

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the International Coalition to End Domestics' Exploitation

JANUARY 1987

WRYE CALLS FOR DOMESTICS' RIGHTS

INTERCEDE has learned that recently Ontario Minister of Labour William Wrye put forward a proposal to expand the rights of domestic workers under the Employment Standards Act. The proposal reflects a number of INTERCEDE's key recommendations and it includes:

- * coverage of domestic workers under the hours of work and overtime provisions
- * a written agreement, signed by the employer and the domestic, which sets out the hours of work, plus a record of overtime hours
- * revoking the daily, weekly and monthly minimum pay rates and applying the hourly minimum, plus time and one-half for each hour worked in excess of 44 hours weekly
- * a new rate of \$10.00 per week for board if the room is shared, or the regular \$20.00 per week if the room is private
- * a new regulation which does not permit employers to deduct for meals which have not been eaten and rooms that have not been occupied
- * coverage of domestics working 24 hours or less per week for an employer under the minimum wage
- * requiring that a live-in domestic who works during her weekly free period be paid one and one-half times the regular rate of pay

- * amending the Labour Relations Act to cover all domestic workers employed in private households

Mr. Wrye's proposal has been discussed and approved by cabinet committees on race relations, social policy and economic impact. Other ministers in the Liberal government have also promoted these changes and played an advocacy role on behalf of domestic workers' rights, especially Attorney General Ian Scott, who is also the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, and Lily Munro, Minister of Citizenship and Culture.

In spite of this support, Mr Wrye's proposal was not approved when it came before the full Cabinet at a recent meeting. The whole question of domestic worker's rights was deferred for 'further study'!

INTERCEDE is alarmed at this untimely decision. The government has been studying the issue since it came to power in 1985, and all we have after 1½ years is just another delay!

We have requested an urgent meeting with Mr. Wrye which is scheduled to take place on February 3. We have also requested a meeting with Premier David Peterson in order to appeal to him personally to end the exploitation of domestic workers in this province.

INTERCEDE feels strongly that the time for action is long overdue. We are asking the government for assurances that it will take action in the very near future, otherwise we will have no choice but to proceed with a court challenge to the Ontario labour laws under the Charter of Rights.

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COCO'S CALENDAR

Recent happenings...

- * last month our Board of Directors held a special 'get acquainted' luncheon to welcome new members
- * on December 9 members of INTERCEDE met with Dr. Dan Hill and senior staff at the office of the Ontario Ombudsman
- * on December 18 INTERCEDE attended the LEAF Christmas party and met the new director Christie Jefferson

Coming up soon...

- * our next monthly meeting is set for Sunday, February 1, 3pm, at the Cecil Community Centre. All domestic workers are welcome! For more information call me at 591-1625
- * our Service Unit will be open on Saturday, February 7, 10am - 2pm. Call me or Joan Ann for an appointment at 591-1625

...AND CONGRATULATIONS!!

- * to Effie Henry, a long-time member of INTERCEDE who is back in Toronto after a period of work in Vancouver...good to have you with us again!
- * to our new landed immigrants: MARIE LUISE TRESSEL, from West Germany; WANAPORN THERANUKON, from Thailand; and TERESITA CALIM, from the Philippines. Best of luck to all of you!
- * and a special welcome back to all our members who went home to their Christmas holidays, including board member Lynette Munian just back from Guyana

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS!

- Columbia Diaz

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Unfortunately 1987 brings a cut in all our paycheques because deductions are increasing - again!

As of January 1, if you are a foreign domestic worker receiving the minimum rate of pay, this is your breakdown:

Monthly:	\$827.50	Gross Pay
	238.00	Room & Board
	11.71	Canada Pension
	19.45	Unemployment Ins.
	82.55	Income Tax
That leaves:	<u>475.74</u>	Net Pay

If you are a permanent resident, the legal minimum pay rate minus deductions is as follows:

Monthly:	\$823.00	Gross Pay
	238.00	Room & Board
	11.68	Canada Pension
	19.34	Unemployment Ins.
	79.95	Income Tax
That leaves:	<u>474.03</u>	Net Pay

The minimum yearly pay (gross) for a foreign domestic worker is \$9,930.00.

The minimum yearly pay (gross) under Ontario labour law is \$9,876.00.

Remember, that if you are experienced and/or have special skills you can negotiate a higher rate of pay with your employer.

