

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers and Newcomers

February 2004

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History is celebrated annually in Canada every February. Black History Month began in the 1920's in the United States when African-American historian, Carter G. Woodson recommended that the accomplishments of Black Americans be honoured. In 1926 a 'Black History Week' was established and in 1976 Black History Week became 'Black History Month'.

The idea of Black History Month in Canada was adopted from the United States and the Canadian Parliament officially recognized Black History Month in 1995.

It is important to recognize and respect the contributions that Black Canadians have made and continue to make in the creation of Canada. There is a lack of knowledge about the vital role the Black community has made in building Canada. Black people in Canada have a very rich history that should be known to all living in this country.

Historically Western History has created a myth that people of African descent have not contributed the development of the Western World - that is completely false.

Here is information of two significant Black Canadian Women:

Mary Ann Shadd (1823-1893) arrived in Canada during the time of the Underground Railroad. She taught children of arriving refugees and was also an anti-slavery activist who distributed educational materials on fighting slavery. She earned a law degree and worked as a lawyer, teacher, and publisher. She was the first woman in Canada to become a publisher and published *The Provincial Freeman*.

Portia White (1911 - 1968) was a critically acclaimed international musician. Her singing career began at her father's Baptist Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and she made her first professional singing performance in Toronto. She performed over 100 concerts in places such as New York City, and performed in front of Queen Elizabeth II.

INTERCEDE's Caribbean Connection Support Group is celebrating Black History Month on Saturday February 14, 2004, with a potluck meal and a guest speaker from Toronto's Black community. Domestic workers and caregivers from the Black community are greatly encouraged to come out and join us. For further information please contact Salma at (416) 483-4554 x 22.

*Information for this article was obtained from http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/balck-noir/index_e.cfm



INTERCEDE CHRISTMAS PARTY

INTERCEDE had its annual holiday party on Sunday December 7, 2003. The Cecil Community Centre was bright and beautiful, not only because of the Christmas decorations but also because of the energy, spirit and cheerfulness from all who attended the party. There was an array of delicacies which consisted of food from the Caribbean, South America and the Philippines. A main attraction was the large roasted pig (lechon).

Some members led Christmas carols in which everyone in the room joined in and sang songs like, "Joy to the World" and "Winter Wonderland". The celebration continued with dancing, eating, and mingling.

There were parlor games, singing competition and exchange gifts. The winners appreciated the wonderful prizes. The party was very successful with many people in attendance and everyone had fun.

Our guest speaker was Susan Nielson, Executive Director of the Toronto Adult Student (TASA). She spoke about her

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

INTERCEDE MEETING
Every First Sunday of the Month

(if holiday, meeting is on the second Sunday)

Apply or renew your membership - \$10.

Sunday, February 1, 2004, 3-5 p.m.
At Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.
(one block south of College cor. Spadina)

***Information Session on
Professions & Trades in Ontario***

***Guest Speaker, Jane Cullingworth, Coordinator
Policy Roundtables Mobilizing Professions and Trades (PROMPT)***

belief in hard work due to her experience growing up and working on the family farm. She feels that farm work is similar to working as a caregiver or domestic worker because of the physical labour, long hours and how society undervalues this work. She added that domestic work and caregiving is sacred work and that society could not function without these occupations.

TASA recognizes that English is a second language for many caregivers and domestic workers, therefore TASA provides courses that help improve English language skills, upgrade credentials, and provide job training. Ms. Neilson spoke about her own experience going back to school as an adult. She said that it was frightening at first, but looking back now, she sees how it drastically improved the quality of her life and broke down barriers of isolation. She said that she considers returning to school as an adult to be "the best thing she has ever done". **For more information about the Toronto Adult Student Association please call (416) 461-1443.**

INTERCEDE would like to thank everyone who came out to our Christmas Party, it was a wonderful way to end 2003. We wish you all a Happy New Year!



