

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the International Coalition to End Domestics' Exploitation

JUNE 1984

OPEN HOUSE A BIG SUCCESS!

It was standing room only on Sunday, May 6, at the INTERCEDE OPEN HOUSE which officially launched the new SERVICE UNIT.

Domestic workers turned out in force to greet members of the community which included: June Rowlands, Executive Alderman; Audrey Swail, Ontario Women's Directorate; Monica Armour, Urban Alliance on Race Relations; Carmencita Hernandez; Kababayan Community Centre; and Rob Adamson; Committee for the Just Treatment of Illegal Immigrants.

The program began with INTERCEDE Co-ordinator Judith Ramirez welcoming the guests and thanking them for their support in the long months of lobbying. Austin Cook brought a message of congratulations from Immigration Minister John Roberts. Mr. Cook stressed the Minister's respect and admiration for INTERCEDE and urged us to "keep up your invaluable work".

Dan Heap, Member of Parliament (Spadina), assured us of his continued support as did Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, Ontario Status of Women Council; Leona Gislason, YWCA; and Wilson Head, past president of the National Black Coalition of Canada. Two domestic workers, recently landed, Linda Lising and Avril Higginson, spoke of the help which they and many others have received from INTERCEDE.

The highlight of the program was a special presentation to Father Massi Lombardi, of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, of the framed first copy of DOMESTICS CROSS CULTURAL NEWS. Father Lombardi is a strong supporter of INTERCEDE and he helped arrange a one-year PLURA grant to launch our newsletter.

Among our special invited guests were Walter Bye, Co-ordinator of the Domestics

Program at the Canada Immigration Centre, 130 Bloor Street West, Toronto; and Janina Lebon of the Canada Immigration Centre in Hamilton, Ontario.

Also sending greetings and beautiful flowers was the office of former Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy, who introduced the landed status policy in 1981 and who gave initial approval to the SERVICE UNIT proposal.

Amid brightly colored balloons, everyone lined up to sample Filipino and West Indian specialties from the hearty buffet: Chinese-style noodles, egg rolls, patties, salads of all types, rice pudding, cakes, all beautifully arranged and in great abundance!

INTERCEDE thanks all of you from the community who came out on May 6 to share our joy and sense of accomplishment.

PRECILLA VITTO GETS EXTENSION!

Precilla Vitto, a domestic worker from the Philippines was turned down for landing in June 1983. She was ordered to leave Canada on or before May 13, 1984.

Ms. Vitto contacted the SERVICE UNIT on March 15, 1984. Following an in-depth interview, we made a strong appeal to the local immigration office for a re-assessment under the domestics program.

On May 4, 1984, Ms. Vitto went to immigration with her counsellor, Columbia Tarape, to hear their decision. She was granted a one-year extension to complete her upgrading before undergoing a further assessment. Congratulations, Precilla Vitto!

If you are turned down for landing contact the INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT immediately at (416) 929-3240, or come to our office at 348 College Street (second floor).

COCO'S CALENDAR

Recent happenings...

- * on May 13 Carmencita Hernandez, of our Community Advisory Committee, spoke on a panel on organizing immigrant domestics, at the WORKERS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE at O.I.S.E.
- * on May 19 Judith Ramirez was the special speaker at the ANNUAL INDUCTION BALL of the PHILIPPINE-CANADIAN LADIES CIRCLE
- * On May 20 I spoke on a panel on domestic workers rights at a forum sponsored by KABABAYAN COMMUNITY CENTRE
- * on May 30 Judith Ramirez spoke on a panel "Should there be a General Amnesty for Illegal Immigrants?" sponsored by the URBAN ALLIANCE ON RACE RELATIONS

Coming up...

- * come celebrate with us the PHILIPPINE NATIONAL DAY PICNIC, on Saturday, June 9, at Seton Park (Thornccliffe Park), 10 am - 6 pm. Talent show, food, games, contests, and cultural presentation!
- * get your dancing shoes on for INTERCEDE's SWING INTO SUMMER DANCE, on Saturday, June 30, at Cecil Community Centre. Tickets: \$5 (\$4 members)
- * INTERCEDE SUMMER SPEAKERS SERIES
 - July 8 "Violence Against Women"
by Debbie Parent
Toronto Rape Crisis Centre
 - August 12 "Achieving Your Goals"
by Jean Augustine
Principal, St. Felix School
(ex domestic worker)

The speakers will be part of our monthly Sunday meetings, 2 - 5 pm, 58 Cecil St.

Newsletter Committee:

Desiree Hipplewith, Lynette Munia, Judith Ramirez, Pamela Skeete, Columbia Tarape, Sonia Thomas, Daphne Tucker

...AND CONGRATULATIONS!

- * to our new landed immigrants: BARBARA GONZALVES, RUTH PHILLIPPE, NAOMI WRAY
- * to Service Unit Counsellor DESIREE HIPPLEWITH who had a birthday on May 1... many happy returns!
- * to ANAPOLA LOPEZ, sister of member TERESA LOPEZ, who just arrived from Portugal to work as a domestic...a warm welcome!
- * to our co-ordinator JUDITH RAMIREZ who was just appointed by Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton to a TASK FORCE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
- * to member EFFIE HENRY who is moving to Vancouver with her employer...we'll really miss you, Effie!
- * our condolences to member VELMA RILEY whose mother died suddenly in Jamaica... Velma has flown home for the funeral with our deepest sympathy to the family

Tune in next month for more!

