

# DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

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

December 2004

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554



## INTERCEDE'S 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY DINNER



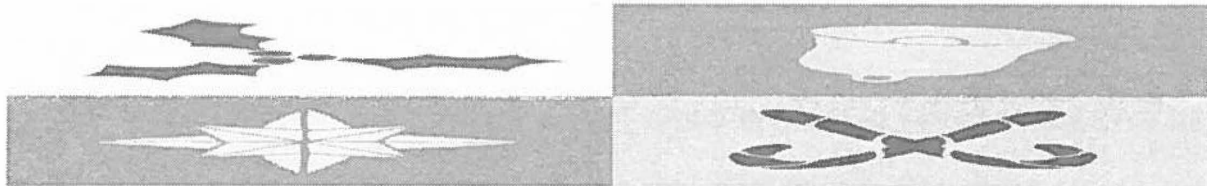
It was a fun-filled Saturday evening last October 30 at Cecil Community Centre. Friends, old and new, and those who supported INTERCEDE all through the years made the event so special.

Everybody enjoyed the sumptuous dinner while a surprise guest singer, Bong Castillo, rendered three songs popularized by local Filipino artists. Then followed the main course of the night – the non-stop calorie burning dance by all. The favourite sounds of the 90s – reggae, rock, pop, world music from the 80s, even the swing and salsa of the 70s and boogie, cha cha and waltz of the 50s were all played by spinner Ed Muyot. It was made more enjoyable by the dance lessons given by Norman Nograles.

What really surprised everyone was the unexpected awarding ceremony which capped the momentous evening. The founding members of INTERCEDE -- Coco Diaz, for her twenty years of service as counselor, and Fely Villasin, the Coordinator, were presented plaques of appreciation for their dedication and long standing service. Presenters were current treasurer Martha Ocampo, and long-time past board member, Eli Bisenio. Clients and friends could only wish that INTERCEDE would continue its invaluable service, especially to the workers under Canada's Live In Caregiver Program.



## Seasons Greetings



INTERCEDE invites everyone to our

### **Christmas Meeting and Pot Luck Party**

*Guest of Honour:*

*An Official from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada*

Sunday, December 5, 2004, 3-7 p.m.  
At Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.  
(one block south of College cor. Spadina)

**Gift Exchange (\$10++)**

## TRAINING WORKSHOPS IMPROVE THE LIVES OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

By Bong Castro,

Kapisanan Philippine Centre Workshop Coordinator

The Advocacy and Leadership Training workshops conducted by INTERCEDE has been very successful since its inception four years ago. In June 2004, INTERCEDE partnered with the Kapisanan Philippine Centre to train the fifth group of graduates.

The Advocacy and Leadership Training workshops educate domestic workers and caregivers about their rights and social issues such as Power Relations, Racism, Homophobia and Violence against Women and Children.

Participants said they were often surprised at what they learned during the discussions. For example, one participant said that she did not know that certain comments aimed towards her were racist. Other participants said that issues that they thought did not matter to them have now gotten their attention because they learned to analyze them in a critical way.

Most importantly, the participants said the Advocacy and Leadership Training workshops have improved their lives. Participants have learned how to express themselves assertively and become more confident in their communication skills.

The six-month workshop series will culminate on December 5, 2004 with the graduation of fourteen successful participants. A Level II Series will be conducted from January-to-March 2005 for those who have participated previously.

On a personal note, I would like to share that I am a proud graduate of the Advocacy and Leadership Training workshops. It has helped me in more ways than one and I encourage each and every one of you to join.

### INTERCEDE and Kapisanan Philippine Centre

Are inviting former participants of Leadership and Advocacy Workshops to join Level II Training which will start in January 2005.

For more information call Bong at 416-887-6126 or Genie at 416-483-4554 ext. 21.

### INTERCEDE First Meeting In the Year 2005

**Sunday January 9, 2005, 3 pm**  
**Cecil Community Centre**  
**(one block south of College cor. Spadina)**

*Topic to be announced.*

*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 or renew your membership - \$10.

## KEEPING IT CLEAN – WITHOUT RISKING YOUR HEALTH

On Saturday November 13, the Intercede Caribbean Connection Black Support Group welcomed guest speaker, Ann Phillips to facilitate a discussion on Environmental-Friendly products. Ms. Phillips has been an Environmental Health Promoter/Researcher for the past twelve years and is presently working at the South Riverdale Community Health Centre.

