

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the International Coalition to End Domestics' Exploitation

FEBRUARY 1988

DEMAND FOR FOREIGN DOMESTICS WAY UP!

More and more women are coming to Canada under the Foreign Domestic Program every year. The number of live-in domestic workers has been rising steadily throughout the 19-80's and has now reached a record high.

According to figures released to INTERCEDE by the Immigration Commission, the total number of foreign domestics in Canada in 1986 was 16,052, a 12% increase from the previous year.

Approximately 43% of foreign domestics in 1986 were recent arrivals or 'new entrants'. Of these, 43% came from Europe, Australia and New Zealand; 38% came from Philippines; and 6% came from the Caribbean.

Roughly 44% of 'new entrants' from the top ten source countries were visible-minority women from the Philippines and the Caribbean. Some of the 'new entrants' from Europe are also Third World women who come to Canada via a third country. However, because Immigration does not record country of birth, it is difficult to gain a more precise picture.

The lion's share of foreign domestics continue to come to Ontario. Over 10,300 are currently living in the province, the majority right here in Metro Toronto. The next largest concentrations are in Alberta, with 2,064 or 13%, and British Columbia, with 1,948 or 12%. Quebec has 1,276 foreign domestics, or 8% of the total number in Canada.

A critical issue in the past several years has been the number of foreign domestics rejected for landing under the Foreign Domestic Program. The figure has been rising steadily - 4% in 1983, 7% in 1984, 16% in 1985. Since all new people are selected abroad on the basis of their likelihood of qualifying for permanent residence, INTERCEDE was alarmed about the steady rise in the rejection rate.

Due to persistent lobbying and to widespread community support on this issue, it now appears that the rejection rate has dropped dramatically to only 3% for 1986. INTERCEDE will be monitoring closely to ensure that this is an accurate picture and that the trend will continue in the future.

Another important issue has been the lack of detailed information on who is being rejected for landing. It has been impossible to gain a clear picture of whether certain groups, ie. sole-support mothers or visible minority women are disproportionately represented among those rejected for landing.

INTERCEDE is happy to report that the Immigration Commission is now required to keep detailed statistics on who is being rejected - age, country of origin, number of dependents, etc. This will allow us to determine whether there is discrimination in granting permanent residence, something we have long suspected to be the case.

Of growing concern to us is the fact that fewer and fewer women from the Caribbean are being accepted under the Foreign Domestic Program. We intend to study the issue more closely.

COCO'S CALENDAR

Recent happenings...

- * on January 31 INTERCEDE attended a meeting of the Network of Filipino-Canadian Women
- * on February 9 we met with a representative of MATCH International to explore ways of working together
- * on February 14 INTERCEDE President Catherine Gilbert attended a Heritage Day service hosted by Multiculturalism Minister David Crombie at Roy Thomson Hall

Coming up soon...

- * our Service Unit will be open on Saturday, March 5, 10am - 2pm. Call us at 591-1625 or 591-7036 for an appointment
- * INTERCEDE's next monthly meeting is set for Sunday, March 6, at 3pm at the Cecil Community Centre. A special program will mark International Women's Day
- * on March 13 the Kababayan Community Centre is holding a Career Planning Workshop for domestics. For information call 532-3888

...AND CONGRATULATIONS!

- * to VERONICA SCOTT and HILDA ATUTUBO who recently got married
- * to our new landed immigrants ARSE-NIA LUCENA, NENA MARQUEZ and LUCY FIGUEROA from the Philippines
- * a warm welcome to ELISABETH MUNIAN, daughter of board member LYNETTE !
- * Happy Birthday to our co-ordinator JUDITH RAMIREZ and long-time member ROSE PIERRE
- * our heartfelt sympathy to JUDITH AGUDA on the death of her father

- Columbia Diaz

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Income tax time has rolled around again and every domestic worker should be aware of the following information.

- * your employer(s) must give you a T-4 slip by February 28, 1988
- * your T-4 slip(s) must have the correct amount of wages earned and the correct deductions made by your employer(s). Do not accept a T-4 with incorrect info!
- * your t-4 slip(s) must have your social insurance number (SIN) and the correct spelling of your name

If you have been sending money back home to support your spouse or children, you have the right to make a claim on your income tax return provided you have receipts. Valid receipts include money orders, from the bank or post office, and cancelled cheques.

To make a claim for support of relatives you must submit a one-page form called 'Declaration of support of Non-Resident Spouse or Children' along with your income tax return. These forms are available at all post offices.

Please note that if you have receipts for school fees, prescription drugs, and dental fees, you are entitled to make a claim on your income tax return.

