

# DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

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

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554

March 2003



## MOST HIDDEN UN INSTRUMENT ENTERING INTO FORCE SOON:

*Statement by the Steering Committee for the Global Campaign for Ratification of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*

Geneva, 11 December 2002 – On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, the National Parliament of Timor – Leste (East Timor) decided to accede to the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. This will allow the entry into force of the Convention early next year.

It is a long awaited hard won success for all migrants and for all those who have been struggling for more respect for the human rights of documented and undocumented migrant workers and their families, including the Global Campaign for Ratification of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

We congratulate Timor-Leste and all State Parties that took the lead in confirming their commitment to bring their national laws into compliance with this landmark human rights instrument. At the same time, we take the opportunity to invite all other governments, especially the 15 European Union Member States in view of the 2004 deadline for harmonization of their immigration and refugee policies, to promptly give serious consideration to becoming state party to this major human rights standard.

With the Convention coming into force soon, the international community will be challenged to look at migration from a human rights perspective and not exclusively as an economic, political and national security issue.

With rising xenophobia and attacks on foreigners, this Convention extends the ever so much needed protection to migrant workers and their families world-wide. It provides a set of binding international standards to address the treatment,

welfare and human rights of both documented and undocumented migrants and the obligations and responsibilities on the part of the sending and receiving States. It extends the concept of "equality of treatment" between national and non-nationals, between women and men migrant workers and between documented and undocumented workers. Overall, the Convention seeks to play a role in preventing and eliminating the exploitation of all migrant workers and members of their families throughout the entire migration process. In particular, it seeks to put an end to the illegal or clandestine recruitment and trafficking of migrant workers and to discourage the employment of migrant workers in an irregular or undocumented situation. Finally, the Convention establishes mechanisms for its implementation which provide new opportunities for increased participation from the global community to protect the rights of migrants.

The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families on 18 December 1990. In 1994, at the UN Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, a small group of non-governmental organizations and migration experts from Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East laid the foundations for the Global Campaign. Four years later, the Steering Committee, a unique alliance of intergovernmental agencies and leading international church, labour, human rights, migrants and women's organizations, was created. It provides a more focused flow among the different groups and improves cooperation for the global effort to bring the Convention into force.



*All Domestic/Caregiver workers,  
Newcomers and those on Temporary Work  
Permit are welcome to attend*

**INTERCEDE MEETING**  
**Every First Sunday of the Month**

(if holiday, meeting is on the second Sunday)

Apply or renew your membership - \$10.

Sunday, March 2, 2003 3-5 p.m.  
At Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.  
(one block south of College cor. Spadina)

**INCOME TAX PREPARATION**  
*Guest Speakers, Elsa Reyes & Ted Dayna*  
*Association of Filipino Canadian Chartered Accountants*

**ABSENTEE VOTING LAW PASSED**

On January 30, 2003, the Absentee Voting Law was finally approved by the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives through a bicameral conference committee. The approval came after the House of Representatives agreed to a compromise on the inclusion of immigrants and green card holders under the contentious law.

Under this compromise agreement, Filipinos abroad who are immigrants and green card holders will be allowed to vote in 2004 but they will be required to execute an affidavit of intent to return and re-establish their residence in the Philippines within three years or be stricken out of the list of voters for the following elections.

Filipino citizens overseas can participate in the election of the president, vice president, senators and party list candidates. They will have to register in person in the Philippines or in embassies abroad and show a valid Philippine passport or any other document acceptable to the Comelec as proof of Filipino nationality.

Voting will be done in person at designated voting centres abroad but may be done by mail in selected countries with reliable, efficient and secure postal system such as Canada, the UK and Japan. This postal voting is being tested in 2004 for expansion or restriction. Counting and canvass will be done on site simultaneously with the Philippines regardless of differences in time zones.

Non-government organizations abroad may soon be able to apply for accreditation and play an important role in information dissemination and to act as watchdogs and election observer teams.



**COME AND JOIN US ON:**

**March 8, 2003 - International Women's Day  
March  
University of Toronto  
OISE Auditorium,  
252 Bloor St. West  
(St. George Subway Station)  
11:00 am - Rally  
1:00 pm - March**

**March 21, 22 & 23, 2003 - 7th Annual Domestic  
Workers and Caregivers  
Conference**

For further information and registration, call Genie at 416-483-4554 ext. 21.

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

In Canada, Black History Month is annually celebrated in February. INTERCEDE would like to acknowledge the contributions from Black Canadians past and present and also the struggles that Black Canadians have faced, and are still confronting today. Major Black figures and historical occurrences are remembered during Black History month.

