

# DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

March 1993



(INTERCEDE)

## LCP MAY BE PROVEN TO VIOLATE CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

By Carol Salmon

"A good case can be made" that the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) violates Section 15(1) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and "it may be argued that... this program... denies women equal benefit of the law and discriminates on the basis of race, colour, national and ethnic origin."

T. Connie Nakatsu of LEAF (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund) presented this topic before a group of women lawyers attending the Canadian Bar Association Institute dealing with "How Feminist Analysis Can Change Legal Practice" on January 29, 1993. LEAF is in the process of developing arguments that may be used to support a Charter challenge against the Live-In Caregiver Program.

In her presentation Nakatsu said that the requirement of a minimum Grade 12 and six months formal training may eliminate women from three main source countries for domestic workers, namely, the Philippines, the Caribbean and Latin America, where this level of education and training or related training are not available. Initial statistics and indicators show that while there may be no direct discrimination, systemic discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin could be proven.

The LCP requirements would favour women from Europe like Sweden, Germany, England etc. A limited survey of the educational levels of members of INTERCEDE done last year showed that fully 70 per cent would not have been able to enter Canada under the admission criteria of the LCP which took effect in April 1992.

There is evidence of race-based distinctions that have resulted in an ever-decreasing number of Caribbean women entering Canada as domestic workers under the Immigration program. In 1982, there were 24.5 per cent Filipinas and 18.3 per cent Caribbean women entering the Foreign Domestic Movement program; in 1990, the percentages of women from the Philippines increased to 60.2 per cent, while the number from the Caribbean decreased to 5.4 per cent.

It is often heard that nannies from England, Sweden and Switzerland, for example, are less desirable because they are unwilling to perform housekeeping chores such as cleaning, cooking, laundry, etc. On the other hand, it is acknowledged that the European-trained nanny is the one to hire if you wanted "specialized" care for your child. The LCP criteria adversely affect employers who want to hire women mainly to do domestic work. This in itself can be abusive and racist and creates a hierarchy of caregivers or domestic workers; it allows employers to hire one group of women if they want "specialized" care, and another group of women to do "dirty work", a discrimination based on the national or ethnic origin of the women being hired.

The LCP admission criteria could discriminate against employers who may prefer to hire persons familiar with certain religious or ethnic aspects of caregiving because these persons may not necessarily have the Grade 12, six month training or other qualifications to enter the Immigration program. This lack of respect for, and acknowledgment of, the importance of culture is

The monthly meeting will be on Sunday, March 7, 1993 at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street from 3-5 p.m.

3:15-4:15 pm **"WEN-DO DEMONSTRATION: WOMEN'S SELF DEFENCE"**

By Marla Warner and Lisa Wolfman Wën-Do Women's Self-Defence Corporation

4:15-5:00 pm **"HOME SWEET HOME - Portable Theatre on Violence Against Women"**

Short excerpts to be presented by Carlos Bulosan Cultural Workshop

CLASP Legal Clinic open during the meeting.

2-3 pm New Member Applications and Renewals. Members with ID numbers 92-588 to 92-847 must renew or be dropped from membership list.



discriminatory on the basis of national or ethnic origin. The requirement that a person be able to speak English or French also violates the Charter. In the Independent Category of immigrants, a person's ability to speak one of the official languages is but one factor amongst many which are evaluated. To treat domestic/caregiver workers differently is discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origin and colour.

**Ecos Hispanos**  
de Carmen Pulido

Venimos de diferentes países, pero con un mismo idioma, el español. Como todos los inmigrantes, llegamos con muchas ilusiones y expectativas a Canadá. Pronto nos dimos cuenta que no es fácil adaptarse a la sociedad canadiense si estamos aislados? Como obtener información correcta, escoger cursos o estudios, consejería legal, etc.?

Así comenzó el grupo hispano de INTERCEDE. Nuestra primera reunión se realizó el 24 de noviembre pasado con quince trabajadoras del programa LCP, donde acordamos reunirnos cada dos meses.

El segundo encuentro trató de información general y orientación del programa de trabajo doméstico que estuvo a cargo en su primera parte, por nuestra consejera Coco Diaz. Todos los participantes, alrededor de 25 personas, obtuvimos una valiosa información sobre nuestros deberes y derechos en Canada. En la segunda parte, contamos con la grata presencia de la trabajadora legal Sra. Consuelo Rubio; que gentilmente absolvió las inquietudes de los asistentes en lo concerniente al área de inmigraciones. Gracias Consuelo por tu magnífica labor y apoyo a nuestro grupo!

