

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

July 1997



DOMESTIC WORKERS MUST GET "POINTS" TO ENTER AS IMMIGRANTS; INTERCEDE QUESTIONNAIRE MAY SHOW HOW

During the 3rd annual INTERCEDE conference of domestic workers in October last year, participants decided we needed to reinforce a campaign to allow domestic workers to enter Canada as immigrants.

A questionnaire that INTERCEDE is asking domestic/caregiver workers, past and present, to fill and send back is part of this effort.

With the help of a lawyer advocate and two law students, who wrote the questionnaire, INTERCEDE will present an argument for allowing domestic workers to gain enough immigration "points" to be able to enter Canada on an equal footing with other immigrant workers.

The objective is to make "domestic work" an independent immigrant category instead of a "special" category needing "special" programs such as the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) and its antecedent, the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) program. If domestic work were considered a real occupation, a real "work", then it should be allotted enough points - enough so domestic workers can get the passing 70 points they would need to enter as landed immigrants.

The fact that domestic work is not considered real work discriminates against women who choose to do paid work in the home as domestics or caregivers. It validates society's traditional view that women's work in the home is of no value.

INTERCEDE hopes that women will answer the questionnaire if they entered Canada as domestic workers or caregivers, under the FDM or LCP, whether they are still domestic workers or not, or whether they are still on temporary work permits or already citizens.

TIPS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NEWLY REUNITED FAMILIES

by Carol Salmon

Lack of communication and problem-solving skills! Did you know that these are at the root of most family conflicts?

A domestic workers' ability to resolve conflicts in her own family is severely hampered by the Live-in Caregiver Program. The LCP separates her from her family for up to 3 to 6 years. Because of that, her capacity to fulfill her role as a wife and/or mother is put to the test. And what happens after reunification is like the final exam.

Hopefully before they come, your family will have been prepared for life in Canada. They should know what kind of work you've been doing, the sacrifices you have made and the long hours you may still have to work when they arrive. You will have shared your dreams for the future, and values and discipline will have been reinforced in letters or by phone. A team effort philosophy needs to be established before they leave for Canada, if you are to weather tensions and conflicts successfully as a family.

Your ability to be patient may be one of the most important qualities to help you get through the mixed feelings of

**ALL DOMESTIC/CAREGIVER WORKERS, AND NON-IMMIGRANTS WITH WORK PERMITS
WELCOME TO INTERCEDE MEETINGS EVERY FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH**

(if a holiday, meeting is on second Sunday)

Sunday, July 6, 1997

3-5 pm at Cecil Community Centre
58 Cecil St., South of College/Spadina

Topic: COMBAT STRESS! LEARN TAI-CHI

Instructor: Mr. Mak, Cecil Community Centre

AFTERNOON POT LUCK - Let's celebrate summer!

If you are interested in legal advice, please call for appointment.

Membership renewals at 2:30 pm.

uncertainty/excitement and anxiety/relief experienced during the reunification process. One dictionary defines patience as "uncomplaining endurance under distress or annoyance, capable of being tolerant and tender while awaiting results or a particular outcome".

Imagine how quickly problems could be solved if people remained tender to one another when trying to resolve a conflict or crisis! And although the patience of your family members may need to be cultivated, they can learn by the example you set.

Of course, there could be less problems if your spouse gets a job right away or if your kids feel accepted by classmates, do well in school, are well behaved and therefore adjusting to their new life.

However, conflict due to failed expectations on the part of the sponsorer and her dependents may be a reality in many homes. Therefore talking, listening to each other and learning to resolve family problems is essential. Because conflict is inevitable, communication really is critical if a family is to survive.

To help you prevent or resolve potential conflicts we have compiled the following 10 "easy" tips:

1. Be respectful of each other. Do not behave in a superior way, throw insults or lower someone's self-esteem.
2. Avoid comparing family member(s) to each other or to others.
3. Be a good listener and treat all concerns seriously. Do not claim to see the other person's point of view and then treat it as unimportant.
4. Show empathy. Try to understand the other person's point of view and to feel the emotional force behind their perspective. Your body language and tone of voice will demonstrate how much you care.

