

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

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

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554

December 2001



CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT PEACE

During this holiday season, we think it is important to remind ourselves of the true message of Christmas. So we are reprinting, with slight revisions, the following appeal which has traveled around the globe and which was passed on to us by a friend from Quezon City, Philippines.

LIGHT A CANDLE FOR HOPE AND PEACE!

We, the peace-loving members of a community that spans the entire globe deeply believe in the need for a non-violent response to the horrors of September 11, 2001.

We, sisters and brothers of all religious faiths, condemn the acts of misled, extremist, hateful individuals and reaffirm our empathetic solidarity with all victims of violence, no matter their skin color, gender, political and national identities, or time and location of the experience of brutality.

We believe that violence begets violence, which can never be stopped by more violence, but will only be multiplied and transformed into yet other expressions of violence.

We, the peace-seeking people at this moment in history draw on the teachings and inspiration of those who have shown us the ways of non-violence, justice by law, and loving-kindness on every continent, during every time in history, in crises as big and bigger than the one right now.

We need to be reminded of each other's presence and thereby strengthen our unity and resolve to reject racism, discrimination, lawlessness, elimination of civic freedoms, and militarism.

We, the peace-affirming community of courageous individuals all across the Earth do not accept what is portrayed as the inevitable and necessary response to terrorism and hatred: yet another war.

We therefore signify our commitment to peace by lighting candles in our windows every night, at 7 pm local time for at least an hour, so that a chain of light will embrace the world with hope

at every minute of the day. We will light candles on our doorsteps as long as is needed to reach every country to bring the message of hope, community and peace. We shall find in that beacon of hope the resolve and courage to stop the spiral of violence sinking us deeper into atrocity and fear. We will burn candles on our front porches every night as long as is needed to reach the leaders of our countries to stop the preparation for and conduct of war.

Please pass this message on - by email, mail, or from hand to hand - to as many people, circles, networks, and news outlets as you can reach. Translate it into the language of your people. Wherever you can, talk to the press, send letters to your political leaders, connect with your neighbors and friends. We are friends of peace and we are everywhere.

Light a candle of hope, a candle for peace tonight at 7 pm local time and again tomorrow. and again, and again. Please save this message and resend it to your contacts every day - until the world is lit with hope!



*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)

CHRISTMAS MEETING AND PARTY

Sunday, December 2, 2001, 3-6 p.m.
At Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.
(one block south of College cor. Spadina)

Guest Speaker, Mr. Bruce Falconer
Human Resources Counsellor,
Citizenship & Immigration Canada

PROGRAM*POT LUCK*GIFT EXCHANGE (\$10.00 max)

Members of INTERCEDE Staff wish all of you a Season of Peace!

A NEW SERIES OF ADVOCACY TRAINING

Where are they now the sixteen women who struggled through six Sundays of "Advocacy and Leadership Training" during the first half of this year?

Well, they are moving on and seeking to improve their lives. Some are actively upgrading or pursuing studies in nursing, social work, accounting, some are finishing their 24 months in the LCP, relating to employers with more confidence and professionalism. And four of them have been chosen as members on the Board of Directors of INTERCEDE, while two have been hired on staff.

The enthusiasm to participate in the second series of advocacy training was shown when 20 names immediately filled the limit for the workshops one week after they were announced.

On October 28, an orientation was given to the new participants on the objectives of the new series which are "Ensuring a Safe Workplace" and "Actions on Recommendations of INTERCEDE's research entitled Caregivers Break the Silence".

Veterans of the last series will be practicing the

skills they learned in facilitation by assisting in leading parts of the workshops and by playing leadership roles in organizing upcoming activities which are designed to follow up on INTERCEDE's research recommendations. Funding for the two parts of this series come from Toronto's Breaking the Cycle of Violence and Access and Equity Grants programs.

The new series will be held every third Sunday starting November 18 at George Brown College on King St. East, Rm 323-A. During the first session, the morning was dedicated to understanding Power and power relations. It was followed with a presentation on violence against women by Sattie Naras of Assaulted Women's Helpline. In addition, attendees learned important listening skills and a few useful stretches to relieve aching backs and shoulders.