Seguimos creciendo en número de participantes y en conocimiento de esta realidad, así que escogimos como tema de nuestra próxima reunión "la situación laboral y perspectivas de empleo en Canadá", nuestra

invitado será el Sr. Duberlis Ramos, consejero de empleo del R.I.C. que nos disertará sobre este interesante tema el domingo 14 de marzo de 3 p.m. a 5 p.m.

Así que si deseas conocernos e integrarte a nuestras reuniones y actividades sociales, llama a INTERCEDE 324-8751 para mayores informes y pregunta por nuestra consejera Coco Diaz. Te esperamos y hasta pronto!

**Caribbean Domestic Workers  
Celebrate Black History Month**

The month of February has been dedicated to honour the achievements of Black people in Canadian society. On Sunday, February 21, eight determined members of INTERCEDE's Caribbean group bared the snow-storm to participate in a program called "Black Women of Canada" at the Jamaican Canadian Association.

They listened to the inspired messages of panelists: Ontario member of Parliament Zanana Akande; health care worker Carolann Wright; Councillor Bev Salmon and health care coordinator for Women's Health in Women's Hands, Vuyiswa Keyi.

They learned about the important role of nurses, teachers and other women of the Caribbean who had originally entered Canada to serve as domestic workers.

Despite the weather, the program gathered more than 100 people and INTERCEDE's participants were happy to be part of the event.

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 MARCH, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION :       CHANGE OF ADDRESS :

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

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$20.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$25.00



## Chinese Group Celebrates New Year

Ginger Chung, Board member of INTERCEDE, led the celebrators, 15 domestic workers from Hongkong and Malaysia, in a sumptuous lunch to celebrate Chinese New Year last Sunday, February 14.

The group decided to look at the possibility of organizing an English As A Second Language (ESL) class, one Sunday a month, and combine it with a monthly group meeting.

Half of the group were proud to have been members of INTERCEDE for over two years and have continued actively in the organization even if they are already on open permit.

## VANCOUVER AFFILIATE HOLDS FORUM WITH COORDINATOR

In an educational forum held at the Vancouver Holiday Inn on Sunday, February 21, Fely Villasin, INTERCEDE coordinator, and Lorina Serafico, Chairperson of the Committee for Domestic Worker/Caregivers' Rights (CDWCR), joined representatives of Canada Immigration and British Columbia's Ministry of Labour to speak about the rights and organizing capacity of domestic workers.

The forum gathered over seventy-five domestic workers and some guests and supporters led by Judy Rebick, President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), Jackie Larkin, NAC Executive member, Ujjal Dosanjh, MLA, and various representatives of unions.

Villasin met CDWCR members for the first time since the group was officially launched as an affiliate of INTERCEDE in B.C. In two days of marathon steering committee meetings, discussions were held not only on organizational links but also two important issues: broad based bargaining for domestic workers and changes needed in provincial labour laws.

CDWCR holds monthly members' orientation and information meetings. It has began outreach within and outside of Vancouver. Among its membership development and training activities is a panel on Racism on March 21 and a study of broad-based bargaining in April.

CDWCR can be contacted at tel. 525-1345 (Julie), 538-6618 (Claire) or 732-3460 (Cora).

### STAFF NOTES

by Columbia Tarape-Diaz

#### You've Come a Long Way Joyce!

Joyce Namakoye, arrived from Kenya under the FDM in April 1988. In the same month of the following year, April 1989, she first came in contact with INTERCEDE from an emergency shelter where Joyce had sought refuge from the abuses she had suffered: excessive hours of work, underpayment, being lent out to work for friends of her employer.

Joyce could only speak Swahili then - she had not been allowed out of the house to take upgrading or ESL

courses. She felt lost.

Joyce filed a claim for unpaid wages with Coco Diaz' assistance, she found another employer, and she rigorously exerted effort to meet the FDM criteria for landing: volunteer work, English classes, wisely managing her money even while supporting a granddaughter in her hometown.

Determined to prove herself, to integrate, to work hard and get good references, Joyce passed a personal assessment interview in November 1991 with flying colours.

On February 26, 1993, Joyce received her landed immigrant documents. It took five long years! Now she can't wait to sponsor her granddaughter.

