

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers and Newcomers

March 2007

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554



INTERCEDE CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD)

Every year on March 8th, International Women's Day is commemorated worldwide with celebrations of all the women in our lives as we honour those who have come before us and continue to make humanity awe-inspiring - our mothers, our grandmothers, our sisters, our friends and colleagues.

International Women's Day 2007 Annual Toronto March & Rally is on Saturday, March 10, 2007 - Rally starts at 11:00 am. March begins at 1:00 pm. Join in for this year's largest march in Canada with speakers, entertainers, and a fair. Free. Location: OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto.

The IWD 2007 celebration has the following demands:

1. Stop violence against women!
2. \$10 an hour minimum wage now!
3. A national daycare program now!
4. No more wars!

We would like to invite INTERCEDE members for breakfast to celebrate IWD on March 10, 2007, Saturday, at 8:30 am., at Future's Café, at 483 Bloor St. West (exit on Walmer at Spadina Subway station, walk south to Bloor then walk west on Bloor). It will be followed by International Women's Day rally at 11:00 a.m. at OISE Auditorium, 252 Bloor St. W. and a march following the rally.

For more information, please call Genie at 416-483- 4554 ext. 21. See you all there!

UNPRECEDENTED LEGISLATION BREAKS DOWN BARRIERS FOR NEWCOMERS

*Bill 124, Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, Passes
(an excerpt from www.citizenship.gov.on.ca)*

QUEEN'S PARK — Legislation to break down barriers so that internationally trained professionals can work in their fields sooner was passed December 13, 2006 in the Ontario Legislature, Ontario Citizenship and Immigration Minister Mike Colle announced.

Breaking Down Barriers: Ontario's Comprehensive Plan for Newcomers

The *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006*, is a key component of the McGuinty government's comprehensive plan, **Breaking Down Barriers**, for newcomers to integrate successfully into Ontario's economy. Other initiatives include:

- Negotiated the first-ever **Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement**, which quadruples federal spending on language training and settlement services and brings an additional \$920 million to assist Ontario newcomers over five years;
- Developed '**All About Ontario**,' a new citizenship curriculum resource to be added to language and citizenship classes in early 2007 to help newcomers learn about Ontario's history, geography, their roles and responsibilities, and to promote civic participation – from voting to volunteering;
- Invested over \$34 million in more than 60 **Bridge Training Programs**, helping thousands of newcomers work in over 100 trades and professions;
- Launched immigration web portal, **www.OntarioImmigration.ca**, which is designed to support newcomers both in Ontario and abroad, prior to arrival;

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- Established the first Provincial **Internship for the Internationally Trained**. Administered by Career Bridge, newcomers with a minimum of three years international work experience will be placed for six-month paid assignments within the Ontario Public Service and Crown Agencies;
- Created a **Foreign Trained Professionals Loans** program of up to \$5,000 per person to cover assessment, training and exam costs, in partnership with the Maytree Foundation; and,
Total annual investment of **\$130 million**, more than any other province in Canada, on programs to help newcomers upgrade their language skills, settle and find work.
“Our government is keeping its commitment to break down the barriers that prevent newcomers from entering the workforce. We are determined to ensure that Ontario's newcomers have every opportunity to succeed and participate in our economy,” said Colle. (www.citizenship.gov.on.ca)

COCO'S CORNER

With the growing number of caregivers who are not able to complete the required twenty four months live-in work within the three years under the LCP, I am often confronted with questions like:

If I get married, do I still need to work as a caregiver and do I need to go back to my home country to be sponsored to become a permanent resident in Canada?

Getting married is not the smartest solution to your problem if you're not able to apply for permanent residence due to your non-completion of the requirements under the LCP. You might even be in a more complicated immigration situation. However, if you decide to go this route make note of the following:

- ☞ proof of genuine relationship and the marriage must be legal
- ☞ that your spouse meet the eligibility criteria to become a sponsor i.e. a permanent resident/citizen of Canada, has employment, proof of earning, no record of default sponsorship, default of financial support payment to either previous spouse or dependent child
- ☞ also, the spouse is not on social assistance or in a disability
- ☞ and not been charge or convicted of any sexual offence
- ☞ call or visit CIC website www.cic.gc.ca for more info
- ☞ In addition, you need to have a valid Immigration status to be sponsored by your spouse, pass medical and security clearance. For more info and assistance call INTERCEDE for assistance.

