

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers and Newcomers

May 2004

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554



NEW LOCATION FOR INTERCEDE SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2004 MEETING

Remember that the **May 2nd** INTERCEDE meeting will not be at Cecil St. Community Centre this Sunday, instead it will be at the **Toronto Women's Bookstore** at 73 Harbord Street (just two streets south of Bloor St. West at Spadina Ave) from 3-5 pm.

Our meeting coincides with the opening reception for an art exhibit by Jo SiMalaya (former INTERCEDE JSW Facilitator and Interim Coordinator). The name of the exhibit is: **What If The Prime Minister Was A Domestic Worker?**

Jo will exhibit her photography and speakers from INTERCEDE's Advocacy Training will talk about their experiences as domestic workers and make recommendations for change. Everyone is welcome to this free event.

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



**Artist asks, 'What if the Prime Minister
was a Domestic Worker?'**

*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.

REGULARIZED IMMIGRATION CONSULTANTS

INTERCEDE has received numerous complaints from clients about Immigration Consultants who have taken advantage of them when they are seeking help with their immigration papers.

This has become a major problem because many potential immigrants put their trust with immigration consultants. Some immigration consultants claimed to be licensed when they are not, or they have taken money without providing proper assistance.

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada found in their 2002 review, that many consultants "[are] holding themselves out as on the subject of immigration despite the fact that they know little or have no training or experience" (*Toronto Star*).

Due to the many problems immigration consultants have caused they must now be part of the Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants. Members of the new society must:

- ☒ Pass the society's ethics and knowledge test
- ☒ Pay \$ 1,800 annual membership
- ☒ Be Canadian citizens or Permanent residents
- ☒ Have one year of full-time experience representing clients in immigration and refugee pre-screening, selection or final decisions on application claims or appeal in the past five years
- ☒ Have ten cases filed before Immigration Canada and /for the refugee board since June 28, 2002, or have graduated from the Immigration Practitioner Certificate program at Seneca College or the University of British Columbia after 2002
- ☒ Pass police background checks from every country where the person has resided for six months or more in the past 10 years
- ☒ Carry a minimum of \$1 million in insurance for professional errors and omissions.



INVESTIGATE VALIDITY OF ADVERTISEMENT!

There is massive advertising in newspapers in Toronto, Hong Kong, and the Philippines about employment recruitment agencies for live-in caregivers. Most of these employment agencies have a connection or partnership with Immigration Consultants.

Hoping to come to Canada, many pay enormous amounts of money to get assistance in processing their papers either on temporary work permits, student visas', visitors' visas', or under the Live-in Caregiver Program.

Approximately \$4,000 to \$7,000 is being paid to "representatives" or "agents" of agencies for help. After paying these high fees, people are shocked and upset that what they requested for, such as a work permit or student visa is not given to them. There have been some cases where they have waited more than one year but still have not received confirmation of employment or employment has not been arranged at all.

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Recently some employment agencies have been exposed of fraud operations and participating in unlawful activities regarding the recruitment of live-in caregivers in Toronto, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Call INTERCEDE to report employment/recruitment agencies and we will refer you to places that can help to take action against these agencies.



CARIBBEAN CONNECTION BLACK SUPPORT GROUP

The Caribbean Connection Black Support Group met on April 17 at Abacus Chinese Restaurant to get together and have fun. Our past meetings in the office have been very informative, but really serious, and the women thought it would be enjoyable to go out and talk about anything and fill our tummies with yummy food at the same time. May 2004 will mark the one-year anniversary of the Caribbean Connection Black Support Group and the women expressed how much this group has meant to them. They are very happy to see how the group has grown and progressed since the first meeting. When the group began we started with five participants and presently twelve to sixteen women attend each meeting. The women articulated that because of this group they feel that they have a space to meet women from the same community and who face similar problems and situations. The guest speakers have addressed issues that are specific to the needs of Black domestic workers and caregivers and this has been a great learning and support for the women.

The following is some feedback from the members of the group:

"Because if our group I feel very welcome and I can talk and be understood about my concerns. When I leave one of our sessions I am filled with a lot of valuable information. For me our Black History Month Meeting was very informative and our March meeting [coping with stress] benefited me in that I took a new approach to my situation."

"This group has helped me to know about other Black women like myself and to have more confidence in myself"

"It is a great group. It has helped me with decisions in my life."

