

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers and Newcomers

May 2006

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554



"FROM VICTIMIZATION TO EMPOWERMENT"- THEME OF EIGHTH INTERCEDE CONFERENCE

INTERCEDE has issued an invitation to Ontario caregivers and domestic workers, particularly those in the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) to come to a conference where they can share their stories of victimization and where they can then develop prevention measures and solutions that can empower them.

Organizations serving domestic workers and caregivers outside Ontario are expected to send delegates to the three-day meeting, the eighth such event organized by INTERCEDE. The Conference will start on the evening of May 5 and end mid-day on Sunday May 7. It will take place at the Kapisanan Philippine Centre, a newly-opened Filipino-Canadian artistic and cultural venue located in Augusta Street, Kensington area.

The early part of the meeting will consist of sharing stories and listening to the experiences of participants in which they fell victim to violence and other forms of abuse. These stories will be the context for the discussions in the following sessions.

Most of Saturday will be spent examining the structural and systemic barriers that may give rise to violence in our society, and the reasons why they persist. A presentation and workshop on racism will be headed by Martha Ocampo, Executive Director of Across Boundaries Ethnocultural Mental Health Centre. In the afternoon, a presentation and workshop on Violence against Women will be facilitated by Marilyn Oladimeiji, a collective member of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre.

From Vancouver, two organizations will be updating delegates on their work related to the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP): the West Coast Domestic Workers' Association will be represented by Grace Balbutin, Legal Advocate, who will talk of their experiences with the 24/36 -month rule, among others. Meanwhile, Lorina Serafico and Cenen Bagon of the Committee for Domestic Workers' and Caregivers' Rights will discuss immediate and future concerns vis-à-vis the LCP.

PLEASE BE WARNED

It has come to our attention that the good name of INTERCEDE is being used without our authorization nor knowledge by unscrupulous parties including recruitment and employment agencies, immigration consultants, and similar others in order to lend credibility to their businesses and for other opportunistic reasons and intentions. Be reminded that all INTERCEDE services are FREE.

If you encounter any such misrepresentation of INTERCEDE, in whatever form or context, please report to us including all relevant information so that we can pursue the matter promptly. Call 416-483-4554 or email info@intercedetoronto.org.

These presentations will be followed by a discussion of solutions and prevention strategies, including government services, that participants can avail of or adopt. There will be a representative from the Ministry of the Attorney General Ontario Victim Services Secretariat, Linda Chihab, who will talk about the resources and services which are offered to assist victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and other crimes..

The last sessions of the conference will focus on action plans which can be locally implemented or nationally coordinated aimed not only to minimize victimization but also to empower caregivers into active advocacy to eliminate the barriers that they face.

But it will not just be work, work, work – there will be time to socialize and get to know each other and to mingle with friends and supporters. This is the highlight of a Community Night which will start at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 7. It will be open to the public.

Funding for the meeting came from the Ministry of the Attorney General through the Ontario Victim Services Secretariat Community Projects Grants Program. This Program focuses on victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, hate crimes, child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, and other under-served and unserved victims.

WHAT TO DO IF ARRESTED FOR IMMIGRATION REASONS

Recent newspaper stories about the deportation of workers accused of living in Canada without proper documents have sent a chill down the spine of many newcomers and immigrants including workers on temporary work permits under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP).

Immigrant-serving organizations are concerned that misinformation or lack of information could make matters worse for those who are worried that a similar fates await them or their relatives and friends.

To ensure that all human rights are observed and protected, these organizations are exerting an effort to properly and widely inform their constituents and each other about the facts and processes that should be expected and which they should be aware of.

At this time the legal information from the Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) is valuable for all concerned. CLEO has a wide range of information published in brochures that relate to urgent and practical legal matters affecting particularly all newcomers in Ontario. One that has become relevant these days is entitled: "Being Arrested and Detained for Immigration Reasons".

