

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL



INTERCEDE FOR THE RIGHTS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS,

February 2001

Call us toll-free
1-877-483-4554

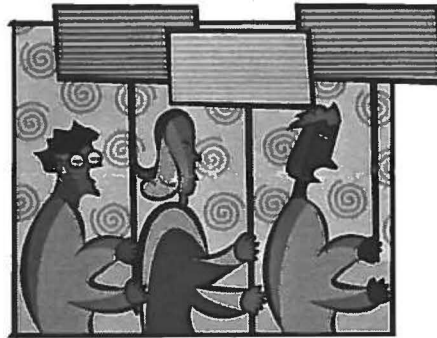
Post-Valentine's Day
Fundraising Dance!
Saturday February 24
(see inside)

INTERCEDE Launches New Leadership & Advocacy Training Program for Women

On December 3, 2000, fourteen women attended the first meeting of our Leadership & Advocacy Training Program which officially began on January 2001. The objectives of the six-month pilot project funded by the Maytree Foundation are to assess the training needs of the participants, and to develop a training model.

The idea to create a formal, sustained advocacy training program came from INTERCEDE's Participatory Action Research project, "Caregivers Break the Silence" and supported at the Annual Domestic Worker's Conference in September 2000.

Fely Villasin, INTERCEDE Coordinator, facilitated the lively introductory session. Participants completed an exercise called "Choose Your Spot" and were asked to give their perspective on issues of racism, violence against women, homophobia, workers' rights, etc.



The group discussed the idea of "leadership" and who leaders are, the following points were made:

- ⇒ A leader is a good listener, a role model, a guide
- ⇒ Leadership requires consultation, good judgement and ability to analyze
- ⇒ A leader or group of leaders is someone able to reflect the ideas of the bigger community, analyze and translate them into action which is accepted and done willingly by that community
- ⇒ A leader does not act alone, on the basis of her individual

intelligence, education, skills etc. but is someone invested with power and authority by the larger group, and therefore is accountable to that group for that power and authority.

- ⇒ In our day-to-day world who are the leaders? How did they become leaders and why?
- ⇒ We must critically reflect on our "leaders" – whether in our family, in our neighbourhood, our organization, our country etc.

The program will be facilitated by the Carlos Bulosan Cultural Workshop, a group with a long history of using popular education methods in community training, and be held at the Women's Counselling Referral & Education Centre. Next meeting is February 11th.



*Interested in attending this program?
Call our office for more information.*

*All Domestic/Caregiver workers,
Newcomers and Women on Temporary
Work Permit are welcome to attend*

INTERCEDE MEETING Every First Sunday of the Month

(if holiday, meeting is on the second Sunday)

Next Meeting:
Time:
Location:

Sunday February 4, 2001

3 - 5 p.m.

Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street
(1 block south of College, at Spadina Ave)

Topic:

Preparing Your 2001 Tax Return

Guest Speakers:

Buddy Jibe (President) & Pempe Saavedra, (Past-Pres.),
Association of Filipino-Canadian Accountants

Welcome to our new Intake & Administrative Assistant!

We are happy to welcome our newest staff member, **Anita Tantengco Fortuno!**

Anita was born in the Philippines and has been working as a live-in caregiver since her arrival in Canada two-and-a-half years ago.

Anita has 19 years experience working in Financial Accounting while in Cabuyao, Laguna.

She joined INTERCEDE's Job Search Workshops last summer while she was completing the Live-In Caregiver Program.

Anita says her plans for the future are to "work hard and prepare for the arrival of my family here in Canada, get settled here probably for good and to be able to help those who are in the Live-In Caregiver Program and other newcomers to Canada."



**Job Search Workshop Graduates, July 2000 - Front l-r: Juvy, Julia, Susana
Back: Gloria, Mary Ann, Anita, Dilshad, Yisiel, Diana, Grace & Arlene**

As our Intake and Administrative Assistant, Anita will often be the first person you meet when you visit our office or call for information about our workshops. So be sure to call Anita and say hello at (416) 483-4554 extension 21.



