

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

June 1992



(INTERCEDE)

HIGHER EDUCATED "CAREGIVERS" FROM POOR COUNTRIES CAN COME TO CANADA AS DOMESTICS

A new program called "Live-In Caregiver Program" (LCP) that replaces the previous Foreign Domestic Workers program (FDM) will admit only higher educated and trained women from developing countries such as the Philippines and the Caribbean to enter Canada to do domestic work.

From April 27, women intending to do domestic work will be admitted on the basis of their training and education related to care for children, for seniors, and the disabled. A Grade 12 education plus training in such courses as early childhood education, geriatric care, or pediatric nursing will qualify someone to enter the "Live-In Caregiver Program".

The new program announced by Immigration Minister Bernard Valcourt enables Canadian employers to obtain higher qualified labour for less pay. But it certainly does not reflect INTERCEDE's principal concerns: lessening the abuses against live-in domestic workers by eliminating the temporary work permit system and removing the mandatory live-in requirement. This combination is the source of the most common abuses against domestic workers such as excessively long

hours of work and uncompensated overtime.

Although it is household work including cooking, vacuuming, cleaning toilets, dishwashing, laundry etc. which now constitute the main bulk of the "Live-in Caregiver's" responsibilities, it will be her Grade 12 education and training that will qualify her for the new program. Even years of paid experience taking care of children and doing housework will not qualify someone for admission in the new program.

Instead of improving the life and work situation of foreign domestic workers, the new requirements will raise more barriers for women of colour escaping poverty from their countries. The new admission criteria will keep out poorer women with no access to the education and training required. It will keep out women who are by occupation and experience domestic workers and who take care of children and other dependents.

In a letter to Minister Bernard Valcourt of Immigration, INTERCEDE's president, Pura Velasco said that the new program renders "invisible" domestic work which is women's work, and that it is sending "the message that

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Come to INTERCEDE's Monthly Meeting on Sunday, June 7, 1992 from 3 - 5 pm at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street (South of College, off Spadina)

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>2 - 3 pm</i> | <i>New Member applications and renewals</i> |
| <i>3 - 4 pm</i> | <i>WHAT TO KNOW FOR CAREERS IN SENIOR CARE Nadira Somwaru, Metro Home for the Aged</i> |
| <i>4 - 5 pm</i> | <i>WHAT TO KNOW FOR CAREERS IN CHILD CARE Evelyn Napier, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care</i> |

Members in 1991 with I.D.# 1689 to 1794 must renew or be dropped from membership list.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Sexual Harassment is when something that is said or done to you makes you feel uncomfortable. It is not something you like. It is different from respectful flirtation or a compliment. For example, an employer who comes into your room unannounced or uninvited while you are changing your clothes, when you have gone to bed or who make gestures of a sexual nature to you, such as comments about your body or suggestions about sexual acts he could perform on you or you on him.

In most instances, sexual harassment takes place in relationships that we have with someone in "authority", with someone we may depend on for our salary, advice, legal help, grades etc. For example, an employer, a church leader or clergyman, a counsellor, an immigration officer or consultant, a teacher, or even a friend has the potential to exert power and control over you and to exploit their role in your lives while you are in a vulnerable state.

In many cases, for Black, Filipino, Chinese, Latina and south Asian women, racial harassment is also mixed in with the sexual harassment. For example, a Black employee or Latina may be told that "Black women are always ready for sex".

Many of us get very confused when it comes to sexual harassment, and we are not able to act. Some of us blame ourselves for this happening. It is very important therefore, that we recognize our rights as women, as human beings, to have control over our lives and bodies, and to know that we have a right to decide who we want to develop sexual relationships with, without being coerced or exploited in the process.

The specific conditions of domestic work requiring you to live-in and to be temporary residents until you get landed status also make you as women vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Many do not want to jeopardize their chances of getting landed status and will "endure" this type of situation, not recognizing how unhealthy it is. It creates job-related stress that affects us emotionally, mentally and physically. Some women experience lack of sleep out of fear which can lead to fatigue and an inability to do their jobs.

It is important that if you are being sexually harassed on the job, that you tell someone. Talk about it with a trusted friend or counsellor and seek assistance. For those who can, you should document it, write it down, when it happened and what took place. INTERCEDE is a link to services, they can guide you to counsellors if need be or assist you in handling the situation.

It is illegal for immigration to deport you because you are being sexually harassed on the job. To defend yourself however, you may need the support of a counsellor in your dealings with immigration.

Thank you to Joan Grant-Cummings of Womens Health in Womens Hands. This has been a summary of the information she provided us with regarding her presentation on sexual harassment at INTERCEDE's May 3rd meeting.

We wish to thank the Employment and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Women's Program); 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 JUNE, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION :

(only until December 1992)

NEW SUBSCRIPTION :

CHANGE OF ADDRESS :

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

Please send DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS to :

MEMBER ID NUMBER : _____ NAME : _____

ADDRESS : _____

CITY/PROVINCE : _____

POSTAL CODE : _____ TELEPHONE : _____

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

| | | | |
|---------------------------|------|-----------------------|---------|
| INTERCEDE Members : | FREE | Non-member Domestic : | \$5.00 |
| Non-Profit Organizations: | FREE | Others | \$20.00 |

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only higher-educated women from poor countries can come to Canada to take care of children and do housework". She asked for a reconsideration of the changes and other discriminatory aspects of the new program as a "step to ending the systemic barriers that have historically characterized Canada's immigration policies".

