

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

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

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554

May 2002



WILL FILIPINOS OVERSEAS BE ABLE TO VOTE IN 2004?

On April 1, INTERCEDE attended a consultation on the Absentee Voting Bill held by a joint legislative committee composed of Senators and Congressmen from the Philippines. Along with an international network of groups, INTERCEDE has been advocating to allow Filipino migrant workers and immigrants to exercise the right to vote.

They were among those represented at the evening meeting in New York's Philippine Centre, which was chaired by Senator Edgardo Angara. Angara remarked that overseas Filipinos had shown great interest in the proposed voting law and made valuable suggestions to improve it.

Two important demands made by migrant groups abroad were now included in the Bill: the inclusion of all Filipino citizens, including those who may be undocumented; and a more transparent vote-counting process, to be held at voting places abroad. Members of the audience duly noted and appreciated the work of the legislators while offering some more ideas for facilitating voter registration and tallying.

Groups like EMPOWER, eLagda, Kakammpi and others, have proposed continuous voter registration including at the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) where pre-departure orientations are given to those leaving the Philippines as immigrants and contract workers. At the New York meeting their representatives raised concerns about the power of the Oversight Committee – which should monitor and propose recommendations but not be vested any power to stop the Bill's implementation.

INTERCEDE stressed that after more than a dozen years of delay, the Absentee Voting Bill must be passed without any more excuses, if not for anything but simple justice; that it is time overseas workers – 20 per cent of the voting population – have a say in choosing leaders who will work for their welfare and benefit.

The meeting in New York was one of two consultations which took place in North America, the other which followed was in Los Angeles.



IMPORTANT: POWER OF ATTORNEY AND WILLS

Karen Skinner, a barrister/solicitor who was our guest speaker on Sunday April 7, 2002, explained that people do not talk about Power of Attorney because it is usually associated with incapacity, nor Wills because they're usually associated with death. A Power of Attorney is established and used when someone is still alive, it is not effective after a person dies. A Will, however, is made when a person is alive and takes effect in the event of the person's death. This is why a person should also make a Will even though he/she has a Power of Attorney.

Power of Attorney gives authority to another person to make decisions regarding your finances and personal care. It is a good idea to inform the person to whom you would like to give your Power of Attorney. You can choose a family member or close friend. A person must agree and accept the responsibility of Power of Attorney. There are two types of

*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, May 5, 2002, 3-6 p.m.
At Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.
(one block south of College cor. Spadina)

Women's Health Issues
Signs of Menopause, Sexually Transmitted Diseases,
Breast Self-examination, etc...

Power of Attorney. One is used in relation to a person's property and the other is used to decide on someone's personal care. A person can give authority to another person to make decisions regarding finances associated with daily living. If a person is medically incapable, the person with Power of Attorney can make decisions for that person regarding personal care, including hospital care and physical care. If your Power of Attorney is with one who resides outside Canada, you can pick a friend to make decisions in this absence. This is called a **joint and severed** Power of Attorney. You can also change your Power of Attorney as your situation changes.

If you have no Power of Attorney, the state takes statutory guardianship, and assigns the responsibility based on a list of priorities. The first person on the list is the person's spouse, including your estranged spouse if you are separated. Next in line is your child/children. Your brothers and sisters are next then any other relative. If a relative wants to make decisions for you, but has no power of attorney, that relative has to post a bond to have this responsibility allocated to him/her.

Why should you make a Will? A Will is made in the event of death and it takes effect at this point. A Will is about making arrangement such as funeral arrangement and division of your property. It allows you to determine how your estate will be distributed in the event of your death. If no will is made, the government will decide how this is done. The state first gives property to your spouse then to your children. If you have no spouse and no children, your estate will go to your other blood relatives. Therefore, if you have no Will, your estate might be shared with relatives whom you might not even know. A Will is good because you get to decide who gets what. You can also save your family the trouble of spending money to get a probate to distribute your estate.

If a minor is named in a Will, a trust is set up until he/she reaches the age of majority or whatever age is stipulated in the Will. In the meantime, family and friends take care of the child, but they have to apply to the court for guardianship.

