

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the International Coalition to End Domestics' Exploitation

JANUARY 1988

QUEBEC DOMESTICS SCORE VICTORY!

In recent months the Household Workers Association of Montreal has been spearheading a public campaign to win more protection for domestic workers under Quebec's labour laws.

The Association has appealed to the government to meet the following demands for basic rights:

- * include all domestics under the Labour Standards Act; those who care for children are currently excluded
- * grant live-in domestics wage parity with live-out workers; the minimum wage for live-ins is only \$3.03hr as compared to \$4.55hr for live-outs
- * grant live-in domestics overtime pay after the standard 44 hours a week instead of the current 53 hours

The Household Workers Association is made up of domestic workers from many cultural and racial backgrounds. They work closely with their allies in the community. A petition is being circulated in support of the above demands and 6000 signatures have been collected already!

On January 15, 1988, Association representatives met with Quebec Minister of Labour, Pierre Paradis, and two senior policy advisors. They renewed their call for action made in an earlier meeting with the Minister last fall. They also presented a case history of a foreign domestic being paid only \$30-40 a week who was recently beaten by her employer.

Maria Ciampi, of the Association, told INTERCEDE that the meeting with

the Minister was very successful. He revealed that he was making the following proposals for change:

- * include domestics who do a combination of housework and childcare in the Labour Standards Act
- * grant live-in domestics the same minimum wage (\$4.55hr) as live-outs

The new amendments are expected to come into effect in the fall and they represent a significant victory for Quebec domestic workers.

The Association remains concerned that domestics who care mostly for children, the elderly or the handicapped will still be excluded from the Labour Standards Act. "We maintain that anyone whose main source of income comes from doing household work should be guaranteed certain rights, just like any other worker", said Ms. Ciampi. "Our battle is not over", she added.

INTERCEDE salutes the Household Workers Association of Montreal for this important breakthrough. We assure you of our steadfast support as you continue to fight for our sisters in Quebec!

ARE YOU GETTING OVERTIME PAY?

At INTERCEDE's last monthly meeting, an informal survey was held to see how many live-in domestics are receiving overtime pay. Conducted by Mary Eberts, of the Women's Legal Education & Action Fund (LEAF), the poll revealed that, of the 120 domestics present, a full one half were working more than 44 hours a week and not receiving any overtime pay. Only four were receiving time off in lieu of overtime pay.

This information will be used in the INTERCEDE/LEAF Charter challenge to

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COCO'S CALENDAR

Recent happenings. . .

- * on January 9 INTERCEDE attended the founding meeting of the Filipino Emergency Assistance Society of Toronto (FEAST)
- * on January 11 Judith Ramirez was interviewed by the New Internationalist for a special issue on domestics around the world
- * on January 26 INTERCEDE attended a consultation with Sylvia Gold, of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, on their new release Immigrant Women in Canada: a Policy Perspective

Coming up soon. . .

- * INTERCEDE's next monthly meeting is set for Sunday, February 7, 3-5pm, at the Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street
- * The SERVICE UNIT will be open on Saturday, February 6, 10am - 2pm. Please call for an appointment at 591-1625 or 591-7063

...AND CONGRATULATIONS!

- * to our new landed immigrants Norma Malicdem and Board member Meilita Carbungco
- * to Aida Manangan on the birth of her baby girl
- * Happy Birthday to Leonila Nieto and Judy Sarmiento
- * best wishes to Effie Henry and Board member Eugenia Yuen on their new jobs
- * our deepest sympathy to the families of Ligaya Langit and Juliet Libon
- * welcome back to Ioney Shirley who went home to Jamaica!

- Columbia Diaz

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

As of January 1, 1988, the deductions on your pay have changed slightly. The rates below apply to foreign domestics who are working 44 hours a week with no overtime. If you work more than 44 hours a week, these rates are too low: you should be receiving time and a half (\$6.83hr) for each hour you work in excess of 44 a week. Your totals for the week, month, etc. would, therefore, be higher.

Please use the rates below as a sample guide only. If you are a full-time live-in worker this is the very least you should be paid:

MONTHLY	\$867.53	Gross Pay*
	247.00	Room & Board
	90.10	Income Tax
	13.02	Canada Pension
	20.39	Unempl. Insur.

That leaves: 497.02 Net Pay

BI-WEEKLY	\$400.40	Gross Pay*
	114.00	Room & Board
	42.10	Income Tax
	6.01	Canada Pension
	9.41	Unempl. Insur.

That leaves: 228.88 Net Pay

WEEKLY	\$200.20	Gross Pay*
	57.00	Room & Board
	21.05	Income Tax
	3.00	Canada Pension
	4.70	Unempl. Insur.

That leaves: 114.45 Net Pay

* Remember Gross Pay is based on 44 hours a week with no overtime.