VANCOUVER CDWCR
 Committee for Domestic Workers' &
 Caregivers' Rights
 (an INTERCEDE Affiliate)
 Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 874-0649

5. Do not blame anyone for the problem, even if it is justified. Blaming is counter-productive and will make someone feel defensive and close-minded to discussing the real problem or to suggesting solutions.

6. Focus on present behaviours, problem-solving and future planning. What has happened already cannot be changed.

7. Do not pretend to agree to a solution and then hold on to grudges and hard feelings. Dredging up the past and going over old mistakes during new conflicts is unfair.

8. Avoid applying the silent treatment, yelling or withholding your affection as a way of manipulating the outcome of the conflict.

9. Encourage discussion and cooperation by increasing the self-confidence of family members and by drawing attention to their positive contributions in the past.

10. Plan a strategic time and place to talk about conflicts as they arise. Be aware of the possible need for privacy. Enlist the help of the people involved to suggest ways to resolve the problem and what action(s) should be done.

Good Luck!

ARE YOU STRESSED? DON'T BE!

by Carol Salmon

Stress can result from any demand made on your mind or body, any life change good or bad: thinking too much, loneliness, low-self esteem, a bad boss, your relationship with family or friends, failed expectations, financial worries, adjusting to life with family members, a death in a family, etc.

If we let them, stressors will wreak havoc on our lives. We may exhibit moodiness, fatigue or insomnia, nervousness, clumsiness, neck or back pain, headaches, dizziness, stomach pain, loss or increase in appetite, etc.

These effects often make it harder to enjoy the other aspects of our life that are going well. Allowing resentment, anger or stress to build up on the inside could also

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manifest itself in a more serious medical or attitude problem!

We can choose to see stressful events as either a negative experience or as an opportunity. For example, when Terry Fox lost his leg to cancer, he did not let the fear of cancer destroy his spirit, he walked across Canada to raise money for cancer research! Our positive attitude may not inspire a country, but it may improve the quality of our lives and empower those around us to face their problems rather than avoid them.

Remember, worrying cannot change the outcome of any situation, it cannot lessen the pain or make problems go away any faster. All it can do is make you feel worse in an already bad situation.

When stressful events occur you want to ask yourself why is this happening and what can I do to lessen its effect. Sometimes we know what we can do to solve it but choose to either complain to anyone who will listen or to keep quiet and suffer in silence, rather than deal with the actual problem. Why let stress control your life? Work through it, then let it go.

Don't wait for someone else to appreciate who you are and what you're doing, pat yourself on the back! Don't wait for someone to apologize, tell them how you feel and that you would like to work things out or that you don't think things will work out! It's up to you. Don't blame others for your financial ruin, budget and stick to it! Work through whatever is bothering you, for your own peace of mind, because you cannot force other people to change or to do the right thing. Don't let people who are falling take you with them.

So while you are working on solving your problem, here are some suggestions from our members to help you relax:

Eat better, take a walk, talk with a friend, exercise, get your hair done, get a massage, light scented candles, listen to music, close your eyes and relax, watch TV, take a vacation, pray, read, sing, cook, go to the movies, sleep, go to church, get involved in outdoor sports or events, talk with your doctor, write in a diary, go shopping, write letters, knit, volunteer, help someone in need, etc.!

A MOTHER'S LAST REQUEST

by Coco Diaz

Analiza Fenoy, Annie to her friends, was full of hope she'd see her children soon when she called my office. It was one week before she died. Her voice sounded so happy informing me that a match for a bone marrow transplant had been found for her. Unfortunately, no such operation took place.

Back in April 1992, when Annie first contacted INTERCEDE, she expressed her dream that one day her two young children would re-unite with her here in Canada. She included them in her application for permanent residence that she finally filed in 1995.

An illness that inflicted Annie, prevented her from meeting medical requirements and delayed the processing of her landed status. She was uncertain when she could be re-united with her children so she planned a visit to the Philippines in May 1996. But before she could travel she became seriously ill. Instead, she requested her mother to come to Canada to be at her side. Her mother arrived on a visitors visa and took care of her during the last few months.

Every time, I talked with Annie, she spoke of her longing for her children and how she wanted them to have a good future. Annie was determined to maintain financial support for her children by making sure that her Insurance Policy was in force and her two sons her beneficiaries. Also, she prepared a will that spelled out decisions and arrangements in the event of her death.

