

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers, and Newcomers

April 1998



INTERCEDE members were among the thousands of women who marched on International Women's Day. (Toronto Star March 8, 1998)

All Domestic/Caregiver Workers, Non-Immigrant Women with Temporary Work Permit and all Newcomers

YOU ARE WELCOME TO

INTERCEDE MEETING EVERY FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

(if a holiday, meeting is on second Sunday)

Sunday, April 5, 1998 3 - 5 p.m.

Cecil Community Center, 58 Cecil Street

Topic: Changes being proposed to Canadian Immigration Laws

FREE INCOME TAX PREPARATION *(by Assn of Filipino-Canadian Accountants)*

Make sure to bring your T4, Income Tax forms, receipts, etc.

Renew your membership or Apply as New Member at 3:00 p.m.

SUGGESTED CHANGES TO CANADA IMMIGRATION

On January 6, 1998 the Honourable Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration announced suggested changes to Canada's Immigration and Refugee policies. This extensive report was prepared by the Legislative Review Advisory Group commissioned to advise the Minister on the best future direction of Canada Immigration Laws.

The Report seems to show that the best direction for Canada is to target the rich and educated as preferred candidates for immigration to this country. It seems to suggest, (but with no sound research to support the presumption) that immigrants with lower education or with less money will be a burden to Canada.

The previously independent class of immigrants has been renamed as the "self-supporting" class of immigrants. Criteria for permanent residence will be based on ability to speak English or French, post-secondary education, having money to pay for your settlement, in addition to age and work or business experience.

These selection criteria of "self-supporting class" immigrants are biased against immigration of women from poorer countries. In general, women have less access to higher education or language training, less access to good jobs or wealth. The criteria above will undoubtedly lead to systemic barriers and discrimination in immigration based on both gender and country of origin.

Chapter 6 of the Report deals with the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) and advises that Immigration should no longer discriminate in favour of or against this group. The Report's recommendation 75 states that the LCP should be eliminated as a separate class and that Immigration and Citizenship legislation should allow caregivers with a valid, permanent job offer to apply for landed status under the Self-supporting class.

The Advisory group further states that "(c)aregivers be allowed to live in or live out according to the arrangement they make with their employer". Other proposed changes include:

- Permitting caregivers to enter Canada as landed immigrants provided they meet criteria laid out for the self-supporting class of economic immigrants which would eliminate the two years of temporary bonded labour.
- Permitting caregivers to enter as foreign workers with temporary work permits who can later apply for landing under the self-support class when a permanent job offer has been validated by the Canada Employment Centre.

- Caregivers entering as foreign workers and able to migrate with their families; family members will be able to work and employers will be required to provide health insurance coverage for workers and their families.

While these changes appear positive, what determines whether a domestic worker will remain a temporary worker or be accepted as a landed immigrant upon arrival will be the presence of a permanent job offer.

The problem is that there is no clear definition in the report of what is considered a "permanent job offer". It looks like employers will exercise more power over domestic workers if a "permanent" job offer depends on their discretion. It also seems that they will mainly control whether a caregiver will live-in or out as a condition of such a job offer. Temporary status and dependence on employers for a permanent job offer will once again maintain exploitative work conditions that are disempowering to domestic workers. Also as foreign workers, they will not receive health coverage under publicly funded and administered health insurance plans.

Domestic workers will have a more difficult time to sponsor their families, not only because they will need more money than just the \$975 landing fee, but also because they will have to fear language-learning fees and other settlement costs.

INTERCEDE has appealed to Minister Robillard to increase, not decrease, the chances of women domestic workers from poor countries such as the Philippines, Caribbean, Latin-American Countries, etc. to enter Canada as full fledged immigrants.

We made it clear that we are not in favour of continuing the discriminatory conditions in the Live-in Caregiver program. Rather, we are asking for equality under Canada's immigration policy - that is, an equality of access and opportunity for domestic workers, poor women and women of colour to enter Canada as immigrants.

This article was derived from lawyer Yola Grant's Critique of the Immigration report titled, Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration, as it pertains to caregivers.

Workshop on

"WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?"

(A Continuing Education to End
Violence Against Women)

Sunday, April 26, 1998 2 - 5 pm

Please register by calling 483-4554

INTERCEDE'S FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE TACKLES APEC

The fourth annual meeting of domestic workers, caregivers and nannies was held in Vancouver by INTERCEDE affiliate, the Committee for Domestic Worker's and Caregiver Worker's Rights (CDWCR) on November 15-16, 1997.

Over 48 participants attended the conference, including eight each from Regina, Saskatchewan, Toronto and three delegates from Indonesia.

Discussions focused primarily on issues concerning immigration, human rights and labour protection. Activities for 1998 included making further representation for the inclusion of domestic workers under the point system, raising the profile on the need for ratification of the United Nations Convention on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families, and the continued monitoring of the implementation of the legislated Central Registry of employers and their caregivers in Vancouver.

Special attention was paid to the Womens Conference Against APEC held November 17-- and the actual APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Meeting in which government leaders of countries bordering the Pacific Ocean would be gathering together to discuss the elimination of trade and investment barriers between them by the year 2020.

In examining why they should care about APEC and globalization, participants learned that competition in a free market when trade and investment barriers are gone can lead to a hiring of cheap labour in order to maximize profits. Migrant workers thereby become part of the cheap labour that fuels globalization in a competition that ultimately leads to the decline of their human rights and the erosion of their rights as workers.

