

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

April 1994



(INTERCEDE)

FOREIGN DOMESTIC WORKERS WRITE TO MINISTER MARCHI: PLEASE STOP CONTINUING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST US!

Sergio Marchi, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, received more than 30 handwritten letters from INTERCEDE members describing some of the impact of the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) on their lives and asking him to end discrimination against them.

Minister Marchi received the letters during a meeting held with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) including its president, Sunera Thobani, and members of its executive, Flora Fernandez and Fely Villasin, coordinator of INTERCEDE and one of NAC's vice-presidents.

Among the issues taken up at the meeting apart from the LCP were the immigration policy review process and the plight of women seeking refuge from gender-based persecution and domestic violence in particular.

In a letter handed to Minister Marchi, Villasin highlighted immigration rules and practices that should be changed or eliminated to end discrimination suffered by foreign caregivers and domestic workers, including:

1. the entry criteria of the LCP that excludes women who don't have an equivalent of a Canadian secondary education (Grade 12) and that requires them to have a six-month full-time training or one-year experience related to the work they are accepting, as well as proficiency in English or French;

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VANCOUVER'S CDWCR PLEASED OVER RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS TO ESA

The Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights, an affiliate organization of INTERCEDE, was pleased to learn recently that recommendations made to the British Columbia Employment Standards Act (ESA) may soon give domestic workers minimum wage and hours of work protection.

Up to now, domestic workers in British Columbia are excluded from the provisions of the ESA regarding minimum wage and hours of work. CDWCR has asked the B.C. Ministry of Labour to act quickly on these improvements.

Other recommended changes would give the Labour ministry the authority to approve living accommodations and rent charged. CDWCR hopes this would ensure that rooms rented to live-in workers would be standardized and be more acceptable.

CDWCR members expressed concern however over the absence of concrete recommendations for

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Come to INTERCEDE's monthly meeting on Sunday, April 10, 1994, 3-5 p.m. at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street, South of College & Spadina

2-3 p.m. New member application and renewals. Members with ID numbers 93-0245 to 93-0322 must renew or be dropped from membership list.

3-4 p.m. TAX QUESTION AND ANSWER with Mary Lyn Cooney
Income tax preparation with volunteer accountants from
Association of Filipino-Canadian Accountants
Make sure to bring your T4, income tax forms, receipts etc.

CLASP Legal Clinic will be open.

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2. the requirement that they live-in their employer's household as a condition of maintaining their temporary status;
3. the requirement that restricts them to a single employer specified in their work permit;
4. the requirement that if they fail to complete 24 months or two full years, without interruption, of live-in caregiving work within three years from their entry into the program they would forfeit the right to become permanent residents;
5. the dependence of a foreign domestic worker's application for permanent residence on her spouse and dependents' eligibility to immigrate to Canada, even after she has completed the requirements for permanent residence under the LCP."

Workers cited problems with the temporary work permit system in the LCP such as the "continuous fear of being sent back", of being deported or being rejected for landed status; of being "forced to work with abusive employers"; of temporary status being used as a "tool" by employers to exploit and take advantage of them; and of

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COMBINED FIRST AID AND CPR CLASS
(at Discounted rates for INTERCEDE members)

Saturday, May 28, 1994 9:30 am to 4:30 pm
OR
Sunday, May 29, 1994 10 am to 5 pm

Space for each class is limited.
Register early and pay \$45 to INTERCEDE.
For more information call 324-8751

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enforcement of the Act or for monitoring of employers. They said that even if domestic workers are legally protected, without strong enforcement provisions, this protection would be meaningless. They will continue to press the B.C. government on stronger enforcement provision and monitoring measures.

A key recommendation made by CDWCR meant to resolve this gap was the creation and mandating of a Central Registry where employers would have been obliged to report the names of domestic workers hired. But the official recommendations made by the Labour ministry do not include the establishment of such a registry.

CDWCR spokesperson, Julie Diesta, said they will press the government for action on its recommendation to create a Central Registry.

PILIPINAS MEETING

Sunday, April 17, 1994 1-5 p.m.
George Brown College
Room R-456-E
200 King St. W (King Subway)

**PROBLEMS WITH PASSPORT,
BIRTH CERTIFICATE, MARITAL STATUS
AND OTHER MISREPRESENTATION?**

Presenter: Bayani Abesamis

(articling with Aaron & Aaron, Barristers,
and member, Philippine Bar)

For more info, call **324-8751**

We wish to thank the Employment and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Secretary of State; Multiculturalism and Citizenship; Ontario Ministry of Citizenship; Ontario Women's Directorate; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); and the City of Toronto Grants Review Board for their continuing support.

TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS since March 1993 (Does not apply to current members)

INTERESTED TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER? SEND THE FORM BELOW WITH PAYMENT.
IF NO RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION BY END OF APRIL, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION ☐ NEW SUBSCRIPTION ☐ CHANGE OF ADDRESS ☐

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

Please send *DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS* to:

NAME : _____

ADDRESS : _____

CITY/PROVINCE : _____

POSTAL CODE : _____ TELEPHONE : _____

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$20.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$25.00

INTERCEDE THEATRE GOERS

If you want to join other members to see a play, a musical, or any other entertainment, INTERCEDE will be reserving tickets

FOR FREE OR AT A DISCOUNT

so put your name on our Theatre-Goer List;
Register by calling 324-8751

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"being discriminated from other foreign workers who are admitted as landed immigrants.