Q & A with Coco and Anita

- Q:** I am a Permanent Resident and have lived in Ontario for more than three years. I have not yet applied for Canadian citizenship because the employer I left in my country has offered me a job. Can I be out of Canada and return after two years? Can my previous years' stay in Canada be counted for my citizenship application?
- A:** As a Permanent Resident, you can remain outside Canada without worry as long as you spend at least two years in Canada during every five-year period. Upon your return you can file for citizenship because you have already met the initial requirement of residing in Canada for at least three years. Remember that all Canadian citizenship applicants are required to complete a written test, except children and applicants over 60 years old. Some people may even be called in for a face-to-face interview.
- Q:** My current Employment Authorization will expire on February 20, 2004 and I have been given notice of employment termination effective February 15, 2004. Do I still need to apply for an extension of my Employment Authorization or can I just wait for my Open Permit, that I requested when I filed my Permanent Residence application in November 2003, to be issued?
- A:** There is no guarantee that your application for permanent residence will be processed in time. To avoid possible complications, to the extent of being out of valid immigration status, we suggest that you apply for an extension of your Employment Authorization immediately.
- Q:** I am a Permanent Resident and gave birth to my son in Canada four years ago. Last year I brought him to the Philippines and decided to have my parents take care of him temporarily. I plan to bring my son back to Canada next year. Will I be penalized because my son has been out of Canada and will he be able to return without problems?

A: We advise you to contact the Philippine Consulate Office for information regarding possible penalties for overstaying. However, your son should be able to return to Canada without a problem because he is a Canadian citizen by birth.

Please remember that it is very important that you have your Permanent Residence Card or Canadian Citizenship **before** going to the Philippines because **effective December 31, 2003** everyone is required to show their Permanent Residence Card or Canadian Citizenship card in order to return to Canada from abroad.

- Q:** I applied for permanent residence and an open work permit on October 2003. My current work permit will expire on March 2004. Do I have to apply for renewal of my work permit?
- A:** Yes, you must have a valid work permit or immigration status while your application for permanent residence and open work permit is still in process. However, if your work permit had expired and you did not apply for an extension, you still have 90 days from expiry of your work permit to apply for restoration of status and renewal/extension of work permit. If ninety days had expired and you did not renew your work permit, Immigration will order you to leave Canada and your application for permanent residence and open work permit will be refused.
- Q:** I arrived in Canada on April 2001 and I completed 24 months and applied for permanent residence under LCP on December 2003. Can I still apply for extension of work permit after three years upon arrival in Canada under LCP?
- A:** Yes, you can still apply for extension after three years under LCP **but** you must ask your employer to request for a new validated job offer from Human Resourced Development Canada (HRDC). You must attach this new validated job offer to your application for extension of work permit otherwise Immigration will not renew your work permit.



A Day in the Life of a Volunteer

By Fred Gerra

As I step into the INTERCEDE office, I notice a few clients patiently waiting for their appointments. I wave to Genie, the Intake and Administrative Assistant, who is busy on the telephone. While counsellors, Anita, Salma and Coco are in their offices dealing with client's immigration and employment problems. Lourdes, the JSW facilitator is working away on her computer preparing upcoming job search workshops.

When caregivers, domestic workers, and newcomers leave the office, I notice their expressions of relief. Someone is there for them. I realize how valuable the time is that they spend with the counsellors.

As lunchtime rolls around, we all gather for a pleasant conversation about different issues ranging from politics and movies, to stories from childhood and 'back home'. These moments provide us with a mental break from the challenging work at INTERCEDE.

As a volunteer, I am learning new things everyday and my work is always appreciated with "thank you's" from everyone in the office. I truly feel like I am part of something special, and that I belong to the INTERCEDE family.

INTERCEDE has been serving clients for almost 20 years, and I want to say "keep up the good work" to everyone!