For more information or assistance contact:

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT	591-1625
REVENUE CANADA	869-1500

- Joan Ann Gravesande

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WELCOME BACK, COCO !

WEINER TO MEET WITH INTERCEDE

Minister of State for Immigration, Gerry Weiner, will be meeting with an INTERCEDE delegation on January 31. The meeting will be held at the Cecil Community Centre and include members of the INTERCEDE board and staff, as well as community representatives.

High on the agenda is the issue of the immigration processing fees. INTERCEDE has called on the Minister to exempt foreign domestic workers from having to pay the \$50.00 charge for new work permits and the \$125.00 charge for landing applications.

We have estimated that the new fees have already cost foreign domestics \$1,125,000 for work permits only in the last year!

Our letter-writing campaign to Mr. Weiner protesting the processing fees is having a clear impact. His Ottawa office told us recently that the letters are arriving on his desk 'thick and heavy'.

On January 31 we will have the opportunity to appeal to Mr. Weiner personally to provide relief to foreign domestic workers from the heavy financial burden imposed by the fees.

We ask all our friends and supporters in the community to help us in this critical effort. If you have not already sent a copy of our open letter to the Minister, please do so NOW before the end of the month!

Many of you have already sent in a letter, and we thank you for doing your part. Give the attached letter to a friend or workmate. The more voices are raised in protest the greater our chances of convincing Mr. Weiner to act!

For more copies of the letter call INTERCEDE at 591-1625.

EXCITING WORKSHOP PLANNED

On March 27 - 29, 1987, INTERCEDE is sponsoring a training workshop on how to organize for change. The event will be attended by approximately twenty immigrant and visible-minority women from across Canada.

The workshop, which will be held at the Brownstone Hotel, in Toronto, is designed to teach basic skills in the areas of:

- * lobbying government
- * organizing a grass-roots constituency
- * developing a media strategy
- * working with community allies
- * leadership and organizational development
- * funding

In our networking with groups across Canada, INTERCEDE has often been asked to hold training sessions on how to do effective lobbying and grass-roots organizing.

We are very pleased to offer this first training workshop and we wish to thank Secretary of State David Crombie for providing the necessary funding.

For more information please contact Beth Udasco at (416) 591-7036.

MEET INTERCEDE'S NEW EXECUTIVE!

At the last meeting of the INTERCEDE Board of Directors, the new Executive Committee was elected by unanimous vote. Our new executive officers are:

- President: Clementina Martinez, a former domestic worker from the Philippines and a long-time activist for domestics' rights
- Vice-pres. Catherine Gilbert, articling law student and a

NEW EXECUTIVE...con't

dedicated community
activist

Lynette Munian, a do-
mestic worker from Gu-
yana who has been ac-
tive in INTERCEDE for
many years

Treasurer: Cornelia Soberano, law
student and former ex-
ecutive assistant to
Alderman June Rowlands

Secretary: Shirin Perston, member
of the YWCA Social Ac-
tion Committee and ac-
tive in the women's &
peace movements

Past-pres.: Eulene Boyce, former
domestic worker from
Barbados and a senior
member of INTERCEDE

Ex-officio: Judith Ramirez, INTER-
CEDE co-ordinator

WELCOME TO NEW DROP-IN

On January 7, 1987, INTERCEDE laun-
ched its new weekly drop-in for nan-
nies and caregivers. It will be held
every Wednesday morning, 9:30 - 11,
at the Cecil Community Centre.

This new program is designed to give
domestics who look after small chil-
dren a break. A cheerful lounge

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

First Class

area is provided along with a toy-
lending library where the children
can play.

We hope many of you will be able to
take advantage of this new drop-in.
There is no charge to register, and
tea or coffee will cost you only 25¢.

The Cecil Community Centre is located
one block from the College St. line
and the Spadina Avenue bus takes you
right into the subway station along
Bloor St.

For more information contact board
member and volunteer Patricia Yuen at
591-1625.

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: Cecil Community Centre
58 Cecil Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1N6

Time: Monday - Friday
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Staff: Columbia Diaz
Joan Ann Gravesande

Tel.: (416) 591-1625

Confidential counselling for domestic
workers on immigration, employment,
human rights and emergency social ser-
vices. Completely free of charge.

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DOWN WITH THE IMMIGRATION FEES !!!

NEXT MEET