

# DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

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

April 2007

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD) CELEBRATION

*(By Angel Macababbad, INTERCEDE member)*

We recently celebrated IWD organized by the dedicated staff of INTERCEDE and friends. This was my first time to attend this kind of rally and I enjoyed the time I spent with all the people who participated in the rally.

A tribute was also given to remarkable women who left us with legacy, like our very own Co-ordinator of INTERCEDE, late Fely Villasin and long time activist Sharona Hall. Their lives were celebrated by their colleagues from different organizations as well as women who they were indirectly involved. The late Fely Villasin was a feminist, an advocate and ceaseless campaigner for landed status and workplace protections for domestic workers and caregivers.

Lots of organizations and prominent personalities joined us in solidarity. Among the present were the National Democratic Party (NDP) Leader, Mr. Jack Layton and MP Olivia Chow. I am pleased that they were at the rally to hear our problems and I am optimistic they will take these issues up to Parliament.

The rally gave me the feeling that if we join our hands together, we will surely be stronger in our fight for all Live-in Caregivers to have Landed Status immediately upon arriving in Canada and for a minimum wage of \$10/hr.

It was an exciting and beautiful experience to be among the brave and hardworking mothers, sisters, friends and above all women, united in the struggle for a better world.

I cannot overemphasize the strength in unity; the importance of a united voice to push our agenda, and to be heard by the government. Without unity of purpose we will fail, but united we shall conquer!

I was disappointed that only a few of us bothered to brave the cold weather to attend the commemorations. We need to be involved in these activities because as women we have some disadvantages in society, and as caregivers we have other extra needs which need urgent attention.

Let us remember, we have come from a long way. The staff at INTERCEDE and others before them have worked very hard for our status here in Canada and therefore, we ought to help them with moral, physical and social support so that they can continue the good work they are doing to help newcomers from the Philippines, the Caribbean and other countries.

On behalf of the people who joined the protest, I would like to thank and congratulate the courageous INTERCEDE community for organizing, for taking the initiative to help others and for giving us the voice. Hopefully, we will see more people at the next activity. Forward with the INTERCEDE community.

**VIVA INTERCEDE!**

*All Domestic/Caregiver workers,  
Newcomers and those on Temporary Work Permit  
are welcome to attend*

**INTERCEDE MEETING  
Every First Sunday of the Month**

*(if holiday, meeting is on the second Sunday)*

*Apply for/renew your membership - \$10.*

**INTERCEDE  
FREE Income Tax Clinic**

*Led by the Association of Filipino-Canadian Accountants*

Sunday, April 15, 2007, 1 - 5 p.m.

at INTERCEDE' Office, 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Ste 405  
(East of Yonge, West of Mt. Pleasant)

**Call Genie at 416-483-4554 ext. 21 for more information**

### EXPECTING A MIRACLE OR HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATION

By Coco Diaz

A frail looking woman came to INTERCEDE office without appointment and obviously visible in her face the uncertainties she is facing. Although we encourage everyone to make an appointment to see and talk to one of the counselors, Juana Tejada, was given the immediate attention.

While filling out thoroughly an intake form, she showed documents she received from immigration, result of her medical examination and a copy of her valid Open Employment Authorization.. It was a puzzle why her OHIP coverage was not renewed.

Juana Tejada, was in limbo and did not know what to do. Deep in her mind, something is wrong with her health. This was confirmed in the report she received when she underwent medical examination which is one of the requirements when she filed her application for Permanent Residence under the Live-In Caregiver Program.

She was given hope when the family doctor who referred her to come to INTERCEDE office told her that something might be done to renew her OHIP coverage in order for her to go for further tests and treatments as soon as possible. The word cancer seems very remote to her and seems very unacceptable.

Juana Tejada, has been anticipating her re-unification with her husband since the filing of her Permanent Residence under the LCP and did not dwell much on the long time and many sacrifices she experienced working as a live-in caregiver. During our conversation, she mentioned that her latest work was taking care of two sets of twins and later concluded that the pain in her back was likely due to pulled muscle or a conclusive sign of having a problem in her lungs.

Her fear of having a serious health problem was confirmed when she went for a biopsy and CT scan through the financial assistance of a church. A community worker introduced her to other organization which led situation to be published in the Toronto Star and other local community newspaper.

With the approval of Juana's appeal for OHIP coverage, she is now scheduled for battery of tests and is currently waiting for the result of her colonoscopy. Also, with the stress in anticipation for a surgery or treatment, she made arrangement in her current job to be on temporary sick leave.

Juana Tejada receives outpouring support and prayers not only from her family and relatives in the Philippines but also from all the people around her. The published story about her in the Toronto Star caught the attention of so many people who have extended some financial support and provided much encouragement.

