

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the International Coalition to End Domestic's Exploitation

FEBRUARY 1985

MINISTER FUNDS SERVICE UNIT!

We have just received word that Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald has renewed the special grant to the INTERCEDE Service Unit for another year!

The Minister's policy advisor Dennison Moore told INTERCEDE Co-ordinator Judith Ramirez that Ms. MacDonald "supports your work and wants to see it continue". He also noted that the minister's office had received many letters and telephone calls from the community urging the renewal of INTERCEDE's grant.

The Service Unit's mandate will remain unchanged as we enter our second year of operation on March 1, 1985, namely, to provide free counselling and advocacy to foreign domestic workers seeking landing in Canada. We will continue a vigorous outreach program to domestics of all races and nationalities.

A revised report titled THE INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT was submitted to Flora MacDonald last month indicating the effectiveness of our in-depth counselling thus far. Of those in-depth pre-assessment cases where immigration had reached decisions, 100% were accepted for landing! Of the rejection review cases where immigration had reached decisions, 27% were accepted for landing, while only 22% were refused a second time. The remainder of cases are still pending.

INTERCEDE is proud of the excellent work done by our two Service Unit counsellors Desiree Hipplewith and Columbia Diaz. A number of domestic workers counselled by them in the past year wrote to Flora MacDonald to let the Minister know what INTERCEDE has meant to them. Here is what they said:

" I was in a difficult situation and did not know where to turn. I had tried other channels and they had done what they could, but my situ-

ation was just the same or even worse because I was given one month to leave the country. So I told INTERCEDE my situation and they immediately took my case in hand. I was given another assessment that qualified me for landed status. I must say I am very grateful to INTERCEDE...and I would vouch for the organization that it has been a great help to domestics..."

- BARBARA DONALDSON

" This is to express my thanks to INTERCEDE's Service Unit. Because if it's not for the help of (their) staff maybe I'm already deported, but with their help my problem was solved."

- MARVIN ROMERO

" This is to express my thanks and gratitude to the INTERCEDE Service Unit for their help and everything they did for me with regards to my problem with immigration. They really did a good job to help me out."

- PRECILLA VITTO

" I was one of (INTERCEDE's) clients who needed their support about the refusal for permanent residence. I'm so glad I received a re-assessment and then I received my application for landed immigrant..."

- PATRICIA FIGUEROA

" Hundreds if not thousands have benefitted from the Service Unit. I'm so glad for its existence. I do support its long life. Don't leave us alone! Long live INTERCEDE!"

- EUGENIA DELEON

All of us at INTERCEDE look forward to another productive year working together for the just treatment of domestic workers!

COCO'S CALENDAR

Recent happenings...

- * on January 16 INTERCEDE attended a seminar on Judge Abella's report "Equality in Employment" sponsored by the URBAN ALLIANCE ON RACE RELATIONS
- * on January 20 we attended an invitational meeting with members of the NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN and the ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN'S ISSUES
- * on January 22 Judith Ramirez was interviewed on CBC radio about the newly released report on racism and employment in Toronto, "Who Gets the Work?"...the study was sponsored by the SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL and the URBAN ALLIANCE ON RACE RELATIONS
- * on January 24 Judith Ramirez was a guest speaker at the "think tank on racism" sponsored by the ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Coming up...

- * INTERCEDE monthly members meeting on Sunday, February 3, 2-5pm, at the Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street
- * on February 15 the CANADA IMMIGRATION CENTRE at 130 Bloor Street West is hosting an OPEN HOUSE from 10am - 3pm
- * on March 1-2 the ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN'S ISSUES is sponsoring a women's health conference at the Park Plaza Hotel. For information call 965-1111

...AND CONGRATULATIONS

- * to our new landed immigrants ROSE NADAL and AMELIA SUMABAT, from the Philippines
- * welcome to our new Steering Committee members JANE HORSLEY, from CLASP, and ALISON KERR, from the anti-pornography movement
- * a very special welcome to the children of members VELMA RILEY, from Jamaica, and TRINIDAD VILLASAYA, from the Philippines
- * and a HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY to all our members and friends!

That's it for this month, folks!

- Columbia Diaz

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

On March 1, 1985, the Ontario minimum wage for domestic workers is going up to the standard \$4.00 per hour.

If you are landed in Canada, that means that the very least that your employer must pay you every month is:

\$757.00	Gross Pay
238.00	Room & Board
56.60	Income Tax
10.18	C.P.P.
17.79	U.I.C.

That leaves you with: 434.43 NET PAY

If you are in Canada on a temporary work permit, then the least that your employer must pay you per month is:

\$946.25	Gross Pay
238.00	Room & Board
103.05	Income Tax
13.58	C.P.P.
22.24	U.I.C.

That leaves you with: 569.38 NET PAY

For more information about your rights call the INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT daily, Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 4:30pm, at (416) 929-3240.

- Desiree Hipplewith

JOIN INTERCEDE

\$5 Year

SUPPORT THE GROUP THAT SUPPORTS YOU!!

