

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

January 1993



(INTERCEDE)

INTERCEDE welcomes affiliate group in B.C.

NEW VANCOUVER GROUP LAUNCHED TO FIGHT FOR FOREIGN DOMESTICS' RIGHTS

A group of 30 foreign domestic workers got together with 15 friends and supporters to launch the Committee for Domestic Workers' and Caregivers' Rights in Vancouver on December 13, 1992.

The Committee presented its plans for the year 1993 and sought the moral and material support of the movements whose own struggles are linked centrally to domestic workers' fight for equality: these are the anti-racist, immigrant and refugee rights, labour, and women's movements.

In a statement made on behalf of the interim steering group, Lorina Serafico said that the present struggle of foreign domestic workers is not confined to workers' rights, but "because of the colour of our skin and our national origin, we are denied certain rights and privileges" ... and "because we are mostly women performing work that has traditionally been unpaid women's work, we are denied the respect and material benefits that are given other workers doing work of comparable value.

The Committee intends to press the Federal government to grant permanent resident status to domestic/caregiver workers upon entry into Canada and to give them the option of choosing to live-in or out.

The Committee will lobby the British Columbia provincial government to include domestic workers in the overtime pay provision of the Employ-

ment Standards Act; work for Workers Compensation coverage; and ask to enshrine sectoral bargaining rights in the provincial labour code.

Meanwhile, organizing activity, to be extended to outlying areas such as Kelowna, Prince George, Nanaimo, etc. will include regular information and orientation meetings, recreational and social activities. Among the topics the Committee has lined up for discussion in support groups and workshops are women's health, sexual assault/harassment, racism and cultural awareness.

Prominent among the guests who encouraged the new group with their presence and gesture of solidarity were Ujjal Dosanjh, Member of the BC Legislative Assembly, and Jackie Larkin, member of the Executive of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). Other friends who came belonged to various labour, service and solidarity groups such as the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Women's Union, Legal Services Society, Health and Sciences Association of BC, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Public Service Alliance of Canada, Latin-American Women, Filipino-Canadians Organizing for Action (FORA) and West Coast Domestic Workers' Association.

The Committee is the first group to request formal affiliation with INTERCEDE, which is based in Metro Toronto but whose work is recognized throughout Canada.

The monthly meeting will be on Sunday, January 10, 1993 at 58 Cecil Street (just south of College corner Spadina), 3 - 6 p.m.

Meeting starts at 3 p.m. SHARP. Please come on time.

3-4 pm **WHAT DOES PAY EQUITY MEAN FOR DOMESTIC CAREGIVER WORKERS?**

Speaker: Katerina Makovec of the Pay Equity Advocacy & Legal Services

4:15-5:30 pm **QUESTION & ANSWER ABOUT IMMIGRATION SPONSORSHIP, LCP ETC.**

Speakers: Canada Immigration Officers/Counsellors

CLASP Legal Clinic open during the meeting.

2-3 pm **New Member Applications and Renewals.** Members with ID numbers 92-16 to 92-288 must renew or be dropped from membership list.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question: I have already completed two years working as a live-in caregiver under the LCP. When I fill the application form to become a permanent resident in Canada, can I already sponsor my children?

Answer: When you fill this application, you are asking to be approved for permanent resident status. There is often a delay of up to two years or more before your application is approved. After you have been approved to become a permanent resident, you can sponsor your spouse and dependent children (under 19 and unmarried, full time students, financially dependent on you). You may have to meet certain financial requirements to be able to sponsor all of your children at once.

Question: Can I sponsor my daughter who is 21 years old? She is attending university and totally dependent on my financial support at present.

Answer: You should be able to sponsor your children over 19, married or unmarried, if they are financially dependent on you and attending school full time. You may want to call INTERCEDE for specific information.

Question: I work from 7 am to 10 pm from Monday to Saturday, and I am paid \$1200 a month. Am I getting the correct pay?