One participant summed up her experience thus: "For the first time I learned the meaning of oppression and that I have power within me to end it."



FREE Job Search Workshop for Caregivers and Newcomers

January 13, 20, 27 & February 3 or February 24, March 3, 17 & 24



Confident about their job search skills - JSW Graduates in September 2001

Topics include how to:

- identify your interests, skills & goals
- find jobs through networking
- develop your self-esteem
- write effective resumes
- handle job interviews with confidence

Classes held at George Brown College (King & Jarvis) on four consecutive Sundays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Call Genie Policapio for more information and for registration at (416) 483-4554 ext. 21, space is limited.

Certificate of Completion provided

Funded by Citizenship & Immigration Canada - Sponsored by COSTI & OCASI

CLC CAMPAIGNS FOR ADEQUATE UI PROTECTION

Today, almost two-thirds of six million unemployed workers do not receive regular Unemployment Insurance benefits. This is because rules to be eligible have changed. The previous "weeks system" was replaced with the current "hours system" and you need at least 910 hours over the past 52 weeks to qualify for EI benefits. Since 1995, maximum benefit has been \$413 per week, paid for fewer weeks.

Furthermore, under the current EI rules, only current and former claimants are eligible for referral to training programs and support, and they have to lose a job first before such training.

According to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), close to a million people who are unemployed are unable to access their benefits under the Employment Insurance Program. Each year, many of them have

worked and paid into EI, but do not work enough hours to qualify for their benefits. Everybody who works pays for insurance, but not everybody who works qualifies for benefits. This includes caregivers who pay into EI, but do not claim for benefits because the LCP requires that they be employed in order to maintain their legal status in Canada.

During recessions such as in 1991, most unemployed and their families were protected by unemployment insurance. If the eligibility rules are not reformed immediately, it is estimated that one million unemployed workers will not qualify for EI benefits in the current recession, and another half million will have their benefits cut off earlier.

The Canadian Labour Congress has launched a campaign to modernize the unemployment insurance system in order to provide a safety net for workers during this recession. They have three main proposals: a uniform qualifying requirement of 360 hours; extending the benefit period up to one year; and introducing a "training leave."

INTERCEDE supports CLC's campaign to make Unemployment Insurance work for working people. After all, UI money comes from workers' pockets. As the CLC slogan says: "Times have changed. Work has changed. Unemployment Insurance needs to change too."

COCO'S CORNER

Q *I have a friend who was recently cleared of sexual assault charges by the court. Her employer accused her of the sexual assault of their two-year-old child in her care. As a caregiver or nanny, how can I protect myself or what precautions should I take to avoid similar incidents?*

A Caregivers are very vulnerable to accusations such as you describe. You must educate yourself about what constitutes abuse, particularly of children, and take care and be attentive to ways of protecting children in your care. Keeping a daily diary of your work and activities is a precaution you can take.

Q *My employment authorization under LCP expired while waiting for the approval of my Open Employment Authorization which I requested when I filed my application for permanent residence. Before my permit expired, I received the result of the Ontario Registered Nurses exams and I then applied to several hospitals. I have now an offer to work as a Registered Nurse. What will I do, I want and need the job!*

A Congratulations for passing the exams. Send an application to Change the Terms and Conditions of

your Stay in Canada requesting for an Open Permit and enclose a letter of explanation why and how it happened that your employment authorization expired. You may send copy of your job acceptance from the hospital and make sure to make a payment for Re-instatement (\$200).

Q *My sister and her 7-year-old daughter arrived in Canada last July on a visitor's visa to visit our sick mother. My sister filed an application for an Independent Immigrant visa in Detroit and was issued a file number. While waiting for the result of their application my niece wants to go to school but we are hesitant to register her because we read that she is "prohibited from attending school". What can we do, can you help us?*

A In Ontario it is illegal for any child between the ages of 6 and 16 not to be in school. A child can be excused from attending school only for a reason such as illness. Register your niece in a school that is close to your residence and get a confirmation from the school then apply for a student permit from Immigration. You may get assistance from the nearest community legal clinic.