They complained about the live-in requirement as a condition of their continued status, of not having "a quiet moment after a long day's work because the kids could go in and out of my unlocked room"; "not having a peaceful sleep for fear of being sexually assaulted by a male employer"; "working long hours and being on call 24 hours of the day"; having "no privacy and being overworked"; and being assigned sub-standard rooms.

The workers asked for a "generic" work permit, one that did not tie them to a specific employer, because "it costs \$100 every time we change employment" even if the employment was terminated by the employer; it is "scary to change employment as this could affect" their landed status application; it limits their freedom to choose the employer they want to work with; and "it may not totally eliminate the abuses but certainly will help lessen them" if a domestic worker is able to change employer more freely.

In her letter Villasin said: "We are requesting you to listen to our appeal and make the necessary changes so that a system of indenture labour that is maintained by the LCP is eliminated and that foreign domestic workers will be treated as equals under immigration policy."

Minister Marchi promised to look into the matters raised by domestic and caregiver workers. Meanwhile, NAC will continue to follow up with the Minister the issues raised above.

CARIBBEAN GROUP MEETING

Sunday, April 17, 1994 3-5 p.m.
Call Carol 324-8751 for meeting place

DID YOU CHANGE ADDRESS?

Please inform us by phone or mail so that you can continue getting your newsletter and we don't waste postage expenses for returned mail!

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW !

INTERCEDE invites you to a dance to
CELEBRATE A DECADE OF SERVICE

Saturday, May 28, 1994 7 pm to 1 am
Scadding Court, 707 Dundas Street West

Light Buffet included in \$13.00 ticket

Attire: Semi-Formal

Music by: Playhouse D.J.Services

STAFF NOTES

From Counsellor Coco Tarape-Diaz:

I want to express my thanks to all who helped and made donations to defray the expenses of Mila dela Cruz Batungbakal, who decided to go home to the Philippines to be close to her family before she died. May she rest in peace.

Also my thanks to all who made donations to transfer the remains of Sarah Navarro, so that her family could bury her in the Philippines.

On another note, I am happy to announce that domestic workers who filed their application for permanent resident in 1989 and 1990 are now receiving their approvals.

I hope they will be able to sponsor all their dependents, specially children who have

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\$176 FOR A TRIP TO OTTAWA

Including: Bus Fare, Hotel, Lunch, and
Registration Fee for

NAC CONFERENCE: International Perspectives - Women & Global Solidarity

(National Action Committee on the Status of Women)

When:

June 9 evening - Leave Toronto by bus
June 10 - 8:30 am to 6 pm NAC Conference
June 11 - Tour Ottawa on your own
or continue NAC conference
June 12 - 2 pm Leave Ottawa by bus

Register your name and deposit \$100
by **April 10.**

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surpassed the 19-year-limit because of the long Immigration processing and delay.

Meanwhile, anyone of you or your friends who are experiencing problems with delays of more than two years in getting approved for landed status, do call INTERCEDE's office for assistance.

News from Coordinator Fely Villasin:

I have just attended a three-day forum on "people's alternatives to economic integration" in the "land of Zapata", Oaxtepec, Mexico where grassroots women's organizations and other social movements and networks sent representatives from Central and South America, the U.S. and Canada.

Conference participants shared experiences on the impact, specially on women, of NAFTA and global restructuring that is integrating the economies of these regions.

Like in Canada, the global restructuring is being implemented on the backs of women who are being pushed into lower paying, more insecure, more informal economy and being pushed back to the homes to do unpaid domestic and caregiving work.

Alternative organizing methods highlighted the conference, popular and grassroots organizations are creating ways of countering the assault on the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society.

On my fourth day, I resumed contacts with Colectibo Ataval whose leaders I met two years ago and who claimed they were inspired by the work of INTERCEDE and have now expanded their work and outreach to Mexico City's domestic workers.

They are hosting the third international conference of domestic workers in Mexico City in March 1995. So, save your money if you want to go with INTERCEDE to attend this Latin American/Caribbean conference for the first time!

DOMESTICS' CROSS CULTURAL NEWS

c/o INTERCEDE

489 College Street, Suite 402
Toronto, Ontario
M6G 1A5

FIRST CLASS

ORIENTATION MEETING

Sunday, April 24, 1994

10 a.m. - to 4 p.m.

Topics:

1. IMMIGRATION AND LABOUR RULES
2. SPONSORING DEPENDENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES

Register by calling 324-8751

and pay \$5 registration fee

(which will be refunded

if you are present on April 24)

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council	345-9312
Employment Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	323-9986
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933
OHIP	
Toronto	482-1111
Scarborough	1-800-263-3814
Mississauga	275-2730
Ontario Human Rights Commission	326-9511
Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Workers' Compensation	927-9555
Revenue Canada (taxation)	869-1500
Centro Para Gente de Habla Hispana	533-8545
Toronto Rape Crisis Center	(24 Hr line) 597-8808
Assaulted Help Line	863-0511

EMERGENCY HOUSING

Nellie's Hostel	461-1084
Evangeline's	762-9636

LEGAL SERVICES

Parkdale Community Legal Services	531-2411
CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic	736-5029
Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Serv.	924-4244
Metro Tor. Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic	971-9674
Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic	971-8832

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ont.
Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm
Tel: (416) 324-8751 Fax: (416) 324-8790

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