On a different front, the Honourable Warren Allmand, Liberal Immigration Critic expressed his frustration with the Minister, at the House of Commons Debates on April 28, for proceeding with the new changes before the Committee on Immigration reported its recommendations. "Not one witness before the committee supported the government's proposals" nor were they consulted as alleged by the Minister, stated Allmand. His request that the new changes be put on hold for a few weeks so the committee could submit their report was rejected by the Minister.

**ORIENTATION MEETING FOR
DOMESTIC WORKERS
ESPECIALLY NEWCOMERS**

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 1992

10 am - 4 pm

**George Brown College, Rm. 541
200 King Street East (King Subway)**

Free Lunch

**Participants will receive Orientation Kits and
Certificates of Participation**

Register by calling 324-8751

QUESTION AND ANSWER

IMMIGRATION

I filed my application for Permanent Residence on January 1992. I received my Open Employment Authorization in March but it still has that I am not allowed to work other than with my employer and that I am not allowed to go to school. I would like to move out from my employer. Will it affect my permanent resident application if I move out?

Your Open Permit allows you to be employed outside domestic work for different employers if you so choose. You still need to obtain a Student Authorization if you intend to take a credit course. Moving out from your employer will not affect your permanent resident application as you have been informally approved upon receipt of your Open Permit.

Do I still need to complete my upgrading in order to complete the assessment criteria for Permanent Residence?

No. As of April 27, 1992 your Record of Employment will be the only criteria that Immigration will use to assess your application. However, it is important for personal advancement, particularly if you choose to work outside of domestic work, to do upgrading.

My Sister in Singapore will be sponsored by my elderly employer to be my replacement as her live-in housekeeper and companion. She was a School Nurse before in the Philippines and has been working in Singapore as a domestic worker for 5 years. Will my sister be qualified to come under the Live-In Caregiver Program?

Under the requirements of the Live-In Caregiver Program your sister has met the criteria of the Grade 12 education but she lacks the formal training to be a companion for an elderly person despite her 5 years experience as a domestic.

I will file my application for Permanent Residence in July. My husband is also under the Live-in Caregiver program and will be completing his two years in January 1993. Can I include his application for permanent residence together with mine?

Since your husband is also under the Live-in Caregiver Program, he could try to submit his application for permanent residence with yours. However, it would be good if he has met at least some of the old requirements such as skills upgrading, integration into the community, successful record of employment and references.

FAMILY SPONSORSHIP

I am approved of my Permanent Residence as of January 1992 and am presently working as an assistant medical technician with an annual gross income of \$25,000. I would like to sponsor my husband and 5 children ages 18, 16, 14, 10 and 8. Will I be qualified with my gross earnings and how much will I pay for the processing of my sponsorship?

There is no minimum of money needed to sponsor your husband and children who are below 19 years and are dependent. You will be required to pay \$350 for your husband and 1 dependent, and \$50 each for your other 4 children.

Can I still include my 21 year old daughter in my sponsorship? She is married and presently attending University.

Yes, under the new regulations effective March 27, 1992 you can include your daughter if you can prove that she was primarily dependent on you financially and was studying full-time at university from age 19 on or from the time she got married.

I do not intend to include my husband in my sponsorship. Will I be approved if I only include my two children who are below 19?

Yes, this should not be a problem. You will be required to pay \$50 for each child.

I arrived on January 1992 under the Live-In Caregiver Program and this June I will be getting married to a Canadian citizen. My future husband would like to sponsor me to become a Permanent Resident. Do I need to be out of the country to be sponsored?

No, you do not need to be out of Canada to be sponsored by your spouse. It is important for

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Canada Immigration Centre | 973-4444 |
| Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council | 971-5893 |
| Employment Standards Enforcement | 328-7180 |
| Immigrant Women's Health Centre | 367-1388 |
| Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre | 656-8933 |
| OHIP Toronto | 482-1111 |
| Scarborough | 1-800-263-3814 |
| Mississauga | 275-2730 |
| Ontario Human Rights Commission | 328-9511 |
| Unemployment Insurance | 730-1211 |
| Workers' Compensation | 927-9555 |
| Revenue Canada (taxation) | 889-1500 |
| Toronto Rape Crisis Center (24 Hr line) | 597-8808 |
| Assaulted Help Line | 863-0511 |

EMERGENCY HOUSING

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Nellie's Hostel | 481-1084 |
| Evangeline's | 782-9636 |

LEGAL SERVICES

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|---|----------|
| Parkdale Community Legal Services | 531-2411 |
| CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic | 738-5029 |
| Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Serv. | 363-0304 |
| Metro Tor. Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic | 971-9674 |
| Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic | 971-8832 |

ALL DAY NIAGARA TRIP

Sunday, July 12, 1992

Assembly: 9:30 at Cecil St. Corner Spadina

Join our one-day excursion to Niagara Falls passing through Niagara-on-the-Lake!
All Members Welcome!

Seats reserved for Members who have paid \$10
Register and pay at Sunday Meeting, June 7
or for more information call 324-8751

you to renew your Employment Authorization if you continue domestic work or to apply for a Visitor's Visa before your current papers expire so you will have status while your sponsorship is being processed.

Thank you to Yousuf Alam of Clasp Legal Clinic who spoke on Sponsorship at the May Meeting.

STAFF NOTES

* Wishing a Happy Spring Holiday to Fely Villasin, INTERCEDE Coordinator

CARIBBEAN DOMESTIC WORKERS MEETING

Sunday, June 21, 1992

3 - 5 p.m. at INTERCEDE
489 College St., Room 402
(west of Bathurst on College)
Register by calling 324-8751

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place : 48
Time : M
Telephone : (41)

INTERCEDE STAFF

Coordinator/Editor :
Counselors :

Intake Worker :

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