

Christmas can be a very stressful time of year. For many the Christmas holiday period is a mass of complex social interactions with family or relatives, some of whom you may rather not see.

There could well be perceived expectations, to create a 'wonderful Christmas' with perfect happy families enjoying luxurious celebrations and gifts, not to mention the most important meal of the year.

These high expectations can create stress, anxiety, and disappointment, as we strive to reach these unrealistic ideals. Some people experience feelings of isolation, financial pressures or increased family conflict resulting in a genuine dislike for the holiday season.

If you fall into any of these categories, take heart, there are some things you can do to help manage the stress during this festive period.

Plan ahead. Make lists for shopping for food, presents, decorations or travel arrangements and sleeping arrangements. Keep these lists for next year, they will need some updating but you'll be glad you have a ready base of ideas to start from next year.

Delegate duties to other family members where possible – it makes them feel involved and helps to reduce your workload.

Do not over-estimate the time you will have available on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day – prepare as much food and ingredients as possible beforehand and freeze to shorten prep time on the day of the big feast.

Set a deadline to STOP! You need down time to enjoy the holiday season, set a reasonable goal to end your Christmas preparations and start your relaxation and family time.

Make time for exercise. 'Tis the season for excessive eating and many sweet treats. Exercise will not only keep those extra calories in check, it will fight the stress as it burns off cortisol and adrenaline and produces mood-enhancing endorphins.

Avoid excessive alcohol. Alcohol will dehydrate you and make your liver work harder to process it. Drink a glass of water to match each drink containing alcohol to remain hydrated. This will also help to avoid the dreaded Boxing Day hangover.

Keep calm. When all the prep in the world doesn't help, breathe. Step away to a quiet space and breathe deeply through your nose, hold for 15-20 seconds and then breathe slowly out through your mouth. Repeat for a few minutes, until you can feel the stress evaporating away.

2016 Children's Christmas Party

The CUPE Local 38 Children's Christmas Party was held at the Red and White Club on December 3 this year and we had a great turn out. In addition to the party being very well attended, we received positive feedback on the event from our members that were able to attend. There were balloon artists, face painters, a magician and Elsa and Anna were there to the delight of many of the children. Of course the main attraction was Santa and his elves, as they posed with hundreds of children for photos provided by a professional photographer.

Planning this event is a major undertaking and it begins with booking the venue a year in advance and then carries into April, when the Social Committee does the toy selection. By September the committee is busy booking the entertainment and gathering enough volunteers to help the event run smoothly. In November, the company that provides our toys and gift bags are busy preparing our order for delivery in December. Did you know that the gift bags used for the toys are handmade by a family here in Calgary? It is a special touch that we appreciate and helps us to cut the waste of wrapping paper for each gift.

All of this takes a great deal of planning, and the timing is vital to the success of the event. It is because of this timing that we have to have a strict cut-off date for registration in order to allow the vendors enough time to prepare for our planned amount of guests. We don't want you to miss out on this fun family event for next year, so keep an eye out for the insert in the October 2017 newsletter and be sure to get your registration form to the office before the cut-off date in November. The application form will also be posted on our website at www.cupe38.org for download.

Local 38 would like to thank all of the volunteers that spend so much of their personal time in making this event happen. We would not have the opportunity to see all of those children's smiling faces if it wasn't for your tireless efforts. **Thank you volunteers**, and we hope to see you all next year!



Due to the holiday season, the Regular Membership meeting has been rescheduled to December 20, 2016. Come by at 7:00 pm for the meeting and stay for the small Holiday Social afterwards.

REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETING



**When: Tuesday, December 20, 2016
at 7:00 p.m.**

**Where: CUPE 38 Office
1439-9 Avenue SE
Business: Regular**

**A Holiday Social will be held upon adjournment of the
Regular Meeting.**

The Officers' and Executive of CUPE Local 38 wish you and your families the very best for the holiday season and the coming New Year. We hope your travels are safe and your time with family and friends is enjoyable.

Happy Holidays and please remember don't drink and drive.

The CUPE Local 38 office will be closed from noon on December 23, 2016 until January 2, 2017 inclusive. The Office re-opens on Tuesday, January 3, 2017.