"I feel very proud to be part of this group of women who share the same thing as me. I feel connected."

"I feel I have found a place where I can talk freely and people can understand where I am coming from."

"I feel that I can talk freely without fear, knowing that whatever I say is safe."

In future groups the women want to work more closely with the STATUS Coalition and have more social outings. If you are a Black caregiver or domestic worker and would like to join the Caribbean Connection please contact Salma Saadi at (416) 483-4554 x22 for more information.



CASINO NIAGARA SPRING TRIP

Sightseeing:

**Niagara on the Lake, Winery,
Flower Clock, See Tulips of different colours
and Cherry Blossoms in full bloom
And of course the breathtaking beauty of Niagara Falls**

For only \$25.00

Saturday, May 15, 2004

8:30 - Assembly Time

9:00 - Departure Time

Meeting Place: York Mills Subway Stn.
(at Shell Gas Stn., Southeast of Yonge)

**Free \$10 Voucher for Casino Niagara
And \$5 Voucher for Food**

To register, please call Genie at 416-483-4554 ext. 21

NOTE: For those who don't have the Niagara Casino Membership card bring your passport or driving license to be able to claim the \$10 and \$5 vouchers at the Casino. Under 19 years old not allowed.

HOLIDAY PAY

Live in caregivers are entitled to holiday pay. There are eight statutory holidays in Canada; New Years Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Even if you did not work on a holiday, you are entitled to "Holiday Pay", provided you worked all of your last regularly scheduled shifts before the holiday and all of the first scheduled shifts after the holiday, or you provided reasonable cause for not working either of those days. Every employee is entitled to holiday pay no matter how recently they were hired or how many days they worked before the holiday.

Holiday pay is computed as follows:

All the regular wages plus all the vacation pay which is payable to the employee in the four weeks ending just before the work week with the public holiday, divided by 20. Regular wages don't include any overtime or premium pay payable to an employee.

If you worked on a holiday, there are two ways to be paid and there should be an agreement in writing on how did you choose to be paid.

First, you will be paid holiday pay plus premium pay which is equivalent to overtime pay, 1.5 of gross hourly rate

OR

You will be given another day off with holiday pay but no premium pay.

Should you have any question regarding holiday and premium pay, call INTERCEDE for an appointment with any of the counselors.



Q & A

Q- Is it really important to ask for pay slip from employers?

A- Yes, it is very important that you request for your pay slip/ statement of earnings so that you will know how much is your gross pay and what deductions were taken from your salary. Always remember that computation of your benefits such as vacation pay, overtime, holiday and premium pays and deduction for taxes, CPP and EI is based on your gross income.

Q- My application for permanent residence and open work permit is in process and my current work permit will expire on February 2005. I am still staying with my employer and they allowed me to go back to the Philippines for one month vacation. Can I go home even the above mentioned application is still in process or do I have to wait until my permanent residence application has been approved?

A- Yes, you can still go home for vacation to the Philippines even your application for permanent residence and open work permit is in process as long as you have a valid work permit for six months and you have a letter from your employer certifying that they allowed you to go back home and that you are expected to resume your work as their live in caregiver on a specific date. You have to present these documents to Canadian embassy visa officers in Manila when you apply for re-entry visa. Don't forget, you cannot come to Canada if you don't have a re-entry visa even if you have a valid work permit.

Q- I am married with 2 children, 11 and 16 years old and I will soon submit my application for permanent residence and open work permit. Is it true that if I will not request for concurrent processing of my family members in the Philippines, I will get my permanent residence faster than the usual processing time?

A- First of all, approval of applications for permanent residence depends on the immigration officer that handles your files. Nobody can tell when an applicant can get his /her approval. However, even if you did not request for concurrent processing of your family members in the Philippines, they will still have to undergo the same procedures. Immigration will still require them to undergo medical and security check and unless they are cleared in the Philippines, you will not get your permanent residence. Therefore, it will still take maximum of 18 months processing time whether you requested or not, for concurrent processing of your family members.

Q- I received my Permanent Residence Status last January and recently transferred here in Toronto where I accepted employment in a pharmaceutical company. In my application, I requested my dependents for a concurrent processing for their permanent residence to be re-united with me. Will there be a problem when they arrived in Canada why their destination is Toronto, rather than in Vancouver as stated in my application?