Special Thank You!

*The staff and board of directors would like to extend our sincerest thanks to **Susan Ballena** and **Jereza "Jing" Mangrobang** for their interim administrative work.*

We could not have had a successful transition without you!

Post-Valentine's Day Fundraising Dance

Saturday February 24th

at Cecil Community Centre

58 Cecil St (1 block South of College St, at Spadina Ave)

8 p.m. to 12 p.m.

Tickets \$15 * light snacks provided

DJ's spinning dance, r&b, salsa and reggae will keep you dancing non-stop!

All Family, Friends & Supporters of INTERCEDE Are Welcome!

For tickets call (416) 483-4554 ext. 21

Attire: Semi-Formal

How does the new 60-hour work week affect domestic workers?

On Dec. 20, 2000, the Ontario government passed Bill 147 that amends the Employment Standards Act. This new labour law, which affects 4.5 million non-unionized workers, lengthens the work week to 60 hours and could make it more difficult for workers to get overtime pay.

However, our clients tell us that for low-income immigrant and migrant women who make their living working in an employer's household, this is business as usual.

Some changes to hours of work and overtime:

- the maximum work week increased by 12 hours
- employers who want people to work longer than 48 hours, no longer a special permit, they only need the permission of the employee
- overtime, at time and a half, must still be paid for any hours above 44 in a week, but under the new rules it can be averaged over four weeks. That means it might be paid only if an employee works more than 176 hours in a four-week period
- employees can agree to take time off instead of overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 44 hours

While Labour Minister Chris Stockwell notes that any hours between 48 and 60 would be voluntary, how many employees can freely choose not to do what their employers want and still keep a good

working relationship? Especially when the employee is a live-in or live-out domestic worker, and the power weighs more heavily in favour of the employer.

We believe that the Employment Standards Act must protect and ensure the rights of all workers particularly those who are not unionized such as caregivers/ domestic workers.

The Ontario government held consultations before these changes and INTERCEDE presented recommendations to raise employment standards for domestic workers (*see Nov 2000 newsletter for complete summary*). So far the changes to the labour law do not reflect our recommendations, which included:

- Raising the minimum wage to a 'living-wage'
- Protect domestic workers against excessive hours of work

by setting maximum hours to 40 per week

- the Ministry of Labour do spot checks and monitor accommodations
- penalize employment and recruitment agencies that implement unscrupulous practices and excessive fees
- give domestic workers the right to all statutory public holidays
- remove the \$10,000 cap on claims and the six-month-after-the-violation limit on claim applications

Please contact INTERCEDE to learn about these and other changes to the Employment Standards Act and how you can protect your rights at (416) 483-4554.



60-hour work week not new to caregivers and domestic workers Quotes from INTERCEDE clients

"Since I started working as live-in caregiver 3 years ago, my regular working hours have been between 60-70 hours per week without overtime time pay."

"The new labour law gives more power to employers."

"Overtime pay was hardly enforced with the current 44 work hours per week, I don't expect any change with a 60-hour work week."

"Being able to spend more time with my family is at the mercy of my employers."

"Now other people will experience the impact of working long hours beyond their control."

"I am pregnant and will never benefit (from the extension of maternity leave to one-year) because I need to complete the 24 month live-in requirement within three years."

Helping newcomers succeed in their job search

Finding a job is one of the most challenging task newcomers face in Canada. It is very important to stay positive during the process and not to become discouraged.

It is usually easier to find a job in the fields that have a shortage of workers and are not regulated. For instance, currently all information technology specialists - computer programmers and analysts, networking specialists - are in high demand. If there is no shortage of workers in this field.

Certain trades or professions are regulated. This means that you must be licensed, registered or certified to practice them. This process can take a few years. INTERCEDE settlement counsellors can give you information about licensing and qualifications recognition.

The job search process usually involves the following steps.

