

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

February 1994



(INTERCEDE)

NEW APPLICANTS LEARN ABOUT INTERCEDE

At their first general meeting for 1994, long-time members of INTERCEDE and its staff took the opportunity of orienting new member applicants about what the organization does and how it serves members and non-member domestic workers and participants in the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP).

As a membership organization

INTERCEDE organizes educational meetings where "we learn everything we need to know so we are kept informed and updated," said a member.

"That's why I don't like missing any of the monthly first Sunday meetings," said another, "and I urge all members to attend them regularly."

Monthly general meetings deal with such topics as Immigration requirements, health issues, human rights, racism, sexual assault, workers' rights, housing issues, citizenship and sponsorship of families, etc.

"We get reliable information in these meetings from staff, community-based workers, immigration officers and other government representatives. This way, we are able to relay correct information to other domestic workers we meet," said one participant at the meeting.

Meanwhile, members have also formed regular support groups such as the Caribbean support group, the Grupo Hispana, Pilipinas and the Chinese group. They meet every two months, sometimes every month, on a Sunday.

"In the group meetings we do not just learn new

information, we feel very supported and enjoy the camaraderie, we even plan movie outings" according to a regular attendee of the Caribbean group. Chinese members recently held a series of English classes as an activity of their group.

There are also special workshops such as those on leadership, on the impact of structural adjustment or on facilitation and self-assertiveness.

Every member can benefit from the all-day orientation sessions that are scheduled every two months. From January, new applicants will be able to get a membership card after completing this orientation.

"Just becoming a member automatically entitles us to a year's subscription to the informative newsletter, *Domestics' Cross-Cultural News*," said one member, "but it's more important to attend INTERCEDE's activities because I feel less isolated."

INTERCEDE's newsletter comes out once a month and several members talked of how valuable are the information contained in it, filing and keeping them for their friends to refer to, specially the Question and Answer columns.

There are social occasions such as dances and excursions offered at very minimal cost. Members who had joined the trip to Niagara last year are hoping that in 1994, there will be a week-end trip to Montreal or Quebec.

And for those who like sports, Bowling Sundays are organized by volunteers during the winter months.

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Come to INTERCEDE's monthly meeting on Sunday, February 6, 1994, 3-5 p.m. at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street, south of College & Spadina

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| 2-3 p.m. | New member application and renewals. Members with ID numbers 93-0064 to 93-0165 must renew or be dropped from membership list. |
| 3-5 p.m. | INFORMATION FOR LCP PARTICIPANTS ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
We will also discuss the rights of domestic workers that employers must respect. |

CLASP Legal Clinic will be open.

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At the client service office

There are two counsellors, Coco Diaz and Carol Salmon, and an intake worker/Administrative Assistant, Eva Jacob. They talk to individuals calling up for information or advice or referrals at INTERCEDE's office at 489 College street.

Clients who have serious problems or who need to talk in person to a counsellor, usually make an appointment before coming to the office. Many have sent back greeting cards or letters stating their appreciation for the assistance they received.

"You don't have to be a member of INTERCEDE to get assistance, and all of INTERCEDE's services are FREE and CONFIDENTIAL," said Fely Villasin, the coordinator.

Office hours are from 9 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday. There are members who volunteer to help in the office, doing mail-outs, making copies, filing etc.

For those in need of legal help, there is a legal clinic open during the Sunday meetings at 58 Cecil street, where CLASP student lawyers offer advice or make referrals.

As an advocacy organization

INTERCEDE is also focused on improving laws, regulations or policies at different levels of government with the goal of gaining equal rights for domestic and caregiver workers.

Among the latest of this work is persuading the provincial government to give domestic workers the right to form unions, recommending changes to the labour law so that protection of domestic workers will be strictly enforced, and so that a central registry of domestic workers will be created.

INTERCEDE has been advocating with the federal government to give domestic workers the right to be

ORIENTATION MEETING

Sunday, February 20, 1994

10 a.m. - to 4 p.m.

