

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers, and Newcomers

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554

~~June~~
JULY 2000



5074 CONTACTS MADE TO INTERCEDE SERVICES

From April 1999 to March 2000, a total of 5074 contacts were made to INTERCEDE for services related to immigration, employment and working conditions, housing, health, job training, and other social services.

Of this number, 3649 were nannies, domestic workers, live-in or live-out caregivers and 471 newcomers who were their sponsored dependents and spouses. While most were from the Philippines, a smaller number were from the Caribbean, Latin America, other Asian countries, the UK and Eastern Europe.

At INTERCEDE, services are geared to assist caregivers and other newcomers during their first few years of settling in a new country. These services are in the form of giving information and orientation, outreach to new caregivers or their families, referrals to relevant agencies and government offices, counselling and problem solving, organizing recreational, educational and social events, and advocacy on particular issues affecting immigrants, migrant workers and women.

Without these INTERCEDE services, thousands of inquiries, calls for assistance, need for individual advocacy or liaison or referrals – would not be met; this would leave thousands of women, caregivers and their families, new immigrants and newcomers ignorant, anxious, stressed out and complicating their integration and adaptation in their new country.

The highest number of our interventions focused on immigration-and employment-related problems, from the most threatening such as deportations, terminal illness or physical assault to the more routine such as

applying for permanent residence and calculating correct wages.

Apart from client services, we also held regular monthly meetings and other group sessions to tackle topics of importance that would inform members and clients about upgrading their child care skills, financial management, tax preparation, labour laws and employment standards, violence against women, family sponsorship, housing and tenant rights, and immigration requirements in the LCP.

Learning to deal with their stressful work environment included sessions in Yoga exercises, self-massage and self-care, and women's health information meetings. In this way, women who otherwise would not have a chance were able to learn various ways of relaxing even under difficult and isolating work condition.

There were also free job search workshops with George Brown College which assisted newcomers in actively finding employment. Throughout the year we held six series of 4-weekend workshops where participants learned how to do effective job hunting, how to write attractive resumes, how to conduct successful interviews, and how to get the jobs they really want – things they would not have learned otherwise.

A key challenge to the organization this year was the Immigration review which has now led to proposed amendments in Canada's Immigration Act. The Board of Directors and members of INTERCEDE organized a fifth annual national domestic workers' conference to tackle the subject. We needed to coordinate the most effective

All Domestic/Caregiver Workers, All Newcomers and Women on Temporary Work Permit

WELCOME TO

INTERCEDE MEETING EVERY FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

(if a holiday, meeting is on second Sunday)

Sunday, June 4, 2000

3-5 p.m. at Cecil Community Center

58 Cecil Street, South of College/Spadina

Topic: SEX AND SEXUALITY

Renew your membership or Apply for New Membership

actions that would persuade the government to scrap the Live-in Caregiver Program in favour of accepting caregivers and domestic workers as full-fledged immigrants to Canada. One such action is to conduct a participatory action research on the abuse and violence women experience under the LCP, including the impact of forced separation of their families.

Worth noting was INTERCEDE's participation in the review of Canada's Human Rights Act. On the international level of advocacy for migrant rights, INTERCEDE participated as part of Canada's non-government delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women where preparations were made for the Special General Assembly this June in view of further implementing the Platform for Action, a list of commitments to establish women's equality all over the world, agreed upon at the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women.

ILLEGAL RECRUITERS SCAM UP TO \$7000 FROM MIGRANTS TO ISRAEL

There are now nearly 30,000 Filipino migrants working in Israel, most of whom are women working as caregivers to the elderly and chronically ill.

While these workers experience the same long list of exploitation and oppression, not just from employers but also their own government and the State of Israel, they are also victims of illegal recruiters who scam P82,000 to P180,000 (Philippine pesos) to process their papers and escort them through the airport.

Kakammpi, a Philippine-based migrant organization, and Kav La Oved, an Israeli non-government organization, recently looked into the illegal recruitment system and have expressed their concern that these criminals continue their nefarious business because there is no deterrent. Rarely are they prosecuted, fined or punished and neither government has indicated any political will to do anything at any time soon.

INTERCEDE has experienced the same frustration with the lack of action by Canadian authorities in regard to illegal recruiters based in Toronto and other cities. Filipina Domestic International or FDI, for example, operating from post office box addresses on Carlton St. has been plying its pyramidal schemes - by mail - to Filipina migrants from Singapore to the Middle East, charging money for empty promises and worthless scraps of paper, with no sign of being caught.

Unfortunately, there is collusion with these Illegal recruiters by migrant workers who don't want to squeal on them or are afraid to do so.

INTERCEDE is eager to hear from anyone who might be willing to give information and help us run after recruiters

who charge exorbitant rates or who victimize migrant workers in other ways.

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

INTERCEDE Caregivers Co-operative, Inc.