- Columbia Tarape

JOIN INTERCEDE

\$5 Year

SUPPORT THE GROUP THAT SUPPORTS YOU!

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Under Ontario law, after three month's employment, domestic workers are entitled to seven paid statutory holidays per year. They are: NEW YEAR'S DAY, GOOD FRIDAY, VICTORIA DAY, DOMINION DAY, LABOUR DAY, THANKSGIVING DAY, and CHRISTMAS DAY. By mutual agreement, the holiday may be substituted for another working day, but no later than the employee's next annual vacation. If the holiday falls on a non-working day or in a vacation period, the employer must designate a working day as the holiday or pay the

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS (con't)

employee an additional day's pay during the pay period in which the holiday falls.

You have the legal right to make a complaint if your employer is not complying with the regulations. Telephone:

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS BRANCH (416) 965-5251
INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT (416) 929-3240

- Cecilia Grave

WEDDING BELLS

Columbia Tarape is getting married June 16

BEST WISHES!!

95% ACCEPTANCE UNDER NEW POLICY

Immigration Minister John Roberts has just released to INTERCEDE the statistics we requested for the first two years of the landed status program.

The good news is that, in cases where final decisions have been made, a full 95% have been accepted for landing!

From November 26, 1981, to October 31, 1983, 6,471 foreign domestics requested landing in Canada. Of these, 3,499 have been accepted, 184 have been rejected, and 2,788 are still going through the system. The last figure means that 43% of domestics seeking landing are still awaiting decisions.

Although the rejection rate is only 5% thus far, the bad news is that 90% of those rejected are domestics from the Third World.

Final decisions have been made for a total of 2046 cases from the three major racial groups - West Indian (646), Asian (537), and European (843) - seeking landing from within Canada. Of these, 71 have been rejected; 37 West Indians, 27 Asians and 7 Europeans.

In spite of the low overall rejection rate

thus far, it is significant that the average number of dependents for Caribbean domestics accepted is 1, while the average number of dependents for those rejected is 3.

INTERCEDE hopes that the current acceptance rate of 95% continues into the third year of the landed status program. We remain concerned about the disproportionate number of visible-minority women being rejected, especially sole-support mothers from the Caribbean.

PHOTOGRAPHING DOMESTIC WORKERS

Pamela Harris, well-known free-lance photographer, has been commissioned by the National Film Board to do a photo documentary on immigrant women working as domestics.

Pamela Harris has attended several INTERCEDE meetings to discuss her project with us. She wants the photographs she takes to inform those who see them about the difficult and important work immigrant women do in Canadian society. "I think the project has to do with the dignity and importance of the work", she says.

Pamela stresses that she needs the consent of both the employer and the employee. She wants to photograph domestics who come from many different countries and who work in a variety of settings: caring for children, housekeeping, cooking, etc. She also wants to include all immigration situations: women on work permits, landed immigrants, illegals, etc.

To express her appreciation for those who work with her on this project, Pamela will be giving back a selection of free photos.

Pamela hopes to complete her project by the end of the summer. The best images will become part of an exhibition and, later, be made into a book.

If you are interested in participating, Pamela can be reached at (416) 923-2271. There is no obligation to be photographed if you call to discuss the project.

- Lynette Munian

UPDATE ON PROVINCIAL DRIVE

On May 10, 1984, the TORONTO STAR published a major article on INTERCEDE's work. Titled "Group Fights for a Fair Deal for Domestic", it was based on interviews with Judith Ramirez and Daphne Tucker and focused on our current efforts to change provincial labour laws. It outlined our major recommendations for changes in the Employment Standards Act, the Workers Compensation Act and the Labour Relations Act.

The Star article led to interviews on CBC radio's FOR YOUR INFORMATION, in Toronto, and RADIO NOON TWO, in Windsor, Ontario. The publicity sparked many calls from the public - most of them supportive ! - and from domestic workers in need of help.

More letters have been sent to Ontario Labour Minister Russell Ramsay supporting INTERCEDE's call for immediate action.

Despite deplorable working conditions, the government continues to deny adequate protection in labour laws for the most exploited group of workers in Ontario.

- Marion Bryden, M.P.P.
(Beaches-Woodbine)
New Democratic Party

Is it not time to seriously look into the recommendations of INTERCEDE that there be changes made now...with respect to providing basic economic fairness for domestic workers in Ontario?

-(Rev) Robert G. Lindsey
Division of Home Missions
United Church of Canada

SERVICE UNIT HOURS

MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Evenings and week-ends: leave a message on our machine and we will return your call promptly! Telephone (416) 929-3240

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

If you are a domestic worker on our mailing list and have been receiving our flyers announcing the monthly meetings, please note that they will no longer be mailed out!

This newsletter will now be your only notification of INTERCEDE activities. The next two monthly meetings are set for:

Sunday, July 8 and August 12

Mark these dates in your calendar!

INTERCEDE DANCE

S W I N G I N T O S U M M E R

...DJ...CASH BAR...FREE BUFFET...PRIZES

SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 8 PM - 1 AM AT
CECIL COMMUNITY CENTRE, 58 CECIL STREET

\$5 (\$4 for members)

A Special Thank You to Every INTERCEDE Member Who Brought Food to the Open House. You Were Great! - Coco Tarape

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS
c/o INTERCEDE
348 College Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1S4

Place
Stamp
Here

FIRST CLASS