All claims must be filed by April 30.

For more information contact:

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT 591-1625/7036
REVENUE CANADA 869-1500

- Joan Ann Gravesande

On Sunday, March 6, INTERCEDE volunteers will be available to assist you with income tax matters from 3-5pm at the Cecil Community Centre.

CARIBBEAN DOMESTIC GETS HELP

Louisley Bethier came to Canada from St. Lucia in October 1987. She hadn't been on the job long when, due to long hours and no overtime pay, she went to her local Immigration office to make a complaint. She was given permission to leave her employer if the situation did not improve, and shortly after she began looking for a new job.

On December 15, 1987 she went for an interview with a prospective employer who asked her to come in for several hours of on-the-job training. On December 16 and 17 she was taught how to use the employer's appliances and got familiar with the employer's child and her routine.

On December 24 Ms. Bethier reported to Immigration with a confirmed offer of employment. She told the officer that she had spent two four-hour periods at her future employers home 'learning the ropes'. The officer immediately informed her that she had broken the law - she had worked illegally in Canada for eight hours - and would, therefore, not be granted a new work permit! She was instructed to await a letter from Immigration about her status.

Ms. Bethier came to our Service Unit for assistance on February 8. She had been unable to work since Christmas and was afraid she was going to be kicked out of the country. As her counsellor, I immediately contacted Immigration about her case. Within days the decision to refuse her a new work permit was reversed. Because so much time has gone by, the job she was offered last December is no longer open. But Ms. Bethier is now free to seek new employment and continue her life and work here in Canada.

- Joan Ann Gravesande

DO YOU NEED CAREER COUNSELLING?

Many domestic workers are interested in exploring other career options, especially after receiving landed status. But there is so much to choose from and so many details to consider. Do you ever feel like you could use some help?

Well, there are excellent services available in the community which offer free and confidential assistance. They can help you draft your resume, prepare for job interviews, test your skills and interests, refer you to subsidized training programs, etc.

Listed below are just a few community-based groups and the specific services they offer. For more information and an appointment, call the group that most suits your particular needs.

TIMES CHANGE WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
22 Davisville Ave./Tel. 487-2807

* job search skills * referrals to employment training programs * job bank * financial assistance * daycare

CAREER INFORMATION & PLACEMENT CENTRE
777 Bloor St. West/Tel. 393-0550 or
461-2482

Must be 25 years and over!

* employment counselling * job strategy * job placement * interest testing

PARACHUTE COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
44 Blevins Place/Tel. 363-1689

Must be 16 - 30 years of age!

* employment counselling * job search strategy * identifying employment assets and barriers * skills upgrading * job bank * subsidized on-the-job training for up to one year

JEWISH VOCATIONAL SERVICES
74 Tycos Drive/ Tel. 787-1151

* career counselling * job placement * changing occupations * dealing with unemployment

FILIPINO BAPTISTS WELCOME INTERCEDE

Approximately one hundred domestic workers attended an information meeting at the First Filipino Baptist Church last month.

INTERCEDE board member Cornelia Soberano and I were resource people at this 'Domestic Workers' Forum' sponsored by the Kababayan Community Centre and the Church.

Among the topics discussed were: immigration, labour standards, and criminal/consumer law. There was a great deal of interest in our new guide KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! and a number of copies were sold.

The Reverend Catanus, Minister of the host church, publicly recognized INTERCEDE's leading role in providing information and resources to Toronto's domestic workers.

- Columbia Diaz

Many thanks to Dr. Archie Chung and Dr. Linda S. Y. Tse for conducting a free eye clinic for INTERCEDE at our last monthly meeting. Over 50 people took advantage of this excellent service, offered free of charge to our members and friends!

DOMESTICS CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS
c/o INTERCEDE
58 Cecil Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1N6

First Class

POSITION AVAILABLE AT INTERCEDE

A full-time temporary position which involves research, lobbying, public education and administration is now open at INTERCEDE.

We are looking for someone with:

- * a post-secondary degree
- * a minimum of 3 years experience
- * proven research/writing skills
- * above average typing skills

If you are interested in applying for the position, please write to us by March 10, 1988 and enclose a copy of your resume.

Personnel Committee
INTERCEDE
58 Cecil Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1N6

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 58 Cecil Street
Toronto, Ontario
Time: Monday - Friday
9:00am - 4:00pm
Tel.: 591-1625 / 591-7036

Free and confidential counselling to all domestic workers on immigration, employment, human rights, etc.

Place
Stamp
Here

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING ON MARCH 6!