1. Locating a Job - The most common ways to find a job in Canada are:

- to contact a Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) office. They are the main government source of information and services for people looking for work. Visit an HRDC/HRCC office in your area (call INTERCEDE for referrals). HRDC also runs the Job Bank, and the Electronic Labour Exchange (ELE). Some offices offer computer training and other courses.
- to look for jobs listed in newspapers, and professional and trade magazines. Look in the classified advertisements section under "Help Wanted" and "Careers".
- to "network". This means to establish personal contacts that may help you to find a job which is not actually advertised anywhere. According to the statistics, **80% of available jobs are not advertised**. Personal contacts can be made through volunteer work, community involvement, going to an ethno-specific organization, taking a class, co-operative education, joining a club or child-parent program, going to parties, etc.
- to join job-finding clubs run by organizations serving newcomers.
- to employ private job placement agencies.
- to look for job listings at community centres.

(continued on next page)

INTERCEDE offers free Job Search Workshops for Caregivers, Newcomers and their Families

Sundays February 25, March 4, 18, & 25

You will learn how to:

- identify your interests, skills & career goals
- write an effective resume
- conduct successful job interviews
- gain self-esteem and confidence

**Classes held at George Brown College,
200 King St. East, Rm. 544-E
10 AM to 5 PM**



I-r: graduates Merlita Fabro, Evelyn Castillo with Jo Alcampo, facilitator

**Call now to register, space is limited
(416) 483-4554 ext. 21**

Certificate of completion to be issued by George Brown College

*Funded by Citizenship & Immigration Canada
Sponsored by COSTI & OCASI*

2. Applying for a Job - To apply for a job in Canada, you usually are asked to submit a résumé and a cover letter.

A résumé is a short description of your work and volunteer experience, and educational background. It should also include your name, address, telephone or fax number, and e-mail address. It should not include any reference to your age, nationality, religion or marital status. The main purpose of your résumé is to get you an interview.

A résumé is usually accompanied by a cover letter. The letter should briefly explain why you are sending a résumé and why you are the best candidate for the job.

Your résumé and cover letter are very important, as they often create the employer's first impression of you. Everything matters, including spelling and formatting.

It usually takes a lot of time and effort to create a résumé and a cover letter that work, and you will probably need help. INTERCEDE offers a **free four-day Job Search Workshop (JSW) Program** designed for caregivers and newcomers. We will help you create a résumé that highlights your skills and experience and teach you other valuable job search techniques.

3. The Interview - An interview is an essential step in getting a job. It is your chance to convince an employer that you are the right candidate for the job. It is also a chance for you to determine if the employer is suitable for you.

At an interview, you should bring a copy of your résumé, your references list and any other documents that you believe can add to your credentials.

You can't possibly anticipate all the questions you will be asked, but some of them are very common. These are questions about your previous work experience and educational background. Some of the questions are about your personal traits, for instance, how you handle stress or how you get along with people. The **JSW Program** prepares you to answer the most common questions in an interview.

There are some questions that are **illegal** for employers to ask. In general, the employer cannot ask about your race, place of origin, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, marital and family status, disability or financial situation.

There are, however, certain situations when such questions are considered valid. According to the **Ontario Human Rights Code**, some of these questions are valid if the nature of employment involves "serving the interests of persons identified by their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, creed, sex, age, marital status or handicap", or the primary duty of employment is "attending to the medical or personal needs of the person". The **JSW Program** can teach you how to handle illegal and biased questions in an interview.

4. Follow Up - It is a very good idea to send a **thank-you letter** after the interview. If you don't hear from the employer within the time indicated for making a decision, you may send a follow-up letter, expressing again your interest in the position. You will probably go through a few interviews before getting a job - use each interview as a learning experience.

Research: Whatever your educational background and work experience is, you need to **research** the occupational field you are interested in. A good opportunity to receive first-hand information about the field, the specific job, required skills and qualifications and also to hear feedback on your résumé is to arrange for an information interview. Find out what companies work in the field. You can look them up in directories and trade or professional magazines or ask people.