One of the most significant events in Black History is the creation of the **Underground Railroad**. The Underground Railroad was formed as a response to over four hundred years of slavery in the United States. Slaves wanting to escape used a network of escape routes starting in the Southern United States. These escape routes came through to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. One woman who played a prominent role in helping hundreds of slaves through the Underground Railroad was **Harriet Tubman**. She was a runaway slave known as the "Moses of her people".

We are presently in a time of uncertainty and fear not knowing if war will happen. During this time it is important to remember one of the most important African-American historical figures who is not just important to the black community, but to everyone all over the world, **Martin Luther King Jr.** Martin Luther King Jr. was a social activist, who believed in peace, justice and equality for all. In a time when the world may go to war it is important to remember his words, "Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation for such a method is love"

We at INTERCEDE would like to honour Black History Month and ask our readers to do the same by learning more about Black history.  
(<http://www.blackhistory society.ca/BH/Month.html>).



**Come to:**

**INTERCEDE  
INCOME TAX CLINIC**

at  
**Cecil Community Centre  
58 Cecil St., Toronto, ON  
April 6, 2003  
3:00 to 6:00 p.m.**

Call 416-483-4554 ext. 21 for further information

**April 6, 2003  
Monthly Meeting  
Topic: Information on New Immigration Law**

## FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP

### FOR NEWCOMERS

**When:** Tuesdays and Thursdays  
March 4, 6, 11 & 13, 2003

**Time :** 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

**Where:** INTERCEDE  
234 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 205  
(Eglinton & Mt. Pleasant)  
Toronto, On. M4P 1K5

### FOR CAREGIVERS

**When:** Sunday  
March 9, 16, 23 & 30, 2003  
April 6, 13, 27 & May 4, 2003

**Time :** 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Where:** INTERCEDE  
234 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 205  
(Eglinton & Mt. Pleasant)  
Toronto, On. M4P 1K5

Please call (416)483-4554 ext. 21 to sign up.  
Seating is limited.

Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada &  
sponsored by COSTI & OCASI

### Top Ten Tips to Job Search Success!

1. Network to get work. Talk to everybody and anybody and let them know you are looking for work. You never know where your contacts may lead you.
2. A resume is the key to a good first impression. Make it a great one! Include your accomplishments. Have someone else proofread it. Accompany your resume with a winning cover letter.
3. Be prepared for the interview. Rehearse responses to various interview questions. Write down your ideas and have questions ready to ask employers.
4. Stay up-to-date with technology & information. Surf the Internet for an abundance of job opportunities and career information. Correspond with employers via-email and apply on line.
5. Tap into the hidden job market. Research potential employers and start cold calling. Contact the person who will actually be making the hiring decision.
6. Learning is a lifelong journey. Keep up-to date with changes in your industry by taking advantage of training and educational opportunities.
7. Smile, be polite and show confidence. Somebody is watching. Your body language reflects your attitude. Remember, it's not only your qualifications, but also your attitude that counts.
8. Ask many, many questions. Always be informed and prepared. Do your research; know where you are going; and connect with people who can help you.

9. Be persistent, don't give up. Keep trying. Talk to Employment/Career Counsellors, friends, family or anyone who can provide support in your search.
10. Explore all your options. There are free services for job seekers. Check them out.  
(extracted from <http://www.jobskills.org>)

#### Words to live by...

*On learning. Anyone who stops learning is old, whether this happens at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps on learning not only remains young, but also becomes constantly more valuable.*

**Harvey Ullman**

### Q & A SECTION

**Q** I arrived in Canada on February 2002 and worked 4 months as caregiver under the LCP. My employment was terminated and while looking for another employer, I took an upgrading course that did not require Student Permit. With my T4 from my income for 4 months can I also claim my tuition fee as well as my receipt for my medical prescriptions.

**A** Yes, you can include your tuition fee receipt, medical receipts, rent, donations, and RRSP. Attend INTERCEDE meeting on March and April for Income Tax information and Tax preparation.

**Q** My T4 slip does not have the name of my employers instead it is issued under their company name. Is this acceptable when I file my Income Tax and will Immigration question me?

**A** To validate your employment ask your employer for a certification letter stating that you are the live-in caregiver for the family and that you are paid through the family company's name. Also, attach copy of your Employment Authorization and Record of Employment as proof of your employment with this employer.