Topics:

- 1. IMMIGRATION AND LABOUR RULES
- 2. SPONSORING DEPENDENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES

Register by calling 324-8751 and pay \$5 registration fee (refunded if you are present on Feb. 20)

landed upon arrival in Canada, just like any other immigrant worker. It has also been asking that living-in be an option rather than a requirement of the domestic worker program.

As part of its advocacy, INTERCEDE fosters public education about the work condition and life situation of domestic and caregiver workers in the LCP. It builds links with groups such as labour, immigrant rights, anti-racism and women's groups. This is because the organization puts a premium on women's rights and other women's issues such as violence against women. INTERCEDE is committed to anti-racism and immigrant rights issues.

INTERCEDE WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS

at monthly meetings and in the office to help in newsletter mailing.

Call 324-8751 for dates.

We wish to thank the Employment and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Secretary of State; Multiculturalism and Citizenship; Ontario Ministry of Citizenship; Ontario Women's Directorate; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); and the City of Toronto Grants Review Board for their continuing support.

TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS since January 1993 (Does not apply to current members)

INTERESTED TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER? SEND THE FORM BELOW WITH PAYMENT. IF NO RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION BY END OF FEBRUARY, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION NEW SUBSCRIPTION CHANGE OF ADDRESS

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

Please send *DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS* to:

NAME : _____
ADDRESS : _____
CITY/PROVINCE : _____
POSTAL CODE : _____ TELEPHONE : _____

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$20.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$25.00

MY RIGHTS THAT AN EMPLOYER MUST RESPECT

Workshop to discuss the content and design of a Poster on Domestic and Caregiver Workers' Rights

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 1994

2 pm - 5 pm

Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street
(South of College and Spadina)

We are inviting all members including:

Caribbean Support Group Grupo Hispana Chinese Group Pilipinas
Call 324-8751 for information

STAFF NOTES

by Columbia Tarape Diaz

May they rest in peace...

INTERCEDE President, Joan Grant-Cummings, wants to inform readers of the passing away of Eva Smith, a former Board member of INTERCEDE. According to Grant-Cummings, Eva Smith was an active member in the Black community. She originally came to Canada under the Caribbean Domestic Scheme in the 1950's and fought hard to improve the rights of domestic workers, specially those from the Caribbean.

Last year, this newsletter carried the story of the brave fight waged by a domestic worker against the ravages of cancer. Carolyn Sacro died recently and is now free of her suffering.

Coco's reminders to nannies...

1. The safety of the child you are caring for is your most important priority, over and above all other housework assigned by your employer.
2. When giving a bath to a baby, make sure you have prepared everything you need and that they are within your reach, for example bath soap, shampoo, towels, etc.
3. Do not attempt to answer the telephone or doorbell or be interrupted by similar things while giving a bath to a baby.
4. Do your other housework while the baby is sleeping or only when you are sure s/he is in a safe, secure place.
5. It is never safe to be doing your cooking while carrying a baby in your arms.
6. In case of an emergency, call 911. In a fire, bring the baby out of the house and to a safe place before calling 911 and your employer.

BOWLING DAYS IN FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 13
Saturday, February 26
Sunday, February 27

Register at 324-8751, or at the Feb. 6 meeting

DID YOU CHANGE ADDRESS?

Please inform us by phone or mail so that you can continue getting your newsletter and we don't waste postage expenses for returned mail!

TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Plan for the future, for major purchases and periodic expenses.

Set your financial goals, determine short, mid- and long range financial goals.

Know your situation by determining your monthly living expenses, periodic expenses and your monthly debt payments.

Do a realistic budget that you follow as closely as possible. Evaluate your budget by comparing actual expenses with planned expenses.

Know the difference between "Wants" and "Needs" and take care of your "needs" first; spend for your "wants" only after your "needs" have been met.