Call the company and ask to speak with a person doing the type of job you are interested in or with the manager of the department. However, do not confuse an **informational interview** with a job interview; at this point you are just obtaining information about your field of work and it is inappropriate to ask for a job interview at this time.

For more information about our JSW Program contact INTERCEDE. Article adapted from Settlement.Org Website for Newcomers: www.settlement.org



HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PAY
Effective January 1, 2001

Pay Schedule	Monthly (12/year)	Semi-Monthly (24/year)	Bi-Weekly (26/year)	Weekly (52/year)
Gross Wages	\$1,781.00	\$890.50	\$822.00	\$411.00
DEDUCTIONS				
Income Tax				
Federal	170.35	85.25	78.20	39.10
Provincial	65.50	32.60	30.30	15.15
Canada Pension Plan	64.04	32.02	29.56	14.78
Employment Insurance	40.07	20.04	18.50	9.25
NET PAY for Live-out	\$1,441.04	\$720.59	\$665.44	\$332.72
Less: (Room & Board)	369.42	184.71	170.50	85.25
NET PAY for Live-in	\$1,071.62	\$535.88	\$494.94	\$247.47

Minimum wage in Ontario is currently \$6.85 per hour. Even though your employment 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 60-hour work week, and does not include overtime calculations. Overtime must be paid for any hours above 44 in a week, but under the new labour law, it can be averaged over four weeks. That means it might be paid only you work more than 176 hours in a four-week period.

Overtime pay is a "time-and-a-half" your regular hourly wage. If you are paid the minimum wage of \$6.85 per hour, your overtime pay should be \$10.28. You may agree to take paid off instead. This is also at the "time-and-a-half" rate. For example, if you worked 10 hours overtime, you should get 15 hours off with pay.

The maximum deduction for board is \$ 53.55 per week (\$2.55 per meal). However, if you miss all six meals during your two days off, only \$38.25 (\$53.55-\$15.30) should be deducted. Room is calculated at a rate of \$31.70 per week for a private room or \$15.85 per week for a shared room.

Income Tax Deductions are based on Code 1 exemption.

Your employer is required by law to withhold Income Tax deductions, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and Employment Insurance (EI) premium from your gross wages. Your employer sends these deductions together with their own contributions to Revenue Canada every month. Each pay day, your employer should give you a - Written Statement of Earnings (see below).

Example:	Name of employee: Mary Grace Joy	Salary: \$6.85 per hour
	Pay period: Jan. 8-12, 2001 (one week)	Total hours worked: 60 hours
	GROSS WAGES: \$411.00	Notes:
	Deductions:	Overtime worked: 16 hours
	Fed. & Prov. Income Tax 54.25	Overtime rate of pay: \$10.28 per hour
	CPP 14.78	
	EI 9.25	
	Room & Board 85.25	
	Total Deductions: \$163.53	
	NET PAY: \$247.47	

Questions & Answers *by Coco Diaz*

Q- I am on Open Employment Authorization Permit, awaiting approval of my Permanent Resident status. I recently married a Canadian citizen, do I need to inform Immigration about this matter.

A- Yes, inform Immigration (Processing Centre) so they can update your personal information and change your marital status to married and let them know that your spouse is a Canadian citizen.

Q- My Permanent Resident status was issued in December 2000 and my elderly parents are visiting me here in Canada . They would like to stay here permanently. Can I sponsor them under Family Class ?

A- Usually, people who want to become permanent Canadian resident must submit their application to a visa office outside Canada. Your parents could return home and you could submit an application to sponsor them as a member of the Family Class. However, if there are exceptional circumstances, you may be allowed to sponsor them within Canada based on Humanitarian and Compassionate consideration. Contact INTERCEDE for guidance and assistance.