Ms. Phillips explained the bad and good signs to look out for when buying household cleaning products. She provided the group with recipes so they could make non-chemical substitutes for store-bought cleaning products that work just as well and are much better for the environment and your health.

If you are a caregiver or domestic worker and are interested in attending a Caribbean Connection Meeting please contact Bernice at (416) 483-4554 ext 22. Next Meeting: Saturday, January 15, 2005 at INTERCEDE Office 2:00-4:00 p.m.

## CHANGES TO OHIP COVERAGE FOR EYE CARE SERVICES

Effective November 1, 2004, routine eye exams provided by either an optometrist or physicians for patients aged 20-64 are no longer covered by OHIP. These individuals will have to pay for this service or have the cost of exams covered by private insurance.

However there are exemptions to this new rule.

- Changes will not affect seniors or those under age 20. People 65 years and older and under 20 will continue to have OHIP coverage for a routine eye exam once every 12 months.
- Changes will not affect ophthalmology services for patients of any age with medical conditions or diseases affecting the eyes.
- All persons receiving assistance under the Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Works or the Family Benefits Program will continue to receive coverage for routine eye exams once every two years.

OHIP is increasing coverage for patients aged 20 to 64 years with medical conditions affecting the eyes. Patients can receive a regular eye exam once every 12 months. Prior to November 1, 2004, eye exams were covered once every two years.

Patients with the following conditions can go directly to their optometrist or physicians to receive OHIP insured eye exam:

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Diabetes Mellitus | 5. Amblyopia            |
| 2. Glaucoma          | 6. Visual Field Defects |
| 3. Cataract          | 7. Corneal disease      |
| 4. Retinal disease   | 8. Strabismus           |

Patients aged 20-64 who have conditions not listed above may be covered for a regular eye exam. They should discuss this with their primary healthcare provider.

If you have any questions regarding eye care services that you have been charged for, please contact Ministry of Health and Long Term Care at 613-536-3103

## Q & A

- Q- I am currently unemployed, so I went to an Employment agency for an interview. They requested a copy of my Immigration document to confirm that I have legal status. I did have my documents with me, so they asked me to scan it and send it through e-mail. I am hesitant to do this. Is it safe?*
- A- Never send Immigration documents through e-mail. Your client identification number is confidential. If you e-mail private documents you risk making sensitive information about yourself available to the public.
- Q- My employer wants me to travel to Florida with their family from December 2004 to March 15, 2005. My Open Work Permit will expire on March 30, 2005 and I am also waiting to receive my Landed Status. What should I do?*
- A- Before living Canada, fill out the application form to renew your Open Work Permit. Make sure you enclose the required supporting papers like copies of your current Open Permit, valid Passport, and the \$150 processing fee. Prepare to mail the package in January or the first week of February. Then call Immigration to follow-up on the status of your application. You can ask someone to collect your mail while you are in Florida, so they can notify you when you receive a letter from Immigration.
- Q- I have been working in Canada as a caregiver for almost 5 years. My refugee application was recently refused. If I am asked to return to my country, can I apply for the Live-In Caregiver Program?*
- A- There are some circumstances where Immigration will allow you to return to Canada. Unfortunately we would need more information before we could advise you on your options. We suggest that you call Immigration or contact the nearest community legal aide office. You may have a chance to return to Canada considering you have five years work experience as caregiver, however there are specific requirements for the Live-in Caregiver Program such as Grade 12 education and a medical and security clearance.
- Q- My sister is working in the Live-in Caregiver Program and is waiting for the approval of her Permanent Residence status. Her husband and two minor children's papers are being processed at the Canadian embassy in the Philippines. She has requested for a concurrent processing. Unfortunately, my sister has become critically ill. Is it possible for either her husband, or one of her children, to come to Canada immediately because of her serious health condition?*
- A- You need to secure consent from your sister to act on her behalf and contact her husband and children. Request a letter from the doctor, or from the hospital where your sister is confined, describing her health condition. Write a letter to the Canadian Embassy to explain why it is urgent that your sister be reunited with her family as soon as possible. Include the letter from the doctor or hospital to verify her critical condition.
- Q- December 25 and 26 are both public holidays that fall on Saturday and Sunday in 2004. Is it appropriate for me to remind my employer that I am entitled to another two extra days off or receive payment?*

- A- Yes, as a live-in caregiver you are covered under the Employment Standards Act of Ontario. You are entitled to two extra days off or be paid premium (1 and ½) pay and holiday pay for hours worked. To qualify you must work your regularly scheduled days before and after the holiday or state that you have reasonable cause for not working (for example, if you are sick). Employment Standards Act of Ontario states that if a public holiday falls on a day that would not ordinarily be a working day for an employee (including live in caregivers) or a day on which the employee is on vacation, the employer shall substitute another day that would ordinarily be a working day for the employee to take off work and for which he or she shall be paid public holiday pay as if the substitute day were a public holiday.