Can I have a better opportunity if I will go to Alberta, since there are plenty of work and will surely find a job not only as a caregiver but a work that I can apply my education?

Your plan to relocate in another province like going to Alberta will not change the condition and requirements of the program you are in. Live-In Caregiver Program is under Federal jurisdiction. You are still required to comply with the requirements before your application for Permanent Residence will get approved. Contact CIC and be aware of other Immigrant Services in the area of relocation.

Do I have the chance to be issued another Work Permit, if I have to apply at the Canadian visa office in Buffalo to re-start the Live-In Caregiver Program?

Those caregivers who went to the Canadian visa office in Buffalo, they were issued a new work permit to re-start the LCP based from these reasons:

- ☞ periods of being unemployed due to services no longer needed because: The elderly employers were brought to nursing home or sometimes died; children they were looking after started attending day care or school; employer could no longer afford to pay their salaries,

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- ☞ or upon arrival in Canada, employers were no longer available, or they hired another caregiver due to the length of waiting,
- ☞ or delayed approval of Offer of Employment from HRSDC and at the processing centre in Vegreville, AB
- ☞ it is a big help for the caregivers when they come to INTERCEDE office for some coaching before their scheduled interview

Considering that I have completed the 24 months and still with the same employer who extremely needs my services, can I still file an application for Permanent Residence beyond my third year?

Yes, you can file your application under the Humanitarian and Compassionate Consideration. Send a supporting letter outlining the circumstances why you were not able to complete the required 24 months on time, and request a letter of support from your employer. There is no guarantee if you will be given consideration but no harm in trying. INTERCEDE would be happy to provide and confirmed the information or reasons since we regularly hear same reason from caregivers.

Other important information!

- ☞ Caregiver is required to apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN) even without an employer. Go to a nearest HRSDC (Human Resource Skills and Devt. Centre) to fill up a form, bring a valid identification document like passport, Employment Authorization and Immigration Papers. Use a reliable address to ensure the security of your mail because SIN card is very important.
- ☞ To apply for an OHIP card, a caregiver has to provide proof of three months residency in Ontario like a copy of Passport with stamped date of arrival, employment authorization, lease or receipt of a renting place, telephone or other utility receipts, employment certification if you are employed.
- ☞ Newcomers like caregiver, independent immigrant, sponsored under the family class can apply for an OHIP even without a current employer as long as you have proof of three months residence in Canada,
- ☞ Even without OHIP if there is a need to see a doctor, there are available services that can be provided, call 211 for the nearest community health centre / clinic or for referral.

Q & A

Q - I received initial approval of my application for permanent residence and I was issued open work permit. How much salary do I have to receive now that I have an open work permit?

A - The minimum salary now effective February 1, 2007 is \$8.00 per hour. I don't know how much pay have you been receiving prior to issuance of your open work permit but it does not mean that being on open work permit, you will receive higher salary from the same employer.. You can talk to your employer and request for salary increase and it depends on their discretion if they will give it to you.

Being on open work permit, you can now work for any employer and any occupation that gives better pay than what you have now.

Q - Do I still need to apply for extension of my work permit with the same employer after I have submitted my application for permanent residence and open work permit?

A - If you submitted your application for permanent residence and open work permit before the expiry of your current work permit; you will be on implied status and you have the option not to renew your work permit. However, being on implied status, you cannot renew your OHIP coverage and in case of emergency, you cannot go back to your country of origin until you receive your open work permit. For these reasons, we strongly suggest that you still renew your work permit while waiting for your open work permit, the processing of which now takes nine to ten months.

Being on implied status, you are allowed to work only for your employer stated on your work permit. Should your employment gets terminated after submission of application for permanent residence and open work permit, you have to find a new employer who would then request for new validation of their job offer at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Upon approval of their job offer, you must apply and wait for issuance of your new work permit under your new employer.

Q - I have been working for my employer since my arrival in June 2006. She has been paying me cash and my friends told me that I should be paid by cheque because this will be my proof of employment when I apply for permanent residence. Is this true? What should I do now?

A - It does not matter if you were paid in cash or in cheque as long as your employer gives you pay slip or statement of earnings showing your pay period, gross pay and the deductions taken from your salary. This statement of earnings is one of the proofs of your employment that immigration will ask you to provide when you apply for permanent residence. You should ask your employer to give you pay slip every time you receive your salary because this will show how did your employer arrive at the net pay you received. At the end of the year, you can always reconcile the annual gross income and the total tax deducted from your salary to the T4 your employer will issue you for income tax purposes.