Annie passed away on May 24, 1997. She was a loving and dedicated mother to her children. She showed optimism that she would overcome her illness and that she would gain permanent resident status in Canada and later would reunite with her children.

Alas, her wish came true too late when her remains were sent to the Philippines, her final resting place.

A GOOD REASON TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP.....

An INTERCEDE membership card has been an excellent help in tracking owners of lost purses and wallets. We have received calls from a number of honest people who found these lost items and were able to contact the owners through their INTERCEDE membership cards.

Emergency First Aid with Child CPR

At St. John Ambulance

(discounted rates for INTERCEDE members)

Sunday, July 27, 1997 10 am to 6 pm

Register early and pay \$50 to INTERCEDE

For more info call 483-4554

INTERCEDE MEETING FOR Non-Immigrants with work Permit: YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

Friday, July 11, 1997, 6 pm

RIGHTS OF WOMEN ON TEMPORARY WORK PERMIT Sunday, Aug. 24, 1997, 3 pm

Tell someone you know...

Call 483-4554 for info

**YOU MIGHT BE MISSING SOMETHING IF
YOU HAVEN'T JOINED YET...**

**INTERCEDE Caregivers Cooperative, Inc.
Giving our best service, Getting the best benefits
Call 483-4554**

The Intercede Caregivers Cooperative has recently been established to provide employment services, benefits and better work conditions for domestic workers. Join early, Join now.

**4TH INTERCEDE DOMESTIC WORKERS
CONFERENCE TO TACKLE APEC,
MIGRANT RIGHTS**

On November 15 and 16, 1997, INTERCEDE and its affiliate organizations will hold their fourth annual conference in Vancouver.

This meeting will follow up on past discussions about policy trends and analyses. It will report on campaigns and activities, including local ones, that were meant to counteract adverse policies affecting the lives of domestic and migrant workers, including immigration and labour policies.

These dates precede the non-government Women's Conference and People's Summit on APEC or Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. APEC aims to commit countries of the region to bring down trade barriers and allow the free flow of corporate capital and profits. But these agreements don't include protection for workers and are increasing the gap between rich and poor, within and between countries.

INTERCEDE's conference will update members about the impact of APEC on women and labour migration, as well as prepare for participants' interaction with the People's Summit on APEC. Julie Diesta, contact officer for the host Committee for Domestic Workers' and Caregivers' Rights (CDWCR) in Vancouver, informs that her organization is preparing the logistics to welcome up to 50 delegates including from Regina, Ottawa, Toronto and other cities.

INTERCEDE Toronto is counting on being able to send up to 10 representatives and hoping to receive funds to subsidize part of delegates' fare and accommodations.

We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Canadian Heritage; Multiculturalism Program; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); the City of Toronto Grants Review Board, Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) the Trillium Foundation, and Urban Rural Mission for their financial support.

For the first time, because of the APEC summit and the interest it has inspired, the conference will allow a limited number of observers as long as they are working as domestic workers or are migrant workers (non-immigrants with work permits) and as long as they register in advance.

Members who are interested to attend the Vancouver Conference, please call 483-4554 and register early, first come first served. You must be prepared to leave on November 14 and come back after Nov. 18th. You may need to pay part of your fare and expenses in Vancouver.

Q & A ON SPONSORING FAMILIES

- Q. I am applying to sponsor a relative from overseas. I know I will have to pay an application fee but can it be refunded if this application is unsuccessful?
- A. No you won't be able to refund the application fee. So you must make sure that your application is accurate, that you qualify as a sponsor and that your relative meets the requirements for sponsorship.
- Q. If I forgot to sign my sponsorship application or forgot to send the fee amount, what should I do?
- A. Your application kit will be returned to you if unsigned but the fee will not. It does not mean that if your application kit was returned because you forgot to sign that your application has been refused.
- Q. Can I refund a Right to Landing Fee?
- A. Yes when a sponsorship application is withdrawn or the sponsored person is denied and there is no appeal or when such appeal is also denied.

**COME AND LEARN
SHIATSU SELF-CARE
SATURDAY, JULY 19, 1997
CALL FOR TIME AND PLACE
483-4554**

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 205,
Toronto, Ont. M4P 1K5
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Tel: (416) 483-4554 Fax: (416) 483-9781

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