

# DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

February 1989

(INTERCEDE)

## IN JANUARY, HIGHEST NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED BY INTERCEDE

In the month of January, INTERCEDE's Service Unit served a total of 354 clients, the highest monthly total in the organization's history.

Almost half were domestic workers who contacted the Unit for the first time. 72 per cent of domestic workers needing assistance are on temporary work permits.

Most of the counselling given was related to matters of immigration. Domestic workers undergoing their first or second assessments called the Unit to seek advice about the different criteria for landed status. Others sought advice about immigration procedures to follow whenever their work permits expire or when they wish to look for new employers after leaving their former employers.

INTERCEDE counsellors also dealt with employment questions such as wages and deductions, vacation pay and time off.

INTERCEDE has also been experiencing record attendances at monthly meetings. More than 350 people came during the first monthly meeting of 1989. At that meeting, 60 domestic workers applied for membership. In the February 5 meeting there were almost 500 people in attendance among whom were 102 new applicants.

Currently, there are 1,060 associate members of INTERCEDE.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### Compulsory Deductions

We recently asked Revenue Canada to update our information about Compulsory Deductions that domestic workers should know about. These are Income Tax deduction, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contribution, Unemployment Insurance (UI) premium and the deduction for room and board.

### Income Tax

Your employer is required by law to withhold Income Tax deduction, CPP contribution and UI premium from your gross wages during every pay period, whether monthly, bi-weekly or weekly.

Your employer has to send these deductions to Revenue Canada every month.

If you are supporting dependent children, your income tax deductions will be lower than those for a person without any dependent children.

Before the end of February each year, your employer is required to give you a completed T4 slip which should have the following information: your total gross wages for the previous year, the total deductions made for Income Tax, CPP and UIC as well as total deductions made for your room and board.

If your employer does not give you a T4 slip at the end of February, you should contact Revenue Canada and inform them of the situation. Revenue Canada will investigate the matter.

Once you receive your T4 slip, you can then file your Income Tax Return. The deadline for filing is April 30.

***Come to INTERCEDE'S monthly meeting on Sunday, March 5, 1989  
from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street.***

***We will celebrate International Women's Day and CLASP  
will make a presentation on assessments of Foreign Domestic Workers.***

***CLASP and INTERCEDE counsellors will be available to serve clients.***

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

You can claim exemption for dependents that you are supporting. You must be the recognized supporter of these dependents, for example your children living in Canada. This means no one else can claim to be supporting the same dependents.

If you are supporting your children who are not living in Canada but are in your country of origin, you will have to fill an additional form, T1E-NR. You must provide receipts for the money sent to support them such as money orders, bank drafts, etc. You cannot claim exemption for your parents if they are living outside of Canada.

### Unemployment Insurance

Your employer is required to deduct Unemployment Insurance premiums and this deduction entitles you to unemployment benefits if you are unable to work because of illness, injury or pregnancy. To receive UI benefits, you must have been employed for at least 20 weeks.

When you leave your employer, he or she must give you a record of employment or separation slip within five days after your last day of employment. This record of employment should contain: the date you started working with the employer, the date you terminated; and how much your total earnings were within that period.

You can take the record of employment along with your Social Insurance Number (SIN) card to the nearest Canada Employment Centre and file a claim for Unemployment Insurance Benefits.

Once you qualify for Unemployment Insurance, you will begin receiving a UI cheque every two weeks representing 60 per cent of your gross earnings. The first cheque will come after a waiting period of at least two weeks. UI benefits are usually paid for a total of 51 weeks.

*We wish to thank the following for their continued support:*

*City of Toronto*

*Employment & Immigration Canada*

*Metro Toronto Community and Social Services*

*Secretary of State*

*All community and individual supporters*

A Claimant Report comes with your UI cheque which you should fill and mail back immediately. On the Claimant Report, you will be asked if you have found new employment and you may be required to furnish a detailed job search form.

Foreign domestic workers do not usually get UI benefits because with the high vacancy rate for domestics, they usually get employed before the waiting period of two weeks is up. Also, foreign domestic workers do not usually claim UI benefits for fear that Immigration may judge them as lacking "self-sufficiency", thus jeopardizing their qualification for landed status.

Revenue Canada Telephone no. 869-1500

(To be continued in March newsletter)

**Joan-Ann Gravesande**

*If you need help with filing your Income Tax, call the following:*

*Kababayan Community Centre Tel. 532-3888*

*Silayan Community Centre Tel. 926-9505*

*If you want to learn how to file your Income Tax yourself, call:*

*Irene Patrick at Bloor Information and Legal Services Tel. 531-4613*

**If you or someone you know have not received this newsletter because of a change of address, please tear the slip below and mail to:**

### INTERCEDE

489 College St., Suite 402

Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

I have changed my address. Please send DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS to my new address:

NAME:.....

ADDRESS: .....

CITY/PROVINCE:..... Postal Code.....

TELEPHONE .....

