagement of the lockdowns. Delays in implementing public health measures, including masking and vaccine passports and lack of oversight at long-term care homes are all failures of this government to respond effectively to this crisis.

As we head into the winter, we must remember to keep each other safe and complete this last mile safely. This means masking and most importantly, it means encouraging those you know, who haven't got their shots yet, to get vaccinated.

Since March 2020, life changed dramatically for all of us. But thanks to science, and the lessons we've learned, I expect we all have a new found appreciation for life as we return to normal.

As we close out 2021, we can have a holiday season where you can get together safely with family and friends with the peace of mind that you are all protected. That is what is around the corner, if we all do our part and get vaccinated.



**Kevin Benn** (he/him)

Secretary-Treasurer,  
UFCW Canada Local 1006A

**SO I CAN BE WITH YOU AGAIN. FASTER.**

GETTING VACCINATED CAN BRING US ALL BACK TOGETHER. FASTER.

FASTER.

1006Alive 23





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