Q *I am now on my 22nd month as live-in caregiver and some of my friends advised me to file an application for permanent residence and request for an Open Employment Authorization to avoid double payment. Is this ok?*

A Under the Live-In Caregiver Program, you can only file your application for permanent resident once you complete the 24 months of live-in work. In addition, you are required to submit proof of employment like a T-4 slip, Record of Employment and Employment Certification. It is wiser for you to complete the requirements to avoid any delay.

A word of caution : Be careful about buying now and paying next year, with no interest! Read between the lines of the agreement or contract. Can you return or exchange or will there be guarantees?

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!!!
'til next year.....



EMERGENCY FIRST AID

Adult CPR/Heartsaver - Saturday, December 29, 2001
Please register at least one week before the start of training date by sending a cheque payable to
ST JOHN AMBULANCE in the amount of **\$59.00**
and mail it to :

INTERCEDE 234 Elinton Ave. E, Suite 205, Toronto, On, M4P 1K5
For further details, please call Genie @ (416)483-4554 x 21

KNOW THE NEW RULES ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

There are eight paid public holidays a year in Ontario. They are: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

To qualify for these paid public holidays, you must have the following:

- worked for your employer for three months or more
- earned wages for at least 12 days during the four workweeks before the holidays, and
- worked your regularly scheduled days before and after the holiday

If you did not work your regular days before and after the holiday, you can still qualify for the paid public holiday if you have reasonable cause such as illness, and you have a doctor's certification.

You get holiday pay which is the total of your previous four weeks' earnings before the holiday, divided by 20. This is roughly one day's pay for full time workers.

If you work on a public holiday, there are two ways to be paid:

1. Premium pay which equals 1.5 x regular hourly rate for hours worked plus holiday pay (above).

For Example: Ana works eight hours a day, five days a week. She earns \$1,096 for four weeks before she worked on Victoria Day. Her regular rate per hour is \$6.85.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \$1,096.00/20 &= \$54.80 \text{ (Holiday pay)} \\
 6.85 \times 1.5 &= 10.28 \text{ (Premium pay rate)} \\
 10.28 \times 8 \text{ hrs} &= 82.24 \text{ (Ana's Premium pay for Victoria Day)}
 \end{aligned}$$

\$82.40	Premium Pay
+ 54.80	Holiday Pay
\$137.04	Total pay Ana will receive for working on Victoria Day

OR

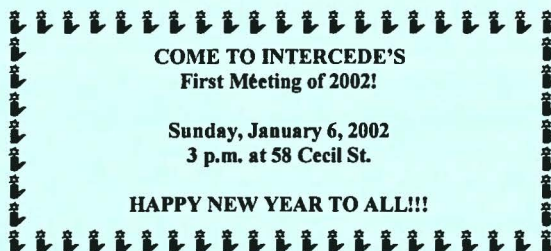
2. Your regular pay, plus day off with holiday pay: Using the above example.

$$\$ 54.80 \text{ Regular pay for working eight hours (6.85 x 8 hours)}$$

$$+ 54.80 \text{ Day off with Holiday pay}$$

$$\$109.60 \text{ Total pay for working on Victoria Day}$$

You have to agree in writing which way you want to get your holiday pay. For any more information or clarification, call INTERCEDE.



INTERCEDE

Address: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 205
Toronto Ontario
M4P 1K5

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

INTERCEDE STAFF:
Fely Villasin - Coordinator
Jo Alcampo - JSW Facilitator
Columbia Diaz - Settlement Counsellor
Olive Smith - Settlement Counsellor
Anita Fortuno - Outreach/Counsellor
Genie Policarpio - Intake & Administrative Assistant

We wish to thank: Citizenship and Immigration Canada - ISAP Program and Job Search Program with COSTI-OCASI; the Federal Status of Women & Status of Women Ontario; the Maytree Foundation, and the Municipality of Toronto CSGP, Access & Equity and "Breaking the Cycle of Violence" grant programs, for their financial support.

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