This pamphlet outlines the rights that someone has and what one should do if confronted with arrest or detention by Immigration authorities. Certainly you have the right to ask for an interpreter, especially if you doubt you will understand everything being told to you. And you do have the right to ask for a lawyer to consult. In fact an arresting officer must tell you of this right. Until such a lawyer comes, you may refuse to answer questions although you are advised to answer if what is at issue is a simple, easily-explained mistake!

A permanent resident (landed immigrant) or a "protected person" such as a refugee whose claim has been accepted, cannot be arrested without a warrant.

But an arrest can be made if you are considered inadmissible to Canada and you are deemed a danger to the public, or you are unlikely to appear for a hearing or removal order, or if immigration authorities are unsure who you are (such as arriving with no passport). There is a list of reasons why you can be detained but within 48 hours your detention must be reviewed at which time you have the right to have an interpreter provided to assist you. Even before your detention review, it will be a good idea to think about who can post your bond.

If you are not released after the first detention review, you must have another review in seven days, and every 30 days after that until either you are released or removed from Canada. You cannot be detained indefinitely. In case you are released you will be made to follow certain terms and conditions, including having a guarantor or bondsperson.

You may be able to apply for Legal Aid although this is not often given for detention reviews or admissibility hearings. Still it will be important for you to contact community organizations for immigrants or refugees such as the Toronto Refugee Affairs Council or the Refugee Law Office.

This and other CLEO publications can be accessed at www.cleo.on.ca or by telephone 416-408-4420.

OHIP COVERAGE FOR LIVE-IN CAREGIVERS ON "IMPLIED STATUS"

A caregiver in the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) whose work permit has expired after she applied for an open work permit is said to be on "implied status" while waiting for her open work permit.

Being on such "implied status", has meant that the live-in caregiver cannot renew OHIP coverage because she does not have a valid work permit. A valid work permit is one of the requirements for OHIP coverage according to the rules of the Ontario Ministry of Health.

After making some representation with the Ministry, INTERCEDE has received assurance that anyone who is refused OHIP coverage while awaiting an open work permit (authorization), that is, while on "implied status", can now appeal such decision so that OHIP Coverage will continue.

What to do to continue OHIP Coverage:

Write a letter of appeal addressed to:

General Manager
Ontario Health Insurance Plan
49 Place d'Armes, 3rd Floor
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 5J3

Upon receipt of your appeal, the Ontario Ministry of Health – OHIP division will call Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) in Vegreville, Alberta, to confirm your status. Once CIC validates, your "implied status", your OHIP coverage will be renewed.

Call INTERCEDE for an appointment with any of the counselors if you want further information and assistance.

INVESTING IS ALSO FOR YOU

When we hear the word "investment" we often associate it with people who have money to invest. We think it is not for ordinary workers like us who earn just enough to meet our basic necessities and to save a small amount for emergency purposes.

People invest for several reasons: to make a down payment on a house, to help pay for children's education, for retirement and for financial stability of loved ones in case of death.

Investing does not necessarily involve large amounts of money. Before you start investing, take time to develop a personal investment strategy with the help of one or more qualified professional financial advisers and ask for an investment portfolio that you can afford. You can avail of the services of financial advisers in your bank or insurance company. Word of mouth can be helpful in identifying capable financial advisers. Ask for recommendations from your accountant, your family or friends whose judgment you trust.

Establish clear and reasonable investment goals with the help of your financial adviser. The latter is trained to stay on top of all the information about markets and the direction of the economy. Discuss your knowledge of financial markets, your financial assets, your tolerance for risk, the amount of money you plan to invest and the things you hope to accomplish by investing.

Be knowledgeable and on guard: do not invest on the basis of hot tips and rumors nor blindly follow investment advice that you don't understand. Don't be afraid to say "NO" if you are not convinced the investment is right for you. Do research on the kind of investment that is best for you.

Invest what you can today because even a small amount of money will end up making a significant difference to your future.

REMINDERS

Make an appointment first

Please call for an appointment before you decide to visit INTERCEDE and have your appointment confirmed by a counselor you want to see. Otherwise, counselors will not be able to talk to you as they may already be booked for other appointments and they will just give you an appointment for another day. To avoid being sent home and wasting your day, do confirm your appointment before coming to INTERCEDE.