In the end, participants were able to grasp in an interesting way how APEC and other related issues impacts on their lives as migrant women and as domestic workers. Conference delegates asserted that there must be a balance between economic policies and human rights; migrant workers are not just commodities. The welfare of the poor and vulnerable must be a priority in all trade agreements. Participants unanimously agreed to join the APEC Meeting and to continue educating others on these issues.

Overall, the conference proved to be empowering and rejuvenating. Delegates left committed to continue the fight for their rights and the rights of migrant workers internationally!

COURSE IN ELDER CARE

April 18 to May 30, 1998 1-5 pm (six Saturdays)

\$80 only for domestic/caregiver workers arranged by INTERCEDE with Seneca College, Leslie Campus

Register with INTERCEDE Now!

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

by *Coco Diaz*

Q1. I am presently without immigration status as my employment authorization under the Live-in Caregiver expired in September 1994. I was referred to an Immigration Consultant and advised to file an application for permanent residence as a refugee. What are my chances?

A. **The wrong advice can often lead to an expensive and unsuccessful outcome. Please contact INTERCEDE office so we can assess your case and help you make a plan of action. If needed, we can refer you to a legal clinic that offers free assistance.**

Q2. The status on my landing papers says I am married, rather than separated. But, now that I am prepared to sponsor my dependents, I do not want to include my husband as he has been living with another woman and they now have a child. Can I sponsor my two minor children without my husband?

A. **Yes, you are not obliged to include your husband in your sponsorship. You are allowed to bring your children but anticipate a long delay if you do not have sole custody of them. Immigration may require you to submit documentation about the status of your marriage such as an affirmation of separation or a divorce decree. In addition, Immigration may ask for legal custody papers given that your children are minors. Call INTERCEDE for an appointment and we can refer you to a legal clinic who handles matters on family law.**

Q3. We were sponsored by my wife and I arrived three months ago with our two children. My relationship with my wife has changed a lot and we mutually agreed to be separated. Our children chose to come and live with me but their mother forced them to stay with her or else she will not provide financial support. As of now, I could not afford to support my two children because I work part-time. Do you have any suggestions on how we can resolve this problem and where we can go for housing and financial assistance?

A. **INTERCEDE now serves families of caregivers and newcomers. We welcome you and your children to come to INTERCEDE office to personally discuss your situation. Call us immediately at 483-4554.**

Q4. I clean the homes of my previous employers and do elderly caregiving during weekends. None of my employers issue T4 slips. Can I file my Income Tax Return even though I am self-employed?

A. **Yes, it is your responsibility to declare your income, remit your taxes, CPP and EI. If you need assistance in preparing your Income Tax come to the INTERCEDE monthly meeting on Sunday, April 5, 1998 at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St. Certified accountants and tax preparation experts will be available to assist INTERCEDE members. Non-members can apply for new memberships or renewals during the meeting.**

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PAY
Effective January 1, 1998

	MONTHLY (12/year)	SEMI-MONTHLY (24/year)	BIWEEKLY (26/year)	WEEK (52/ye
GROSS WAGES	\$1,306.07	\$ 653.03	\$ 602.80	\$ 301.4
DEDUCTIONS:				
Income Tax	176.65	87.85	80.45	41.05
Canada Pension Plan	32.46	16.23	14.98	7.49
Employment Insurance	35.26	17.63	16.28	8.14
Room & Board	<u>369.42</u>	<u>184.71</u>	<u>170.50</u>	<u>85.25</u>
Total Deductions	\$ 613.79	\$ 306.42	\$ 282.21	\$ 141.93
NET PAYMENT	\$ 692.28 =====	\$ 346.61 =====	\$ 320.59 =====	\$ 159.47 =====

Minimum wage in Ontario is currently \$6.85 per hour. Even though your employer/worker agreement or "contract" may have stated your wage at less, your employer must pay you the current legal minimum wage.

Gross Wages are based on a 44 hour work week with no overtime. If you work more than 44 hours in a week you should get overtime pay or, if you agree, paid time off instead. Overtime pay is "time-and-a-half" your regular hourly wage. If you are paid the minimum wage of \$6.85 per hour, your overtime pay is \$10.28 per hour. You may or may not agree to take paid "time-and-a-half" off instead. For example, if you worked ten hours overtime, you should get 15 hours off with pay within the next 12 weeks.

The maximum deduction for board is \$53.55 per week (\$2.55 per meal). However, if you miss all six meals during your two days off, only \$38.25 (\$53.55-\$15.30) should be deducted. Room is calculated at a rate of \$31.70 per week for a private room or \$15.85 per week for a shared room.

Get Your tickets Now!

INTERCEDE Welcome Summer Dance

Saturday, June 20, 1998

Best Western Primrose Hotel - \$15

Join the **MS. INTERCEDE** Contest
call for info now

VANCOUVER CDWCR
Committee for Domestic Workers' &
Caregivers' Rights

(an INTERCEDE Affiliate)

Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 874-0649

**INTERCEDE CAREGIVERS
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

Employment Agency

Needs the following positions for job placement
(part time/full time, Live-in/Live-out)

- Domestic Workers
- Caregivers
- Housekeepers
- Baby Sitters/Elderly Sitters
- Health Care Aides

Apply at:

INTERCEDE CAREGIVER'S COOPERATIVE, INC.
234 Eglinton Avenue East, S-205
Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5
Tel. No. (416) 486-0548
Monday - Friday 1-5 p.m.

We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Canadian Heritage; Multiculturalism Program; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); the City of Toronto Grants Review Board, Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) the Trillium Foundation, and Urban Rural Mission for their financial support.

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 205,
Toronto, Ont. M4P 1K5

Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm

Tel: (416) 483-4554 Fax: (416) 483-9781

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