Your employment agency
Giving our best service, Getting the
best benefits

The INTERCEDE Caregivers Cooperative has been established to provide employment services, benefits and better work conditions for domestic/caregiver workers.

Call 486-0548

Emergency First Aid with CPR - Infant Child

Here's an opportunity to upgrade your skills in childcare. INTERCEDE is offering a course in Emergency First Aid with CPR - Infant Child conducted through St. John Ambulance. It's a one-day comprehensive training to enable participants to expertly tackle emergency situations involving children.

Sunday, July 30, 2000 10 am to 6 pm

St. John Ambulance

46 Wellesley Street East

Please register by sending a cheque of \$51.00 payable to St. John Ambulance and mail to INTERCEDE at:

234 Eglinton Avenue East, S-205

Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5

Tel. (416) 483-4554 ext 21 or 22

Question and Answer:

Q. I have worked for two years with the same employer and was terminated without notice when I declined to go with them to Florida in October 1999. I was entitled to receive termination and vacation/holiday pay in which my employer agreed to pay as soon as they return to Canada. I trusted them and took them at their word. To my disappointment my previous employer denied everything about my claim and said that I was never terminated but it was me who quit my job. They also said that there was no holiday or vacation pay owing because they had generously given me old winter clothes and a New VCR for my birthday. I want to file an official complaint and claim with the Ministry of Labour and I need your assistance.

A. When your former employer refused to pay termination and vacation pay they were in violation of the Employment Standard Act under the Ministry of Labour. There is no way that gifts – be it old or new can offset an employer's obligation to pay. Since this incident occurred over six months ago your claim is not eligible for consideration. The current Employment Standard Act specifies that claims must be filed within six months.

Q. I responded to an ad for free gifts by filling out an entry form and becoming a member of a magazine club. In order to qualify for the special offer, I needed to subscribe and provide them with my credit card number. After receiving couple of copies, I found out that it was not reasonably priced so I cancelled my subscription. To my surprised the company refused to accept my cancellation and continue to bill my credit card account. What should I do to stop them from billing me?

A. It is very difficult to refuse an eye catching advertisements especially if it involves lots of free gifts. It is important to read the fine prints of these ads that state the terms and conditions. You should contact your credit card company and provide a copy of your request for cancellation.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES

As women and caregivers, it seems to come as second nature to many of us to care for others but, what about self-care? This issue was the focus of last month's members meeting with a presentation by representatives of the Anne Johnston Health Station. Here are some practical tips on how to take care of yourselves while taking care of others:

- Awareness of community health centres especially those that specialize in women's health.
- Knowledge about how to access subsidized or free health services including dental and eye glass.
- Knowledge about birth control methods and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

Contact INTERCEDE for referral and for the location of a community health centre near you.

FREE CLASSES every Sunday

at George Brown College, 200 King Street East,
Room 544-E

JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Learn how to:

- job search effectively
- develop network and linkages in the community for jobs
- use computer job search
- develop self esteem and confidence building
- write an effective resume
- conduct a successful interview

*A certificate of completion will be issued by
George Brown College*

**Classes start from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every Sunday
on July 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2000**

Call now to register, space is limited

INTERCEDE Tel. No. (416) 483-4554 ext 25 or 22

**BRIDGING COURSE FOR
WOMEN CONTINUING
EDUCATION AT ATKINSON
COLLEGE, YORK UNIVERSITY**

by: Genie Policarpio, INTERCEDE member

Have you given some thought of going back to school? For a start, why not try it by enrolling in Bridging Course for Women? This is a non-credit course especially designed for women who are considering of getting a university degree. This course is subsidized by York University and will prepare you to get adapted and adjusted again to the life of a student. You will be eligible to enrol at Atkinson College, York University, with a minimum grade of B. I have recently completed the course and will be attending York this Fall.

**JOIN INTERCEDE CAREGIVER'S
COOPERATIVE**

on Saturday, July 1, 2000

for a day of sightseeing tour to Niagara Lake,
Cherry picking and Casino Niagara for only
\$25.00 dollars.

Call Annie (416) 486-0548 x 25 for details.

ATTENTION! INTERCEDE Members

**FREE USE OF COMPUTER
AVAILABLE!**

Need to practice your computer skills
or write your resume?

Call 483-4554 to schedule an appointment

VANCOUVER CDWCR

Committee for Domestic Workers'

& Caregivers' Rights

(an INTERCEDE Affiliate)

Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 874-0649

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION NEW SUBSCRIPTION CHANGE OF ADDRESS

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite 205, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5

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:	\$20.00	Others	\$25.00

*We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP)
and Job Search Program With COSTI-OCASI: Status Of
Women Ontario; Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture &
Recreation (NSP) and the Municipality of Toronto for their
financial support.*

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 205,
Toronto, Ont. M4P 1K5
Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm
Tel: (416) 483-4554 Fax: (416) 483-9781
Toll Free: 1-877-483-4554
Email: office@icfdwr.com

INTERCEDE STAFFS

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