Q & A

- Q. My 20 year old daughter has a one year old child both of whom I support financially. Can I put them in my application for Permanent Residence under the LCP as my dependents and request concurrent processing of their papers so that we can be re-united all together?*
- A.** You can claim both your daughter and her child as your dependents if the former is **unmarried**. It is expected that she remain unmarried while your papers are being processed until she receives approval. Even if your daughter decides not to come to Canada she still has to complete the requirements i.e pass medical and security clearances. For further info and assistance call INTERCEDE.
- Q. I am lacking one month to complete the 24/36 month requirement of the LCP. Can I file my application for Permanent Residence with a supporting letter from a doctor saying I got sick and this led to termination of employment because I needed a few months to recover. What are my chances for approval?*
- A.** There is no harm in trying and filing your application since you do have a very valid reason for not completing the requirement. The support letter from your doctor, a letter from your employer and any proof of skills training would be strong contributing factors that would make CIC sympathetic in considering your application. Also, it would be wise if you came to INTERCEDE for assistance as well as a support letter since we feel that you should not be penalized for circumstances beyond your control.

**Fri. May 5 to Sun. May 7
FROM VICTIMIZATION
TO EMPOWERMENT**

**8th INTERCEDE Domestic Workers
and Caregivers Conference
Inviting workers in the
Live-in Caregiver Program
employed in Ontario and other Cities**

Register now 416-483-4554 ext 21

**Please note that INTERCEDE has no monthly
meeting at Cecil Community Centre for the
month of May 2006**

PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

Are you feeling uncertain about what career path to take and how to best get there? Perhaps you have identified several career options that appear inviting but you are unsure about which one to choose? If this is where you are at, the first thing to remember is that you're not alone!

Most live-in caregivers struggle with similar kinds of issues especially when they're about to complete the 24/36 month requirement of the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). It might even surprise you to learn that these issues are not solely restricted to these people. Some participants start to have career and job-related concerns as early as when they first arrive in Canada.

Below is a list of the more frequent concerns that people might have about their post-LCP future. Do any of the following statements sound familiar?

- "I'm discouraged. I feel so unfocused...I don't know where I'm heading."
- "I like my job as caregiver, what are my options?"
- "I'm, not sure what I'm going to do with my college degree."
- "I'm afraid that my knowledge in my field or area of specialization has become obsolete".
- "I feel incompetent. I don't even know what my skills are or if I have any."
- "I don't know where I will start looking (for jobs)".
- "I want to know how my skills will fit with the job opportunities out there."
- "I really don't know what the high-demand jobs are."
- "Am I on the right track?"
- "Time is running out and I don't know what decision to make."
- "I want to start looking for jobs but how will I know if I have the right resume for the job?"

If any of these statements apply to you and you feel that you are not making any progress, a Job Search Workshop at INTERCEDE may be the best way to go. Becoming clear about which way to go and what will help you get there is something you can get out of the workshop. It can help you put your best foot forward in your job search efforts.

As the saying goes, "You usually start somewhere to get somewhere." Call and register at 416-483-4554 ext. 30 or 21. Don't wait until you've finished the LCP before you start job search, start now.

FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS & NEWCOMERS

WHEN: SUNDAY

May 13, 14, 27 & 28, 2006

June 4, 11, , 18 & 25, 2006

July 9, 16, 23 & 30, 2006

TIME : 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

WHERE: KAPISANAN PHILIPPINE CENTRE

167 Augusta Ave.,

(West of Spadina, North of Dundas St. W.)

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

Seating is limited.

Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada

INTERCEDE

INTERCEDE STAFF:

Address: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 405

Toronto Ontario

M4P 1K5

Regular Hours: Mon-Friday 9 am – 5 p.m.

Telephone: (416) 483-4554

Fax: (416) 483-9781

Toll-Free: 1-877-483-4554

E-mail: info@intercedetoronto.org

INTERCEDE STAFF:

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Anita Fortuno - Settlement Counsellor

Bernice Small - Settlement Counsellor

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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