## **?I HAVE A QUESTION?**

*I am in Toronto on a visitor's visa and I want to work, can INTERCEDE help me get a work visa?*

**Answer:** NO, INTERCEDE can not help you get a work visa. INTERCEDE assists people who are in the Foreign Domestic Program when they enter Canada or domestic workers who already have landed status in Canada.

*I have been here for two years but I have not yet been called for my first assessment, what should I do?*

**Answer:** The best advice we can give you is to write a letter to the Immigration office that covers the area of residence of your employer, to inquire about your schedule for first assessment. It is important that you indicate in your letter your Office File Number, if you have one, as well as your date of birth. This is for the purpose of helping the Immigration office trace your file. This way, you have an inquiry on record, you don't waste time going to Immigration without an appointment, and you hopefully will get a response in writing.

*When can I get a support letter from INTERCEDE?*

**Answer:** A support letter gives information about what INTERCEDE knows about you and your efforts to meet the criteria for landed status. This letter is not required but is helpful as part of your documentation when you go for your assessment.

To get a support letter, call INTERCEDE for an appointment and bring us all the documents that we will need for the support letter such as your volunteer certificates, upgrading certificates, reference letters from employers, bank books and other financial records (savings bonds etc.). Make sure to give INTERCEDE counsellors enough time to see you and do your support letter before you need it, maybe two weeks before.

*Who gets termination pay?*

**Answer:** If an employer terminates your employment without notice, you are entitled to termination pay. If you have worked for your employer for from three months to less than one year, your termination pay should be equal to one week's salary; from one year to less than three years, two weeks' salary; from three years to less than four years, three weeks' salary.

In addition to your termination pay, you should get four per cent of your gross earnings which represents your unused vacation.

Termination pay must be paid no later than seven days after your last day of work.

## **COCO'S CALENDAR**

### ***Our Sympathy...***

To Sonny and Beth Udasco whose father recently passed away. Sonny was former Board Member of Kababayan Community Centre and Beth once worked at INTERCEDE as a part-time counselor.

### ***Mark Your Calendar...***

Join the International Women's Day March on Saturday, March 4. Assembly will be at the University of Toronto Convocation Hall, at 10 a.m., and the march will end up at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute on Gerrard St. where programs, exhibits and other activities will take place.

### ***Coming and Going...***

Board members Mary Jarrell and Cornelia Soberano were resource persons at a Job Re-Entry training session sponsored by CEIC Canadian Jobs Strategy. It was held at ASAP Wordpro Services on January 25.

Board members Yola Grant and Magda Aguada had a great time at the LEAF National Roadshow last February 2.

### ***Bon Voyage...***

to Board member Joyce Stanford who is leaving for a three-week holiday in Guyana on February 27.

### ***Good News...***

Flora Martines, Jean Galicia, Teresita de los Trinos and Marilyn Galapia have obtained their landed status.

Congratulations to Beth Langit who gave birth to a bouncing baby boy.

Best Wishes to Aida Palisoc who recently got married.

### ***Thank you notes...***

To Sister Chit Bautista who has been working very hard on our mailing list and to Cresen Marasigan who has been helping too.

To Thelma Coolen, placement student from George Brown, who is helping us at the Service Unit.

To Delia Llena who never fails to volunteer on Mondays and who is still on the look-out for a locksmith.

To all the volunteers who do the many small and big wonderful things they do to help in the office.

**Columbia Diaz**

# LONG LINES AT EGLINTON IMMIGRATION OFFICE

In response to a letter from INTERCEDE about the line-ups at the Immigration office at 265 Eglinton Avenue, Manager J. E. Campbell has assured that they are "working hard to make improvements".

"I recognize that this creates difficulties for the domestic workers and their employers," Mr. Campbell said of the long queues, "and at the moment, an effort is being made to hire more staff."

"Once staff are hired and trained, I believe that our current problems will be lessened substantially," he added.

Mr. Campbell confirmed the difficulty of getting appointments at the Eglinton office where clients "begin arriving at 7:00 p.m. to wait to be seen the next day," an overnight waiting that INTERCEDE feels is dangerous for domestics who are mostly women.

Mr. Campbell said that the office is now open at 7 p.m. so that "clients can wait in the waiting room" where security personnel "are on site."

Domestic workers and their employers are hoping they will not have to wait long for the time when the line-ups at the Eglinton office will disappear.

***This is your newsletter!!!  
Write your contribution and send in by March 15, 1989.***

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444	Emergency Housing	
Unemployment Insurance	973-4727	Nellie's Hostel	461-1084
Employment Standards Enforcement	965-5251	Evangeline's	762-9636
Ontario Human Rights Commission	965-6841	Legal Services	
Revenue Canada (Taxation)	869-1500	Parkdale Community Legal Services	531-2411
OHIP	965-1000	CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic	736-5029
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933	Kensington-Bellwoods Commty Legal Services	363-0304
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	367-1388	Metro Toronto Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic	971-9674
Education & Skills Training Centre,		INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT	
Labour Council	971-5893	Place:	489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario
		Time:	Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
		Telephone:	(416) 324-8751

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