At INTERCEDE, Juana will be joining the support group of women who are also inflicted of cancer and other severe illness. The emphasis of the group is how to take care of themselves and became aware of other resources and support in the community. They have a rule not to allow their immigration status, OHIP coverage and other concerns to take over their lives. Instead, they must enjoy life and attend to their recovery!



### CHANGES TO THE LIVE-IN CAREGIVER PROGRAM

(an excerpt from WCDWA Newsletter, March 2007)

On January 3, 2007, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) changed the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) as follows:

- ☞ Caregivers entering the LCP will now be eligible for a work permit that is 3 years and 3 months in length. For caregivers who are already under the program, work permit extensions may be granted for up to three months after a caregiver's third year in Canada. **CIC has not changed the condition that caregivers can only work for the employer whose name appears in the permit and the policy does not change the requirement that a caregiver must complete 24 months of work within the 3 years of their arrival.**
- ☞ When a caregiver applies for landing, she decides whether her family (children and spouse) will receive a permanent resident visa. The new policy allows a caregiver who indicated that she does NOT want visas for her family to change her mind at any time before her application is finalized. **This new policy does not change the requirement that a caregiver must list ALL her children, and her spouse, when she applies for landing and that those family members must complete medical examinations, even if they are not coming to Canada.**

**CIC has clarified that caregivers are NOT normally entitled to bring their family to Canada, unless they can produce proof that they have funds to care and support their family.**

**To learn more about changes to the LCP program, call INTERCEDE at 416-483-4554 or attend INTERCEDE meeting.**

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With the changes on the Live-In Caregiver Program, we are bombarded with many questions such as:

- Q - Will my sister who is expected to arrive on April 15, 2007 under the LCP to take my current position as a caregiver of the family whom I worked with for six years will be issued a three years work permit as well as OHIP coverage for three years ?
- A - As stated in the new LCP changes, your sister will surely be issued a work permit for two years or three years. By the time your sister has three months residency in Ontario and has proof of her residency, she could apply for an OHIP coverage.



#### INTERCEDE BLACK SUPPORT GROUP

The Caribbean Connection Black Support Group will meet on April 14, 2007, Saturday, at INTERCEDE office, 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Ste. 405 at 2:00—4:00 p.m.

Please feel free to contact Bernice for more information at 416-483-4554 ext. 22.

**Q and A**

By Anita Fortuno, Counsellor

**Q** - Can I claim for room and board expenses in my income tax return even if the employer did not indicate this expense on my T4?

**A** - Yes, you can if your employer deducted room and board from your salary. If there was no deduction for this expense, then you cannot make any claim for room and board expense when you file your income tax return.

Room and board deductions are taxable income for employers and a deductible expense in your income tax return. If you claim for this expense and your employer did not declare this as added income, both of you will be questioned by Revenue Canada

It is true that room and board deduction is stated in your employment contract but there are employers who are not deducting this from live-in caregiver's salary. Should this be the case, this means that a live-in caregiver is not paying for this expense therefore she/he must have higher net pay since only Taxes, CPP and EI are being deducted from his/her salary.

To avoid any confusion when you receive your T4 slips every year, be sure to ask for your pay slip every time you get your pay check. This way, you will be aware of your gross pay and the deduction taken from your salary every pay period. Talk to your employer about your pay slip, it is a **MUST** for employers to give pay slip to their employees every payday. Tell your employers too that statement of earnings or pay slip is one of the documents required by Citizenship and Immigration Canada as proof of your twenty four months employment under LCP when you apply for permanent residence.

**Q** - Can I process a work permit for my new employer even if I am still working with my current employer?

**A** - Yes, as long as you still have a valid work permit under your current employer, you are legally working for them until you receive your work permit for your new employer.

**Q** - I had my income tax return computed by an independent accounting firm and they told me that I still owe money to the government because my employer did not deduct the correct amount of Taxes, CPP and EI. I talked to my employer about this and I told them they should make the necessary adjustments to my T4 and they should pay the correct amount for the above-mentioned deductions.

*My employer admitted that she miscalculated the deductions taken from my salary but she stressed further that I am responsible to pay what ever amount I owed the government as a result of her mistake. Is this true?*

**A** - Taxes, CPP and EI premiums are deducted from your salary and your employer has their share of your CPP and EI contributions. On or before the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month, your employer must remit to the bank the deductions for the above together with their share. If your employer miscalculated the above - mentioned deductions taken from your salary, you are responsible for your share of Taxes, CPP and EI and the employers are responsible for their share.

Cont. next column

**Q** - My current work permit will expire on April 15 and this is my second year under the Live-in Caregiver program. My employer has not yet signed our employment contract but she assured me that she will still extend my work permit for another year. However, they are still in Florida now and they will return to Toronto on April 8.

Can I submit my application for extension of work permit at CIC office in St. Clair so I could get my extension on the same day?