You can purchase a self-made Will from Grand & Toy and write one by yourself. The only problem with this is that you might not use the legal terminology and could be contested. It is a good idea to update your Will if you get married or have children or any change occurs in your life which should be reflected in your Will.

If you have any questions regarding Wills and Power of Attorney, you can contact Karen Skinner, Barrister/Solicitor, at (416) 225-1176 at 139 Sheppard Avenue, East, Suite 201.



AN UPDATE ON THE FIRST BATCH OF ADVOCACY TRAINING PARTICIPANTS...

Are you wondering about those "Advocates" who graduated eight months ago from our Leadership and Advocacy Training Program? In our December 2001 issue we mentioned that they have been actively pursuing their goals, finding new jobs and completing the 24-month requirement of the LCP.

Since then, what? Despite their hectic schedules, they have been meeting actively each month to practise what they have learned at the Advocacy Training. Some of them are even participating in the second series of monthly sessions and training as "facilitators".

It is amazing how the Advocates have worked together to accomplish the following goals:

1. On January 17, 2002 we wrote an open letter to Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo regarding the restrictive combination of Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) requirements, and distributed copies during her visit to Toronto. We sent this letter and a copy of INTERCEDE's research, "*Caregivers Break the Silence*", to the President.
2. On February 3, 2002 we initiated a question and answer session with Jim Campbell, Regional Manager, SIRO, of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, during our monthly meeting to relate our experiences and problems in the LCP.
3. On March 2, 2002, the "advocates" joined the International Women's Day March bearing INTERCEDE slogans to inform the public about women migrants' rights and the causes of human displacement, particularly of women.
4. An upcoming action on May 22, 2002 will be a Forum led by the "advocates" where they will invite City Councillors, Consular Officials, Media and Labour people to inform them about the violence and abuse we experience as a result of conditions imposed by the LCP.

These actions were planned for the purpose of informing and seeking support from the general public and the government to reform the program.

Caregivers should be allowed to come to Canada as Landed Immigrants and exercise the same rights as others do!



FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP
Sundays May 5, 12, 26 and June 2
 or
Sundays June 9, 16, 23, and 30
Time: 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

For more information call:
Genie at 416-483-4554 ext. 21/Des at ext. 30

**FAREWELL TO JO ALCAMPO AND
WELCOME TO DES BALCE,
THE NEW JSW FACILITATOR**

We say farewell to Jo Alcampo, our outgoing Job Search Workshop (JSW) Facilitator who leaves Intercede to pursue her education. Jo's accomplishments include revising the JSW Program to be more relevant to the needs of caregivers and newcomers and coordinating the publication and book launch of *Caregivers Break The Silence*, during her busy term as Interim Coordinator. However, the most satisfying part of her work at Intercede has been facilitating JSW participants to reclaim their self-confidence and advocate for their rights.

"All the best to staff and board members, and special thanks to Betty, Dianah, Melanya and Mom for their support during the past two years. Thank you / Maraming Salamat Po!" - jo

INTERCEDE welcomes its new Job Search Workshop (JSW) Facilitator — Des Balce. Des brings with her thirteen years of experience in program development in community and government settings. She worked at a United Way funded Winter Relief Program for the homeless, low-income individuals and families at Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre in the eastern region of GTA. Des also served as fundraiser at Asian Foundation towards building geriatric centres for seniors of Asian descent.

Des is most comfortable working on socially relevant projects that challenge the status quo. Being an immigrant herself, she fittingly relates to the issues and concerns of newcomers. Hence her role as JSW facilitator for new immigrants and caregivers.



COCO'S CORNER:

Increase Departure threats from Vegreville !!!

Women are receiving departure orders from CIC in Vegreville, Alberta without undergoing the process of being interviewed, or having their cases heard at the court.

Their skills are needed, they have guaranteed employment they integrate and adjust in Canadian society and pay their taxes. They are law-abiding migrant working women, never been a burden to the government of Canada. Yet Live-in Caregiver's and domestic workers are being refused permanent residence without consideration.