Answer: First of all, your employer is obliged by law to issue a statement of earnings together with your paycheque to show how much you are being paid per hour and what deductions are being taken from your salary.

By law, you are supposed to get minimum wage

of \$6.35 per hour for 44 hours of work in a week; if you work beyond 44 hours in a week, you are to be paid time and a half or \$9.52 per hour. You seem to be working 12 hours per day or an extra 28 hours per week. These extra hours equal \$266.56 per week or \$1155.82 per month.

With your hours you should be earning a gross salary of \$1,210.73, plus 1,155.82 of overtime, equals \$2,365.82. Deduct your room and board (\$341.25), Income Tax (466.25), CPP (50.38) and UIC (70.97), and your total monthly net salary should be \$1,436.97.

The deductions from your salary for tax, CPP and UI must be sent by your employer to Revenue Canada together with his own contributions to CPP and UI. There are employers who make deductions but do not submit these contributions to the government. It is up to Revenue Canada to run after these employers. As far as the worker is concerned, these deductions have been made out of her salary. This is one more reason why every domestic worker must insist to get a statement of earnings with each paycheque.

If your employer refuses to obey the law and does not give you a statement of earnings, it's a

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 (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 JANUARY, 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

good idea to keep your own record of hours worked and the amount of pay you receive.

Question: I am receiving \$800 at the end of every month, am I getting the correct pay?

Answer: A domestic worker usually feels obliged to take an employer's offer of a net amount of \$800 per month without making it clear exactly how much she is being paid per hour. This is all right if the worker does not do any overtime (work beyond 44 hours a week) because \$800 net salary a month is \$158 more than the minimum wage net salary of \$641.70 per month.

The problem is that if she does overtime, she should get paid time and a half for every hour worked. So if she is earning minimum wage \$6.35 per hour, every extra hour worked will be \$9.52 per hour.

It is important that your employer follow the law and accompany all your wages with a Statement of Earnings that show the pay period, the wage per hour, the total number of hours worked, the gross salary earned for the period, all deducted amounts and the resulting net salary you receive. This Statement of Earnings should show how much you are being paid for all your overtime hours.

STAFF NOTES

Vacation time for...

Coco Tarape-Diaz! Have a restful holiday in the Philippines, Coco. Meanwhile we are happy to welcome her temporary replacement, Cora Montilla. Coco will be back at her desk on January 18, 1993.

FROM "GIFT" TO "THEFT" ...

Because of many false accusations of theft levelled at domestic workers, we are forced to warn that every time employers give them any gift (used or new clothes, specially pricey items such as jewelry or appliances), they must play safe by asking that the gift be accompanied with a signed letter indicating clearly what the item is, when it was given, and that it is being given as a gift!

Also, as a precaution, be sure to keep all receipts of your own valuables such as jewelry, cutlery, camera, etc.

Foreign domestic workers who are required to live-in as a condition of their stay in Canada are vulnerable to accusations of theft from vindictive or "forgetful" employers. The fear that strikes them when Police are called to question them is indescribable as they see their whole future

crumble right before their eyes.

We have had cases where employers had called police to enter the private room of the domestic worker, inspect her belongings and ask why clothing or jewelry belonging to the employer were in her possession when these had actually been "gifts" of used clothing or jewelry given previously. Police would go on to ask if jewelry and other valuables really belonged to the worker or how she paid for them.

Recently, we have had cases where workers, who filed claims for underpayment of wages and overtime, were asked by Ministry of Labour officials to deduct the amount of the gift items that employers say were given in lieu of wages. Not only is this improper, it's demeaning to the worker and strips her of any personal worth she had attached to the gift.

BRAVO...IT WAS FUN!

Thanks to the group of Caribbean domestic workers for their presentation of "We Dream of Revenge" during our December 6 Christmas party. It was an inspiring kaleidoscope of poetry, drama, calypso and reggae rhythms symbolizing the struggle of Caribbean domestic workers and their hope for a better life in Canada.