A- No, I do not see any problem. When your dependents arrive they can report at their point of entry that their sponsor has change residence and currently residing in a different place where they also agreed to live. In Canada you have the mobility rights regardless of whether you are permanent resident or citizen.

Q- My employers will be relocating in the USA due to his employment and to further her studies. They wanted me to go with them since their children have grown accustomed to me. I am currently under an Open Employment Authorization and am waiting for the approval of my Permanent Residence. What are the consequences that may happen and will my immigration papers be affected?

A- First, ask your employers if they are Canadian Citizens and will they still pay their taxes here in Canada; and also will they be withholding and remitting the necessary deductions from your salary. Secondly, will you have health coverage or will you have a work permit to work for them when you will be in the USA. Third, do they have arrangement on how their mail will be forwarded and will you be allowed to return to Canada to pick-up your permanent residence status. Once the above are met you may go with your employer and make sure that your immigration papers in Canada is valid. In addition contact the US Consulate for more information on how to obtain a TN Visa for Professionals under NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement).

Q- My dependents whom I sponsored last year have completed all the requirements and are only waiting for the issue of their visa. I am worried because their medical will expire in June. I tried calling Immigration on my break time from work during the day but can not get through. If I give my consent and client ID number to your office can you make the follow-up for me?

A- Yes, INTERCEDE can make the follow-up as long as you have the written consent, however, you need to act immediately if your dependents medical will expire in June. Immigration has implemented an on-line electronic Client Application Status (e-CAS) service. This will allow clients to view status of their immigration application under family class, sponsorship and permanent resident for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Only CIC clients or authorized representatives who are able to provide required identification information can access. To view the e-CAS service go to CIC Web @ www.cic.gc.ca



JOIN KAPISANAN PHILIPPINE CENTRE (KPC) And INTERCEDE's

LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY TRAINING

When : SUNDAY (Six months starting June 2004)

June 13 & 27, 2004

July 11 & 25, 2004

Aug. 8 & 22, 2004

Sep. 5 & 19, 2004

Oct. 3, 17 & 31, 2004

Nov. 14, 2004

Orientation— June 13, 2004, Sunday, 1—4 p.m.

Where : ACROSS BOUNDARIES

51 Clarkson Ave. (E. of Caledonia/N of Eglinton

W.)

Time : 4:00—7:00 p.m.

For more information call 416-887-6126 or 416-483-4554 ext.

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"I learned about my rights and how to become assertive—now I am treated with more respect!" - Series participant

This project is funded by Maytree Foundation and the Ministry of the Attorney General Victims Services Division

Looking for job leads or career connections?



INTERCEDE Offers



Saturday Cafe



For Personal Support Workers

Have fun in an informal group setting while you:

Interview foreign-trained professionals in your field who are now "success stories"

Know the terms, trends & the hidden job market for your type of job/career

Know which organizations you may professionally connect.



Explore training options



Meet new friends who can be your potential job leads

Saturday – May 29, 2004, 3 to 5 p.m.
234 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 405
(North of Eglinton Ave E. & West of Mt. Pleasant)
Toronto, Ontario
Bus # 34, 54 , 51, 103 & 100

Please call for trade-specific information. Seating is limited.
(416) 483-4554 ext. 21 or 30

INTERCEDE also provides free and confidential counseling, information and referral services for domestic workers, caregivers and newcomers.



FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS & FOR NEWCOMERS

WHEN: SUNDAY
June 6, 13, 20 & 27, 2004
July 4, 11, 18 & 25, 2004
August 8, 15, 22 & 29, 2004
TIME : 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
WHERE: INTERCEDE
234 Eglinton Ave E., Suite 405
Toronto, On, M4P 1K5

Please call (416)483-4554 ext. 30 or 21 to sign up.
Seating is limited.

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

INTERCEDE

Address: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 405
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:

- Jo Alcampo — Interim Administrative Co-ordinator
- Des Balce - JSW Facilitator
- Columbia Diaz - Settlement Counsellor & Program Manager
- Anita Fortuno - Settlement Counsellor
- Salma Saadi - Settlement Counsellor
- Genie Policarpio - Intake & Administrative Assistant
- Fely Villasin - Coordinator—on leave

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, Maytree and Trillium Foundations grant programs, for their financial support..



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