**A** - No, CIC office at St. Clair process emergency cases for new employers only. Renewal of work permit with the same employer is not an emergency case even if your work permit is about to expire on April 15. Upon return of your employers from Florida on April 8, you can ask them for new employment contract and you can still send your application for extension to Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, Alberta before expiry on April 15. Send your application through Canada Express Post. Keep the mailing receipt as a proof that you sent your application to their office before the expiry date of your work permit.

**COCO'S CORNER:**

Some practical tips shared by a caregiver on how she saved money and take vacation on a regular basis while working as a caregiver:

- ☞ Borrow movies, books and magazines from the library rather than renting and return promptly to avoid overdue payments
- ☞ Don't be ashamed to use discount coupons, even those rich looking shoppers use their collected coupons
- ☞ Watch the price of items bought scanned by cashiers, sometimes it does not correspond to the advertised price
- ☞ Buy a transit day pass for multiple trips i.e. going for interview to different places, and visiting friends
- ☞ When employer go for vacation outside Canada, they usually take along with the caregiver. Most of the time you are not able to take your off days. With the accumulated off days negotiate with your employer that you intend to stay longer in that place or in a nearby city/ place where you could be alone or able to see some friends and relatives.
- ☞ While visiting places, do not get carried away shopping where your employers buy their stuff. Items at tourist areas are expensive.
- ☞ When traveling, make sure to collect your air miles points from your airline ticket, hotel accommodation, car rentals and others.
- ☞ While on vacation, it is important to stay connected either with your family or friends. The most efficient way to communicate is either by text messaging, internet, or using a phone card to call.
- ☞ Prior to your vacation, bring enough film for camera and connection wires for your gadgets like MP3 unit, cell phone, camcorders, etc...
- ☞ Important is make sure to buy travel insurance, get immunized as required and bring some small portions of first aid kit or basic medicine.

**JSW PROFILE**  
By Rose Tolentino

I've been sending out resumes for a number of months already to work as health care provider. Before I heard from a friend about the Job Search Workshop at INTERCEDE, although she encouraged me to go with her to attend the workshop, I did not pay too much attention to her because I was not convinced that it could make any difference in my job search. And so I kept on sending out resumes and waited for response that never came.

The next time I spoke to my friend, and she mentioned again the JSW workshop, I told her that I will try it once. Not because I believe I need it, but because I have nothing to do and also just to make her happy. Unfortunately, on the very first day that I attended, I immediately realized the reasons why I am not receiving any response on my resumes, and so I did not attend only once but came back for more.

All those time that I was applying for a job, I was very confident that I have a very beautiful resume because it was prepared by someone who is already in the work force. Little did I know that a resume should be more than just beautiful. Also after attending the workshop, it was only then that I realized how little I knew about handling job interviews.

After the workshop, the Facilitator continuously assisted me with my job search, from customizing the cover letter and resume to faxing it to prospective employers. I find it a little bit funny, because I sent out countless resumes in the past, and received not a single response. After I revised my resume and changed my techniques in job search, I received numerous calls for job interviews and I am still receiving calls even when I do not need it anymore because I have already found a job!

**REMINDERS**

**Make an appointment first**

Please call for an appointment before you decide to visit INTERCEDE and have your appointment confirmed by a counselor you want to see. Otherwise, counselors will not be able to talk to you as they may already be booked for other appointments and they will just give you an appointment for another day. To avoid being sent home and wasting your day, do confirm your appointment before coming to INTERCEDE.

**FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS & NEWCOMERS**

**WHEN: SUNDAY**  
April 1, 15, 22 & 29, 2007  
May 6, 13, 26 & 27, 2007  
June 3, 10, 17 & 24, 2007

**TIME :** 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**WHERE: PROLEGAL**  
164 Eglinton Ave. E., 3rd Floor  
(West of Redpath, Walking distance from Eglinton Subway station)

Please call (416)483-4554 ext. 30 or 21 to sign up.  
Seating is limited.  
Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada

**INTERCEDE**

**Address:** 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 405  
Toronto Ontario  
M4P 1K5

**Regular Hours:** Mon-Friday 9 am - 4 p.m.  
**Telephone:** (416) 483-4554  
**Fax:** (416) 483-9781  
**Toll-Free:** 1-877-483-4554  
**Web Site:** www.intercedetoronto.org  
**E-mail:** info@intercedetoronto.org

**INTERCEDE STAFF:**  
Martha Ocampo - Interim-Coordinator  
Jo Alcampo - Administrative Consultant  
Columbia Diaz - Settlement Counsellor & Program Manager  
Anita Fortuno - Settlement Counsellor  
Bernice Small - Settlement Counsellor  
Vicky Policarpio - JSW Facilitator  
Genie Policarpio - Intake & Administrative Assistant

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Citizenship and Immigration Canada / Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada



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