Keep a record of daily expenses and be aware of where your money is going. Use a spending diary to assist you in identifying areas where you must make adjustments.

(reprinted from Staying on Track published by the Credit Counselling Service of Metropolitan Toronto, a charitable, non-profit organization that assists people in managing money, debts and other financial matters. Tel. 593-7434 Toronto, 733-8195 North York, 757-8316 Scarborough)

TAX PREPARATION - FREE VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM

Revenue Canada Taxation has announced the schedule for this year's training program for volunteers interested to assist others in preparing income tax returns.

This one-day training is free. Volunteers who have trained to prepare income tax returns are able to give assistance to low income people and those who cannot complete their income tax returns because of age or sickness, language or other difficulty.

Interested persons have to register by calling the Public Affairs officer at 973-9413, and choosing one of the following dates:

Mondays - January 31, February 7, 14 and 21
Fridays - February 4, 11, 18, 25
at The District Taxation Office
36 Adelaide St. East, 3rd floor West, Room 3
Toronto
from 8:30 am to 4 p.m.

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PAY

Effective January 1, 1994

	MONTHLY (12/year)	SEMI-MONTHLY (24/year)	BIWEEKLY (26/year)	WEEKLY (52/year)
GROSS WAGES	\$1,277.47	\$ 638.73	\$ 589.60	\$ 294.80
DEDUCTIONS:				
Room & Board	361.83	180.92	167.00	83.50
Income Tax	183.15	91.85	85.55	42.65
Canada Pension Plan	25.85	12.92	11.93	5.96
Unemployment Ins.	<u>39.22</u>	<u>19.61</u>	<u>18.10</u>	<u>9.05</u>
NET PAYMENT	<u>\$ 667.42</u>	<u>\$ 333.43</u>	<u>\$ 307.02</u>	<u>\$ 153.64</u>

Minimum wage in Ontario is currently \$6.70 per hour. Even though your employer/worker agreement or "contract" may have stated your wage at less, your employer must pay you the current legal minimum wage.

Gross Wages are based on a 44 hour work week with no overtime. If you work more than 44 hours in a week you should get overtime pay or, if you agree, paid time off instead. Overtime pay is "time-and-a-half" your regular hourly wage. If you are paid the minimum wage of \$6.70 per hour, your overtime pay is \$10.05 per hour. You may or may not agree to take paid "time-and-a-half" off instead. For example, if you worked ten hours overtime, you should get 15 hours off with pay within the next 12 weeks.

The maximum deduction for board is \$52.50 per week (\$2.50 per meal). No deduction is allowed unless you actually eat the meals. So, if you miss all six meals during your two days off, only \$37.50 (\$52.50-\$15.00) should be deducted from your pay for meals. Room is calculated at a rate of \$31.00 per week for a private room or \$15.50 per week for a shared room.

Income Tax deductions are based on Code 1 exemption. If you are supporting dependent children, your tax deductions will be lower and your net pay will be higher. Income Tax is calculated on gross wages.

Your employer is required by law to withhold Income Tax deductions, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and Unemployment (UI) Premiums from your gross wages. Your employer sends these deductions together with their own contributions to Revenue Canada every month. Each pay day, your employer is also required by law to give you a written statement of earnings like the sample below:

Written Statement of Earnings:		Date:	Jan. 7, 1994
Name of Employee:	Maria Gonzalez	Hours worked:	44 hours
Pay Period:	Jan. 1 - 7, 1994	Salary:	\$6.70 per hour
Gross Wages:			\$ 294.80
Overtime:			0
Deductions:			
Room		\$ 31.00	
Board (5 meals not taken)		40.00	
Income Tax		42.65	
CPP		5.96	
UI		<u>9.05</u>	
Total Deductions:			<u>\$ 128.66</u>
Net Payment:			<u>\$ 166.14</u>

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c/o INTERCEDE

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Toronto, Ontario
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FIRST CLASS