For more information call INTERCEDE office and talk to any of the counselors.



## COCO'S CORNER:

Every year I look forward going to the YMCA Geneva Park, in Orilla to attend the Professional Development Conference of Settlement Workers coordinated by OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants) because we get to reconnect with our colleagues and enjoy the fall colours at the beautiful Lake Couchiching.

But better still, we are able to update our knowledge and skills as counselors to newcomers in Canada through various workshops and panel discussions.

Thank you, OCASI, for your continued good work on behalf of organizations serving new immigrants!



## JOB SEARCH SUCCESS STORIES



Baycrest Hospital, Lawrence West hired a new nurse -- **Grace Cabanlit**.

Last Sunday, Grace touched the hearts of many JSW participants, mostly caregivers, who listened to her talk about the many barriers (systemic and otherwise) she experienced when she got her open work permit, then tried to apply for work as a nurse. She appealed to the audience as follows;

*"Use your days off to improve your skills. Take whatever short courses that will be useful later, when you're done with the LCP. Don't get complacent with the skills and attributes that you have. It pays to keep abreast with developments in the ever-changing and ever growing demand for skilled workers here in Canada."*

She also stressed the importance of a focused resume and of reference letters from previous employers and mentors, because prospective employers do base their decision on these job search tools.

Cont. next page

Job Search Success...(cont.)



One of our JSW participants in October is a new immigrant from Israel-- Eli Fayzenberg. Even before he arrived in Toronto in September, Eli had called INTERCEDE to register for JSW.

An aerospace engineer by profession, he was happy to find his first job in Canada just a week after his one-on-one mock interview at INTERCEDE. Kerr Industry, an automotive manufacturing plant in Oshawa, hired him to help establish their new engineering department.

He was told by TDM, an employment agency based in Toronto, that he could expect his starting annual salary to increase from \$55 K, after six months.

Being a newcomer, Eli has this to say;

"I'm so thankful there are services available in the community like JSW, to render professional assistance to new Canadians".

As soon as he gets settled in his new career path, he said he will be most willing to drop by one Sunday to inspire JSW participants by sharing his job search success story.

FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS & NEWCOMERS

WHEN: SUNDAY
December 4, 5, 11 & 12, 2004
January 22, 23, 29 & 30, 2005
February 6, 13, 20 & 27, 2005

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

WHERE: INTERCEDE
234 Eglinton Ave E., Suite 405
Toronto, On, M4P 1K5

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-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 - Part - Time Executive Director
Jo Alcampo - Interim Administrative Co-ordinator
Des Balce - JSW Facilitator
Columbia Diaz - Settlement Counsellor & Program Manager
Anita Fortuno - Settlement Counsellor
Bernice Small - Settlement Counsellor
Genie Policarpio - Intake & Administrative Assistant

INTERCEDE'S Board of Directors For 2005-2006

- Maria Estrelita Castro - President
Maria Belgrave - Vice-President
Martha Ocampo - Treasurer
Minerva Bannawi - Secretary
Marilyn Oladimeiji - Director
Sharon Creedland - Director
Liza Palmamento - Director

We wish to thank: Citizenship and Immigration Canada - ISAP Program and Job Search Program; Ontario Status of Women; the Municipality of Toronto CSGP, Maytree and Trillium Foundations grant programs, for their financial support..



WANT TO CONTINUE RECEIVING OUR NEWSLETTER? If you want a one-year subscription to DOMESTIC'S CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS, please complete the form below and mail it to us with appropriate payment or call (416) 483-4554 ext. 21

Please check: [ ] New Subscription [ ] Membership Renewal [ ] Change of Address [ ] Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Province/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
INTERCEDE Members: FREE Others: \$25.00

MAIL TO: INTERCEDE, 234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite 405, Toronto, ON, M4P 1K5

[ ] Yes, please send me a receipt for my subscription or donation [ ] No receipt required