Should your employer refuse to give you the above-mentioned documents, make a diary or record of your

working hours for your file and the cash you received each pay period to prove to Immigration that you actually worked for your employer.

Other proofs of employment are Record of Employment from your previous employer, T4 and Notice of Assessment for your income tax return and certification of employment from your current employer.

FRAUD ADVISORY WARNING

(An excerpt from www.cic.gc.ca)

Attention all Visa and Work Permit Applicants: Citizenship and Immigration Canada has learned that Visa and Work Permit applicants may be tricked into buying false documents. In several cases, apparently, the victims are offered high-paying jobs in Canadian hotels or on offshore ships.

Please note that valid documents can only be obtained through the Canadian High Commission or embassy in your country and Visa fees can only be processed through the High Commission or the local Canadian Consulate.

If you are interested in applying for a Canadian Visa or Work Permit, please go to the Work in Canada or Immigrate to Canada sections of the official Citizenship and Immigration Web site, www.cic.gc.ca.

FREE Income Tax Clinic

Sunday, April 15, 2006, 1:00—5:00 p.m.

INTERCEDE's Office,

234 Eglinton Ave. E, Ste. 405

Please bring these supporting documents:

1. Income Tax Return Form
2. T-4 Slips from employer
3. All T-Slips received from other sources:
 - ◆ T2202/A – Tuition and Education Amount
 - ◆ T5 – Investment Income
4. Receipts
 - ◆ RRSP
 - ◆ Rent
 - ◆ Donations
 - ◆ Medical Expenses
 - ◆ Tuition Fees
 - ◆ Union Dues /Interest Expense on Student Loan
5. Information required:
 - ◆ Marital Status
 - ◆ SIN of taxpayer (and spouse, if here)
 - ◆ Date of birth
 - ◆ Name of dependents, including parents living with tax payer
 - ◆ Income of spouse
6. 2005 Notice of Assessment from Revenue Canada, or taxpayer 2005 Income Tax Return.

INTERCEDE CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

As we all know, February is Black History Month and INTERCEDE took the initiative to celebrate African Heritage.

The celebration took place at Cecil community Centre on Sunday, February 11, 2007. The program started off with a welcoming speech by Mrs. Joan Thomas, who is a member of INTERCEDE Board of Directors. This was followed by a very inspiring informative speech of the guest speaker Ms. LLana James. She spoke about Moving Forward and Building Capacity for Change. Emceeding the celebration was Ms Kayann Sanders.

The audience was entertained with cultural presentations of poems, songs and music. Awaiting the celebration was a wide variety of Caribbean cuisine which was enjoyed by all.

INTERCEDE would like to say thank you to all who helped make this occasion a success. Without your support, hard work and dedication this event would not have been possible.

INTERCEDE BLACK SUPPORT GROUP

The Caribbean Connection Black Support Group will meet on April 14, 2007, Saturday, at INTERCEDE office, 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Ste. 405 at 2:00—4:00 p.m.

Please feel free to contact Bernice for more information at 416-483-4554 ext. 22.

PLEASE NOTE:

There is no monthly meeting on March 4, 2007 and April 1, 2007 at Cecil Community Centre.

Instead, INTERCEDE invites members and friends to join the IWD Breakfast on March 11, 2007 and on April 15, 2007 to attend tax clinic at INTERCEDE office. Please call Genie at 416-483-4554 ext. 21 for more information and head count.

FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS & NEWCOMERS

WHEN: SUNDAY
March 4, 11, 18 & 25, 2007
April 1, 15, 22 & 29, 2007
May 6, 13, 26 & 27, 2007
TIME : 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
WHERE: PROLEGAL
164 Eglinton Ave. E., 3rd Floor
(West of Redpath, Walking distance from Eglinton Subway station)
Please call (416)483-4554 ext. 30 or 21 to sign up.
Seating is limited.
Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada

INTERCEDE

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INTERCEDE STAFF:
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Vicky Policarpio - JSW Facilitator
Genie Policarpio - Intake & Administrative Assistant

We wish to thank: Citizenship and Immigration Canada - ISAP and Job Search Program; the Municipality of Toronto CSP, and The Ontario Solicitor General's Office for their financial support.

 **Citizenship and Immigration Canada**  **Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada**



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