Also bravo to other program participants: the Reunion Hispana who sang nostalgic Spanish songs from their homeland; the duets and solos of the Chinese and Pilipinas; and the group caroling!

CONGRATULATIONS!...

to the Bowling high score champs who were awarded trophies during INTERCEDE's Christmas dance at the Primrose Hotel on December 19. Sherry Lacson, Jean Jovero, Tess Ventenilla, Elisa Bisenio and others deserve a round of applause for making sure the bowling activity was launched. They will now schedule the next round. Join up and be a champ!

APPEAL FOR DONATIONS

We request Members and Friends to send a New Year donation towards INTERCEDE's programs and activities, including the production of this newsletter.

Your contribution will demonstrate your commitment to INTERCEDE's mandate to improve the immigration status and employment condition of women who do caregiving and domestic work in Canada.

MARK YOUR INTERCEDE CALENDAR

MONTHLY MEETINGS: Planned topics and activities:

Sunday, February 7, 1993

Consumer Rights Against "Fast Loans,
Fast jobs, Special Offers, Discounts, etc."
Valentine Talent Show

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Sunday, March 7, 1993

Guarding against Sexual Assault and
Sexual Harassment
Portable Theatre Show

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Sunday, April 4, 1993

How to Manage Our Limited Income
and tax return filing
Easter Songfest

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INTERCEDE BOWLING SUNDAYS

Thornccliffe Park Bowlerama
Thornccliffe Park Drive
(Pape Subway, Thornccliffe Bus)
Call 324-8751 for dates

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IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council	345-9312
Employment Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	323-9986
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933
OHIP Toronto	482-1111
Scarborough	1-800-263-3814
Mississauga	275-2730
Ontario Human Rights Commission	326-9511
Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Workers' Compensation	927-9555
Revenue Canada (taxation)	869-1500

Toronto Rape Crisis Center (24 Hr line)	597-8808
Assaulted Help Line	863-0511

EMERGENCY HOUSING

Nellie's Hostel	461-1084
Evangeline's	762-9636

LEGAL SERVICES

Parkdale Community Legal Services	531-2411
CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic	736-5029
Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Serv.	363-0304
Metro Tor. Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic	971-9674
Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic	971-8832

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c/o INTERCEDE
489 College Street., Suite 402
Toronto, Ontario
M6G 1A5

FIRST CLASS

Sunday January 24, 1993

CARIBBEAN DOMESTIC WORKERS OUTING
Movie: "MALCOLM X"
12 NOON Assembly at
BLOOR AND YONGE SUBWAY STATION
Call Carol 324-8751 to sign up

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Sunday January 24, 1993

REUNION HISPANA
ORIENTACION EN EL PROGRAMA DE
"LIVE-IN CAREGIVER"

INTERCEDE invita a las trabajadoras hispanas a una reunion sobre sus derechos en el trabajo el dia de 24 Enero 1993 desde 10:00 am a 5:00 pm Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street (cerca de College y Spadina)

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Saturday, February 13, 1993

CHINESE DOMESTIC WORKERS' DINNER
7 pm

Call 324-8751 for info on place

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Sunday, February 21, 1993

ALL-DAY ORIENTATION FOR NEWCOMERS

Workplace rights and Immigration LCP program for domestic workers : 10 am - 4 pm

Call 324-8751 for place and registration

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Sunday, February 21, 1993

CARIBBEAN DOMESTIC WORKERS MEETING

Black History Month : 3 - 5 pm

Call Carol 324-8751 for place

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Sunday, March 14, 1992

SOUTH ASIAN DOMESTIC WORKERS LUNCH

12 noon - 3 pm

Place to be announced. Call 324-8751 to join.

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Saturday and Sunday, March 20 and 21, 1993

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Anti-Racist Facilitators Workshop

10 am - 4 pm

Place to be announced. Call 324-8751 to register.

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place : 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ont
Time : Monday - Friday, 9 am - 4 pm
Telephone : (416) 324-8751 Fax No. 324-8790

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