#### Questions we can't answer!

"Immigration doesn't care that I've been waiting five years to get my permanent residence. Are we people or just papers and files?"

"My employer terminated me because she can't afford to keep me; why should I pay for a new employment authorization when it's not my fault that I lost my job?"

"Do you know how sad it is when you're terminated and your employers watches you like a hawk while you are packing? Or when they put all your belongings in garbage bags and tell you to come pick them up?"

"If ever we go to an Immigration office, the only person we can speak to is the security guard. Are they now trained to provide immigration counselling or information?"

"Why don't Immigration officers give their names over the telephone when we dare ask? Have they not been baptized so they don't have names?"

#### Tale of Woe

A domestic worker who considers herself a model of unquestioning faith and obedience was told by an Immigration officer to mail her application for permanent resident together with the correct fee and not to follow up by phone or mail.

Two years passed - she mustered the courage to call and verify the status of her application. She was told to just wait for the mail.

Eight months passed - she gathered the courage to call again. This time she was told her file was missing. She was told to wait, she will be contacted soon.

Four more months passed, three years since she applied for permanent residence - she again called. She was told her security clearances had expired. She has to fill a new set of application forms!

Have You Waited Too Long to be Landed?

All who have waited two years or more to hear about their application for permanent residence: Please call Eva at INTERCEDE, give your name, file number, exact date of your application and any useful update or information. INTERCEDE will send this list to Immigration and request an update.



## MARK YOUR INTERCEDE CALENDAR

MONTHLY MEETING: Planned topics and activities:

Sunday, April 4, 1993

How to Manage Our Limited Income  
and Tax Return  
Easter Songfest

Sunday, May 2, 1993

Domestic Workers' Rights in New  
Immigration Law  
Learn to Dance

Sunday, June 6, 1993

"Changes Domestic Workers Want in Labour Law"  
Composing our own Song

INTERCEDE BOWLING SUNDAYS

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



## JOIN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FAIR AND ACTIVITIES

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 1993  
FROM 1 PM TO 5 PM  
AT JORGENSEN HALL  
RYERSON CAMPUS  
GERRARD NEAR YONGE

Domingo, 14 de Marzo 1993

REUNION HISPANA

3 - 5 pm

Llama a Coco Diaz, tel. 324-8751

Sunday, March 14, 1993

SOUTH ASIAN DOMESTIC WORKERS  
LUNCH 12 noon - 3 pm

Siddhartha Restaurant

1431 Gerrard St. East (corner Ashdale)

Coxwell Subway, Bus 22A to Gerrard St.)

Please register to join 324-8751

Saturday and Sunday March 20 and 21, 1993

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

**Anti-Racist Facilitators Workshop**

10 am - 4 pm

Centre for Christian Studies

77 Charles St. (Bay Subway - South of Bloor,  
West of Bay)

Register now 324-8751

Sunday, April 18, 1993

ALL-DAY ORIENTATION FOR  
NEWCOMERS

Negotiating to Improve Work Benefits

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

George Brown College, Room 517

200 King St. East (King Subway)

Lunch included

Call to register 324-8751

Sunday, April 25 1993

PILIPINAS GROUP

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Cecil Community Centre, Basement Room

58 Cecil St.

Call and Register 324-8751

## KNOW YOUR NEW PRESIDENT

Joan Grant-Cummings, newly appointed Executive Director of Women's Health In Women's Hands (WHWH), now leads INTERCEDE as President of the organization and Chairperson of its 13-member Board of Directors.

Grant-Cummings has already served a one-year term as Board member and brings to her new position a long history of involvement with the issue of domestic workers. Her mother came to Canada as a domestic worker from Jamaica, she used to counsel and assist domestic workers at the Jamaican Canadian Association, then later at the Immigrant Women's Health Centre (IWHC).

When she first joined WHWH, Grant-Cummings together with health coordinator Vuyiswa Keyi proposed a project with IWHC that provided on-the-spot physical examinations during INTERCEDE's monthly meetings.

Vice-President appointed is Enid Singh, a long-time member of INTERCEDE and also finishing her second of a two-year term on the Board. New Board member, Leah Guion was appointed Secretary, and Ginger Chung now serves as Treasurer.

A lot of organizational clean-up work awaits this year's Board, according to Grant-Cummings, but exciting projects also present a big challenge for us.

## DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

c/o INTERCEDE

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FIRST CLASS

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