Newsletter Committee:
Columbia Diaz, Desiree Hipplewith, Lynette Munian, Judith Ramirez, Pamela Skeete, Sonia Thomas, Daphne Tucker

REMINDER: don't enroll in courses without your special permit from immigration!

A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR FRIENDS!

Since our report in last month's newsletter, members of the community have continued to write to Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald urging her to renew funding for the Service Unit.

INTERCEDE is deeply grateful for the outpouring of support from so many of our allies and friends. We thank all of you for standing up with us for the rights of domestic workers in this country.

" I wish to recognize the importance of the service provided by the INTERCEDE Service Unit to women in domestic service in this province.

It is my understanding that the grant provided by your ministry comes to an end in February 1985. With respect to the future of this excellent service, I would urge you to extend this funding in such a way that the centre could be stabilized. "

- ROBERT WELCH
Ontario Deputy Premier

" As you are no doubt aware INTERCEDE offers a very critical and invaluable service to domestic workers. INTERCEDE's work is very much appreciated not only by the women it serves but also by those who work with and are concerned with the quality of life of these women. "

- FATHER MASSI LOMBARDI
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto

" The Community Forum on Shared Responsibility, a network of social justice organizations, would like to support unequivocally the work of INTERCEDE's Service Unit.

We're fully aware of the vacuum that would be left if INTERCEDE's Service Unit were to disappear. It is the only community-based service designed to meet the needs of foreign domestic workers...Please reconsider any plans to end their grant, and fully fund them for another year. "

- BRIAN GREBOW
Community Forum on
Shared Responsibility

" The Toronto YWCA has been actively involved working on behalf of domestic workers for over twenty years. We were very pleased with the responsiveness of the previous administration in their attempts to correct historical injustices in previous foreign workers policy.

The fact that the services INTERCEDE provides have been so well utilized in the past year, indicates the ongoing need for their work to continue.

The YWCA works closely with INTERCEDE on several levels. Participants and volunteers in our programs who have been in contact with INTERCEDE have been well served and our staff commends the professionalism of this agency. "

- SUSAN KILBOURN
President, YWCA of
Metropolitan Toronto

" I am writing in support of the application for continued funding of the INTERCEDE Service Unit. This unit helps domestic workers in many ways: with general information about employment, immigration and life in Canada, and it also helps protect them from exploitation and human rights violations. "

- DAN HEAP
Member of Parliament
(Spadina)

" I feel compelled to write to you in relation to the grant...which has now lapsed and will force INTERCEDE to close its doors on the 1st of March.

This organization and Judith Ramirez have been instrumental as a check and balance of the system. I regret to say that in past years, foreign domestics were abused by their employers, perhaps more than any other group in the immigrant community. INTERCEDE has singlehandedly raised their working conditions and status and has assisted untold hundreds through the complex bureaucracy of Canada Immigration. "

- MENDEL M. GREEN
Green and Spiegel

AMNESTY FOR ILLEGALS EXTENDED!

Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald recently announced the extension of the Long Term Illegal Migrant Program which was due to end last month.

The program allows people who have been in Canada at least five years continuously without status to come forward anonymously, that is, without giving your name.

The way it works is that you contact a non-government group like INTERCEDE, not immigration. After we ask you all the necessary questions, we put your case forward to immigration officials, without using your name or any information that would easily identify you.

If immigration approves your application, they issue an "approval in principle" letter which we pass on to you. You then go in to immigration and they verify all the information. If there are no problems you are accepted for landing.

This program has now been extended until JULY 3, 1985, so if you think you might qualify for landing, call one of these non-government groups immediately:

- CLASP
 - Susan Woolner (416) 667-3150
- CENTRAL TORONTO COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINIC
 - Rob Adamson (416) 363-0304
- YORK COMMUNITY SERVICES
 - Bob Armstrong (416) 653-5400

All legal services are provided free of charge.

FREE ENGLISH TUTORING!

If English is your first or second language and you would like to improve your writing and/or your communication skills, there is a free tutoring program which might be a stepping stone for you.

The way it works is that you contact St. Christopher House and a tutor is assigned to you. He or she then makes arrangements to meet with you to discuss your particular needs. You might want help with a special project such as preparing for a written driver's test, or you might want to focus on an upgrading assignment such as a book report or an essay.

After your first meeting with your tutor, future meetings are arranged at a mutually convenient time. This program is very flexible and tutors are generally prepared to meet in any part of Toronto, in private homes or in a public place such as a library, in the evening or on week-ends.

All tutoring is done by trained volunteers and their services are completely free of charge. For more information about how you can benefit from this program contact Marianne, at St. Christopher House, 366-3571.

- Desiree Hipplewith

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Next month's INTERCEDE members meeting is set for Sunday, March 3, 2 - 5 pm, at the Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street.

DOMESTICS CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS
c/o INTERCEDE
348 College Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1S4

Place
Stamp
Here

First Class