

Karen Muller

NOMINEE FOR TREASURER

Since 1987, I have been a proud ONA member. I am committed to empowering members through our shared goals and collective powers. This association fosters a culture of inclusion, empowerment, and advocacy to support and improve public healthcare for all.

Seven years ago, our Bargaining unit was placed in Administration by ONA Central. As the leadership team in the local was changing, I saw an opportunity to give back to the association that had already done so much for me. I offered to come in to help as Treasurer/Secretary as it was a service that I had outside experience with and understood. Later that year I was appointed to this role by ONA Central. During this time of rebuilding, it was important to me that our local and Bargaining Unit foster growth, transparency, integrity, and equality for all. Over time we regained our member's trust. Members began to bring issues forward affecting work, fair treatment and their rights. My goal is to ensure that each one of these issues are addressed and we would work with the Local and ONA Central. It was important to me to let them know that their union is there to support them.

For anyone who knows me, they know that I have a passion for advocacy. I find myself speaking up for the betterment of all, constantly. We have a duty to speak up when our collectively bargained rights are being challenged. One voice is so easily lost – but a united front improves the shared concerns of its membership and cannot be ignored.

In 2021 Covid struck. Those of us in the health care profession were hit hard. Members were worried. Management felt that they no longer had to follow the Collective Agreement. This was not ok. Our members needed protection, and they needed it immediately. ONA was there, fighting in hospital meetings, about effective PPE and the protection of our members, and aiding them through their Occupational Health journey after fighting the illness. It was a time of constant change and unrest. We needed to work as a collective, and we were right - we were stronger together. The fight is long, and it is still not over, but it is something that we have learnt from, to ensure that all members stay safe for years to come.

Throughout Covid, I knew that I needed to pivot my knowledge to advocate for our members. I realized that I needed to add to my leadership skills. I reached out to ONA educators and mentors. I have strengthened my capacity as a leader in ways I never would have expected. I am thankful for this collaborative journey with the Local, Central members and educators.

I know that membership wants leaders that are transparent and present. I have relied on my critical thinking and foundations to be those things for our members. Over the years I have held many roles with the local but always continued in the Treasurer/Secretary role. This is a significant role for me, as it is my way to ensure that all members have a voice. Our Local budget is built on the needs for our leaders to represent our members. I respect that the funds to support the local comes from our members dues, and we need to ensure that these funds benefit our entire membership.

I have always been drawn to budgets, strategic planning, transparency, and fiduciary responsibilities. I am fortunate to sit on the Risk Management Committee at Central, Treasurer meetings, and continue to hear from our membership as to their priorities. This has allowed me to voice the needs of our local and incorporate the priorities with the vision of ONA.

As I look to my prospective role for Local Treasurer at Central, I'll seek to employ the same tactics of accountability that allowed our Local to be independent and out of oversight from ONA Central. This position will allow me to support the many locals, big or small, with the education, resources, and support that they deserve to plan strategic budgets and utilize funds for the best possible purpose for their membership. There are numerous moving parts to each local and there are policies and procedures to follow.

ONA is growing! More health care agencies are seeing that ONA's changing inclusive vision is strong. As we welcome new Bargaining units, allied health colleagues, and see changes in Local Leadership, I want to ensure that there is someone for our leaders to work with to ensure that the interest of our membership is upheld. I believe I am the person to aid them in this journey, and I have the track record to prove it.

Just as the 'seasoned' leaders took me under their wing when I was starting this journey, I will work to provide experience, guidance, mentorship to those beginning their journey with ONA, ensuring their goals of better working conditions, safe staffing ratios, and better public health care for all.

To achieve these goals, I want to be the one standing for each member to complete this journey. During this time, I want to ensure that our resources match the financial obligations to ensure that we can support our Strategic Plan. By Collaborating with members of the financial team, Board of Directors, and the support teams at Central, I feel we can make healthcare - and working in healthcare – better for all.

Members need to have a leadership that they can trust to stand for them. Our future in healthcare is bright. I believe that working with our Union we have a strong, respected and hopeful future for all.

In closing, it truly would be my honour to stand for you - the membership - in the position of Treasurer. I will bring my experience, support, and passion to this role. I will work tirelessly to further our profession and strengthen our methods of support and advocacy for healthcare professionals here in Ontario.

Stronger together,

Karen Muller