If you have questions or need assistance, call me at the INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT, 591-7063!

- Joan Ann Gravesande

JOAN ANNE GRAVESANDE IS BACK FROM MATERNITY LEAVE. MISSED YOU, WELCOME!!

OVERTIME...con't

end discrimination against domestic workers in Ontario's labour laws.

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PARTY EVER!

Close to three hundred people turned out for INTERCEDE's annual Christmas party on December 6, 1987. Excitement filled the air as people filed into the beautifully-decorated auditorium of the Cecil Community Centre. Dozens of presents were stacked on the main stage awaiting three 'lucky draws'.

Joyce Stanford, a long-time INTERCEDE member, opened the program with a special holiday greeting. The Chair of the festivities, Magda Aguada, then led the crowd in a spirited songfest.

A full afternoon of entertainment featured a Hawaiian dance by Olive Martine, a vocal solo by Benjie Panlilio, and a Polynesian dance by Lana Taylor.

Two Filipino folk dances, 'La Cucuracha' (with Gloria Bravo, Leony Bacumana, Patricia Balangue, Connie Ustan), and 'Tinikling' (with Marie Mario, Myrla Santos, Lily Tenebro, Myrna Castillo, Nolie Repollezza) were skillfully performed to enthusiastic applause.

Members of the audience were coaxed up to the stage to try the rather complicated dance steps of the 'Tinikling'. Among them were INTERCEDE Co-ordinator Judith Ramirez, Past President Eulene Boyce, and Board members Eugenia Yuen and Mary Mouammar. They tried their best to keep up with the rhythm, but their faltering efforts provoked a lot of amused laughter!

After the formal program everyone got out on the dance floor as raggae Christmas music filled the crowded hall. The spirit of friendship and

fun was on everyone's face as people frolicked together in spontaneous group dances. An elaborate buffet of home-made Filipino specialties and Caribbean holiday food fed the happy revellers.

As the festivities wound down, everyone agreed that it was INTERCEDE's 'best Christmas party ever'. The afternoon of merriment was a fitting way to end a year of challenges and hard work.

Special thanks to Michael O'Donnell, who baked the huge delicious Christmas cake, and to Columbia Diaz who co-ordinated the work of many volunteers.

A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF INTERCEDE'S MEMBERS & FRIENDS!

IT'S INCOME TAX TIME AGAIN!

It's that time of year again and all foreign domestic workers are required to file an income tax return. Your employer is required by law to give you a T-4 slip by February 28, 1988. You are responsible for filing your own return. No one can do it for you.

Rather than run our own Income Tax Clinic this year, INTERCEDE is providing a list of free clinics around the Metro Toronto area. Always telephone for an appointment and do so right away as demand is very heavy!

PARKDALE LEGAL SERVICES 531-2411
1239 Queen Street West
Toronto

SCADDING COURT COMMUNITY 363-5392
CENTRE
707 Dundas Street West
Toronto

BLOOR INFORMATION & 531-4613
LEGAL SERVICES
835 Bloor Street West
Toronto

CENTRE FOR SPANISH SPEAK- 533-8545
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582A College Street
Toronto

YORK COMMUNITY SERVICES 653-5400
1651 Keele Street
Toronto

NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION 924-2543
POST
265 Gerrard Street East
Toronto

FLEMINGDON NEIGHBORHOOD 424-2900
SERVICES
474 Don Mills Road #112
Don Mills

Call your local library (listed in the yellow pages) to see if it offers free income tax service. Many of them do, on a first-come first-served basis. So make your appointment today!

RIGHTS GUIDE GETTING AROUND!

INTERCEDE's new guide for Ontario domestics, KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!, covers many important topics:

- * minimum wage & overtime pay
- * statutory holidays & yearly vacations
- * unemployment insurance & paid maternity leave

A wide cross-section of organiza-

tions have ordered the booklet, including the Rexdale Women's Centre, the YWCA of Metro Toronto, Silayan Filipino Community Centre, Canadian-African Newcomer Aid Centre, COSTI-IIAS, Malton Community Council, and many more.

Order your copy today!

ORDER FORM

I am a domestic worker ()
I am a supporter or group ()
(please check one)

Please send me _____ copies of KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! at \$2.00 a copy for domestics and \$5.00 a copy for supporters/groups. Enclosed is my cheque or money order for \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Please cut out and mail to INTERCEDE, 58 Cecil Street, Toronto, Ont. M5T 1N6

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Free and confidential counselling to all domestics on immigration, employment, human rights, emergency social services, etc. Call us Monday - Friday 9:00am - 4:00pm at 591-1625/7063

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c/o INTERCEDE
58 Cecil Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1N6

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First Class

Next monthly meeting on February 7!