Q- I am currently working under the Live-In Caregiver Program and my employer want to bring me to the United States with them on vacation. How do I apply for a U.S. visa ? What are the requirements?

A- All permanent residents, landed immigrants, holders of student or employment authorization permits, and minister's permit holders need to make an appointment when applying for a visitors visa at the Consulate. You need to have a valid passport, a valid employment authorization and a letter of employment. The application fee for a U.S. visa is \$45.00 US dollars. Call 1-900-451-2778 for appointments.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE...

Caribbean Domestic Worker's Support Group

Would you like to share your feelings and create solutions so that you can better cope with worry, fears, and other concerns?

Join us Wednesdays 11:30 am - 1:30 p.m.

at the Intercede office

**For more information
call Carol Seeley
at (416) 483-4554 ext. 22**

Free and Confidential

RAFFLE WINNERS

Our raffle draw was held on **December 3, 2000** and the winners were...**Lea Laureano** (ticket #4628) won the 1st prize: Round Trip to Philippines, **Carlina R. Tarampi** (#1526) - won 2nd prize: \$500 cash, and **Connie Smarita** (#3851) - won 3rd prize: \$250 cash.

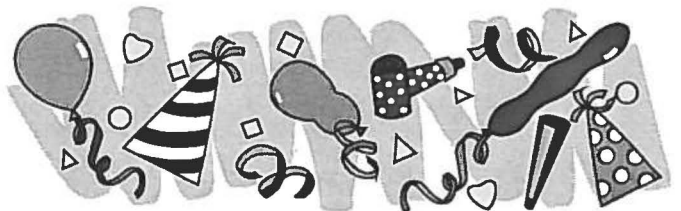
Consolation prize winners were:

Edna Bernardo (#3766), Mercy Catapang (#534 & 697), Jessica Costales (#4634), Dolores Garcia (#1272), Diane Law (#3523), Alma Marcelo (#0186), Estrelita Rendel (#4581), Grace Tabujara (#0198), Alyssa Tantengco (#3579), Pauline Weir (#0449), and Melinda (#0697).

THANK YOU to everyone who supported our fundraiser! All proceeds go towards our services for domestic workers, caregivers and newcomers...so we are all winners!

CHRISTMAS PARTY FUN

We ended the year 2000 by having an occasion to remember on Sunday December 3. As the highlight of the afternoon, members, friends and supporters enjoyed a food-laden table of delicacies, singing of christmas carols and games that got everyone joyfully participating!



You Can Attend a University Bridging Course for Women!

Sponsored by the School for Women's Studies and INTERCEDE

What is a Bridging Course?

- a low cost course that prepares you for university or higher education
- a non-credit course for which you don't need a student permit (must be over 21 years of age)
- an excellent opportunity to improve reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills
- a grade of 'B' or higher will qualify you for admission to York University's Atkinson College

Classes start February 11 to May 6, 2001

Sundays 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.

at the North York Women's Centre, 201 Caribou Road (1 block south of Lawrence, off Bathurst)

Course fee: \$85.00 + \$50.00 for books = \$135.00

This programme is subsidized by York University as part of its community outreach programme



Attend the free information session on Sunday February 4th at 3:00 p.m

Enrollment is limited, Pre-register today! Call (416) 483-4554 ext. 21

Address: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 205
Toronto Ontario M4P 1K5

Hours: Mon-Fri 9 am - 4 p.m.

Telephone: (416) 483-4554

Fax: (416) 483-9781

Toll-Free: 1-877-483-4554

E-mail: office@tofdwr.org

INTERCEDE STAFF:

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We wish to thank: Citizenship and Immigration Canada - ISAP Program and Job Search Program with COSTI-OCASI; the Federal Status of Women & Status of Women Ontario; the Maytree Foundation, and the Municipality of Toronto CSGP for their financial support.



Let us know what you think of our newsletter!
We welcome your feedback, ideas, or comments.
Send your responses by mail or by email
Attention: INTERCEDE Newsletter Committee

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