A cruel decision to depart Canada is meted out to them through no fault of their own! It is beyond their control that employment is terminated because employers can't afford to pay or their services are no longer needed. Many women have to leave because of abuse of their employment rights: long working hours, no overtime pay, unreasonable work expectations or just personal incompatibility with employers. As a result these women do not meet the requirement of completing two years live-in work within the three years in the LCP.

Caregivers who believe that "Honesty is the Best Policy" are now punished after they make corrections to misrepresentations in their original application such as providing accurate age or marital status. Correcting a misrepresentation can now be "dangerous" and could remain uncorrected. This can lead to more complication for women in the LCP!

Caregivers and domestic workers are being treated no differently from criminals who have committed such serious crimes. As a result of their determination to improve their life and provide their skills to Canadian families who recognize their contribution to their children and elderly parents, these women are punished with departure orders. This treatment of caregivers and domestic workers is unfair. If they are good enough to work, they must be good enough to stay!

Q & A...

Q- I'm filing my application for Permanent Resident under the LCP. I have five children, two from my first husband who died and three children from my common law husband. I would like to include my children's names as dependents in my application and request for a concurrent processing. Can I include my common law husband who has been separated from his wife for over fifteen years?

A- Your first two children are sure to be considered as your dependents. However, the three children you must have consent from your common-law husband before you include them in your application. You can not include your common-law husband as your dependent because of his marital status. Call

INTERCEDE
INVITES EVERYONE TO
JOIN US ON
OUR
LEISURE TRIP
TO
NIAGARA FALLS & CASINO

For only \$25.00
SUNDAY : MAY 19, 2002
DEPARTURE : 11:45 A.M.
ASSEMBLY TIME: 11:15 A.M.

Free \$10.00 voucher for Casino Niagara

For further information please call Anita at 416-483-4554 ext. 25

INTERCEDE for an appointment for further assessment and referral to a Family or Immigration lawyer.

Q- My present employers are interested to hire my sister who is on a visitor's visa . She is a Registered Nurse from the Philippines and currently preparing to take the Ontario Nurses Examination. Are both allowed to work for the same employer as caregivers?

A- Your employer can hire additional caregivers as long as the need is justified. HRDC will assess and validate their Offer of Employment, and then a copy will be forwarded to the Canadian Embassy outside Canada where your sister will be able to present herself for a personal interview. Before your sister gets an Employment Authorization under the Live-in Caregiver Program, she has to pass medical and security clearance. There is no guarantee that your sister would be granted an extension of a Visitor's Visa while her application outside Canada is in processes.

Q- I will complete my two year under the LCP in December 2002. I am engaged to be married this June to a Canadian citizen who is willing to sponsor me as his wife just after our marriage. Is it faster for to receive my Permanent Residence through his sponsorship or do I need to file my application on my own upon completion of the two years live-in work under the LCP?

A- The length of the processing of your application either through your husband or under the LCP is almost the same. You are required to comply with all the requirements like passing medical and security clearance. If through your husband you will be both called for a personal interview at the local Immigration Centre while under the LCP your application will be processed in Vegreville, Alberta. However, receiving your landed status through your own effort is such an accomplishment. Whichever you choose, good luck!



**EMERGENCY FIRST AID & CPR
ST JOHN AMBULANCE**
46 Wellesley St. East

Emergency First Aid+Heartsaver - \$59.00
 CN6775 - Saturday, May 04, 2002 9:00 - 5:00 p.m.
 CN6786 - Saturday, June 01, 2002 9:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Emergency First Aid+Infant/Child CPR - \$65.00
 CN6687 - Sunday, May 19, 2002 9:00 - 6:00 p.m.
 CN6689 - Saturday, June 08, 2002 9:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Please register at least 2 weeks before the start of training date by sending a cheque payable to: **ST. JOHN AMBULANCE** and mail it to:

INTERCEDE
 234 Eglinton, Ave. East, Suite 205
 Toronto, Ontario,
 M4P 1K5

For further details, please call Genie at (416) 483-4554 ext. 21

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
 Olive Smith - Settlement Counsellor
 Anita Fortuno - 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.

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