Effective February 1, 2004

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PAY

44 Hour Work Week / Minimum Wage = \$7.15 per hour

Pay Schedule	Monthly (12/year)	Semi-Monthly (24/year)	Bi-Weekly (26/year)	Weekly (52/year)
Gross Wages	\$1,363.27	\$681.63	\$629.82	\$314.60
DEDUCTIONS				
Income Tax				
Federal	98.00	49.60	44.85	22.50
Provincial	36.95	18.50	17.20	8.50
Canada Pension Plan	53.04	26.52	24.48	12.24
Employment Insurance	26.99	13.50	12.46	6.23
NET PAY for Live-out	\$1,148.29	\$573.51	\$530.83	\$265.13
Less: (Room & Board)	369.42	184.71	170.50	85.25
NET PAY for Live-in	\$778.87	\$388.80	\$360.33	\$179.88

Minimum wage in Ontario is currently \$7.15 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 44 hour work week, and does not include overtime calculations. Overtime must be paid for any hours above 44 in a week.

It is important that you keep a list of all hours you worked daily in case there is any dispute about your overtime.

Overtime pay is a "time-and-a-half" your regular hourly wage. If you are paid the minimum wage of \$7.15 per hour, your overtime pay should be \$10.73. You may agree to take paid time-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.

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:** \$7.15 per hour
Pay period: February 2-6, 2004 (one week) **Total hours worked:** 44 hours

GROSS WAGES:	\$314.60	Notes:
Deductions:		Overtime worked:
Fed. & Prov. Income Tax	31.00	Overtime rate of pay: \$10.73 per hour
CPP	12.24	
E I	6.23	
Room & Board	85.25	
Total Deductions:	\$134.72	
NET PAY	\$179.88	

JOB SEARCH SURVIVAL TIPS

Take on the challenge of work search with these survival tips in mind:

Stay Focused. It's job search counsellors' mantra that looking for work is a full time job. Be organized. Know what you can honestly offer, and keep looking by investing 8-10 hours a day just doing job search activities

Be kind to yourself. Don't deny yourself little luxuries, even if you're edgy with your work search. Take care of your body, mind and spirit. Look around for community resources for self development.

Make a list of your assets, liabilities and begin eliminating expenses you can temporarily live without. Remember, while looking for work you're trying to stretch your 'stripped down' budget.

Hone your interview skills. Source for community services offering free job search advice and mock interviews to perfect your interview skills

Volunteer work is a great remedy for self-pity and subconsciously takes care of low self-esteem concerns.

Socialize every chance you get. Join or attend networking groups, association meetings, seminars for free

Look at this free time as gift---- it won't last long. You know you'll find work you'll feel good about, maybe sooner than you think. Be good to yourself. Reference: C. Clarke, Jan. 26, 2004

24 Hours

FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP

FOR CAREGIVERS & FOR NEWCOMERS

WHEN: Sunday
February 1, 15, 22 & 29, 2004
March 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2004
TIME : 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
WHERE: INTERCEDE
234 Eglinton Ave E., Suite 405
Toronto, On, M4P 1K5

Please call (416)483-4554 ext. 30 or 21 to sign up.
Seating is limited.

Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada & sponsored by COSTI & OCASI

INTERCEDE

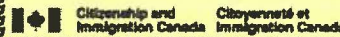
Address: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 405
Toronto Ontario
M4P 1K5

Regular Hours: Mon-Fri 9 am - 4 p.m.
Telephone: (416) 483-4554
Fax: (416) 483-9781
Toll-Free: 1-877-483-4554
E-mail: info@intercedetoronto.org

INTERCEDE STAFF:

- Fely Villasin - Coordinator
- Des Balce - JSW Facilitator
- Columbia Diaz - Settlement Counsellor
- Salma Saadi - Settlement Counsellor
- Anita Fortuno - Settlement Counsellor
- Genie Policarpio - Intake & Administrative Assistant

We wish to thank: Citizenship and Immigration Canada - ISAP Program and Job Search Program with COSTI-OCASI; Ontario Status of Women; the Municipality of Toronto CSGP, Access & Equity and "Breaking the Cycle of Violence" grant programs, for their financial support.



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