**Q** Can you advise me about buying RRSP or investing some of my hard earned money?

**A** I'm happy to share some information given by Mr. Stephen Boujikian, Project Officer/Settlement Counsellor of CIC who was INTERCEDE resource speaker during the February meeting:

- ◆ The earlier the better to make yearly contribution to RRSP.
- ◆ Invest in RSP at the beginning of the tax year and aim for long term investments.
- ◆ Do not cash in your long-term investment before maturity. You can have a mix of short term, medium term and long term government Investments.
- ◆ Avoid full service brokers, bank money-managing officers and independent money managers. These have very high service fees and high percentage commissions.

In addition Mr. Boujikian emphasized the importance of:

- reviewing your assets and investments periodically along with your budget
- keep all your investment receipts, statements and update all legal documents
- put in a binder and keep in a safe place
- and be wise and write a will

**Q** I have been working for my employer since May 2002. I am receiving a net \$900 monthly without any pay stub. I have no idea how much my gross income is but my employer told me that

she is remitting taxes that was deducted from my salary. I just got my T4 for the year 2002 and there is no amount for Room and Board expenses. I will file my income tax return soon, but my friends told me that I am entitled to get a refund for room and board expenses. They even told me that even if my employer did not declare any amount for this expense in my T4, I can still claim a refund for it. Is it true?

A Yes, it is true that you can claim a refund for room and board expense if your employer deducted this expense from salary. Since you are not receiving any pay slip, you have no way of knowing what was deducted from your salary. Ask your employer if she is deducting room and board from your salary. If there was no deduction made for this expense, you cannot claim it for refund. However, if your employer will not declare this income, and you claimed a refund for this expense, both of you will be questioned by Revenue Canada. Next time, be sure to ask for a pay slip from your employer every time you get your pay cheque so you will be aware of what was deducted from your salary.

Q I am a live-in caregiver and I arrived in Canada on June 2000. I will file for my permanent residence on May 2003 after I complete 24 months employment under LCP. For the year 2001, I worked with an employer for 11 months and I requested them to pay my gross salary without deducting anything for taxes, CPP and EI. I was not able to file my income tax return since no T4 was issued to me during this year. Now that I will apply for permanent residence, I realize that I have to provide Notice of Tax assessment from CCRA, which I don't have for the year 2001. Can I just pay for unpaid Taxes, CPP and EI for 2001 and file my income tax return for 2001 together with my tax return for 2002?

A Yes, you can pay unpaid Taxes, CPP and EI for 2001 this year but you will pay penalty plus interest to CCRA. Besides, you have to contact your employer because they have to pay for their share of your CPP and EI. By law, employers must deduct Taxes, CPP and EI from employee's salaries and they must remit it together with their share of CPP (100%) and EI (140%) to Revenue Canada monthly. They will be in violation if they will not comply with this requirement. These deductions are a must. For information on tax matters come to our monthly meeting on March 2, 2003 at Cecil Community Center and you can ask our

volunteer accountants how to handle problems with your income tax.

Q My previous employer refused to provide me a T4 for the five months that I worked for them as live in caregiver. He claimed that since he paid me in cash, he did not have to deduct Taxes, CPP and EI from my salary. But as I remember, our verbal agreement that I would be paid \$1,000 net, which was the amount I received each month for five months. I did not get any pay slip with my salary from them. Are my employers right? How can I oblige them to give me my T4?

A It does not matter if your employer paid you in cash or in cheque, employers must deduct Taxes, CPP and EI from your monthly gross income and have it remitted the following month together with their share of CPP and EI. If you are receiving net income, you should have asked for your pay slip so you will be aware of what was deducted from your salary. Talk to your employer about this problem and if he refuses to comply with this requirement you can come to INTERCEDE office or call CCRA for further assistance at 1-800-959-5525.

INTERCEDE

Address: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 205  
Toronto Ontario  
M4P 1K5

Regular Hours: Mon-Fri 9 am - 4 p.m.  
Telephone: (416) 483-4554  
Fax: (416) 483-9781  
Toll-Free: 1-877-483-4554  
E-mail: info@intercedetoronto.org

INTERCEDE STAFF:

- Fely Villasin - Coordinator
- Des Balce - JSW Facilitator
- Columbia Diaz - Settlement Counsellor
- Anita Fortuno - Settlement Counsellor
- Salma Saadi - Settlement Counsellor
- Genie Policarpio - Intake & Administrative Assistant

We wish to thank: Citizenship and Immigration Canada - ISAP Program and Job Search Program with COSTI-OCASI; Ontario Status of Women; the Municipality of Toronto CSGP, Access & Equity and "Breaking the Cycle of Violence" grant programs, for their financial support.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada / Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

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