

# MEMBER UPDATE



## YOUNG ACTIVISTS COMMITTEE

### Winners of young activists award announced!

#### Congratulations to the young members who make this union run

The Young Activists Committee (YAC) of AUPE is commemorating International Youth Day by recognizing the contributions that young people make to this union. The Recognition of Activism Leadership for Youth (RALY) award is the YAC's most prestigious award, and today we're happy to announce the winners.

We know that young people are the future of the labour movement — it's young people that will pick up the torch where their predecessors left off and advance the fight into the future. Every day, young people in AUPE stand up for their co-workers, defend health and safety in the workplace, and make sure their working conditions are respected.

That's why we created the RALY award — as a small way to thank the young activists that make the labour movement stronger every day. The young activists who, even if they're early in their careers, aren't afraid to put themselves on the line. Without these young activists, the labour movement would be heading to extinction.

August 12 is International Youth Day; this day is a day designated by the United Nations to bring awareness to young activists worldwide and to recognize their efforts to improve society. It

aims to promote ways to engage young activists in becoming more actively involved in making positive contributions to their communities. That is why the YAC recognizes outstanding young activists and present them each with the RALY award. Here are the winners!

The committee wishes to thank these outstanding young activists for all they do for AUPE and their fellow co-workers and are confident they will continue to do amazing work. We're so proud to call all of these members our fellow workers, and look forward to continue building solidarity together. Congratulations!

In Solidarity,  
The Young Activists Committee

**Please see page 2 for winners bios**

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## **Erin Holdner** Local 069—Athabasca University

Erin grew up in a union household—both her parents spent their careers in various levels of government. She saw the benefits of collective agreements in the workplace first-hand – fair wages, better working conditions, and even scholarships for her own post-secondary education.

She has shown a powerful willingness to get involved with Local 069, which has been important as they emerged from a challenging period where people are only beginning to recognize the need to get involved again. Erin is one of the founding members of Local 069's Engagement Committee and continues to be a strong/vocal activist for her fellow workers.

## **Prachi Mishra** Local 052 (University of Calgary)

Prachi is Vice-Chair of Local052. During the past two years, she brought the siloed Calgary post-secondary sector together—creating the context for faculty associations, student unions, activists, and support staff unions from across Calgary to coordinate actions in protest of education cuts. This included drive-through protests downtown and at the Minister's Office, coordinating chalking messages of advocacy at MLA offices across the city, phone zaps, petitions, the Stop the Cuts campaign, and poster campaigns. She connected AUPE and non-AUPE groups to fight for our sector.

With the support of AUPE staff, Prachi helped lead the organizing of our bookstore staff, successfully stopping the privatization of their jobs.

She leads the caretaking fightback for vulnerable, low income, mostly racialized and women caretakers. She is showing them how to find their voice. In 2022 she organized three large information pickets (and an additional one for the U of L strike in Calgary), mapped the caretaking department, and held meetings for caretakers to stand up to the systemic racism and attacks on their livelihoods. She met with the administration to demand the reversal of the devastating decisions they implemented.

When Prachi's position was abolished by the employer, she went to the Local office every day to continue meeting, organizing, and empowering their caretakers. After she secured another staff position in another department, her activism for workplace power and commitment to holding leaders accountable continues.

## **Vevangapi Joy Katjamana** Local 054 (AHS GSS Edmonton Zone)

In 2021 Vevangapi was a strong advocate in fighting the UCP efforts to privatization of frontline public services and fought for over three hundred of her fellow workers at risk of losing their jobs. In this fight, they questioned the legality of the privatization and why the contract afforded many powers to the

government. Throughout the proceedings with the Alberta Health Services privatization team, Vevangapi argued that privatizing frontline jobs in the middle of the pandemic was unreasonable and

discriminatory, and infringed on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This work contributed to the context that eventually saw the Minister of Health resign and subsequently be placed in a different position.

Vevangapi is preparing to become a lawyer as they are passionate about increasing diversity in the legal

profession, especially looking to increase the number of transgender lawyers across Canada, as trans people are extremely unrepresented in this field. As a Black trans person, they have seen and witnessed the injustice the trans community faces in the workforce. They are passionate in their fight to end workplace discrimination against equity-seeking groups and fight provincial governments across the country to amend their healthcare coverage to accommodate all trans patients equally.