

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers and Newcomers

May 2007

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554



A JUBILANT MESSAGE

By Coco Diaz

A regular morning greeted me with a jubilant call that was left in my answering machine. Yes, a call from a caregiver who was acquitted from all charges and her case was dismissed in the criminal court due to lack of sufficient evidence of child abuse.

Kara was accused of child abuse and was reported to the Police by her employer after the Employment Standards Branch of the Ministry of Labour ordered Kara's former employer to pay for the claims she filed.

Kara, a caregiver from West Africa, came to INTERCEDE two years ago after being terminated without notice with all her belongings left in her employer's house. In addition, she claimed that she was never paid of her salary and there were other violations under the Employment Standards Act that occurred during Kara's 7 months employment with the family.

After successfully reviewing and analyzing Kara's information, her rights as a caregiver was explained. She was also given information what action she can take. The first step Kara did, was to seek the assistance of the Police who escorted her to retrieve her belongings from her employer's place. Then she returned to the office for assistance for the calculation of her unpaid wages, vacation and termination notice.

Kara's request of payments for the above was ignored by the employer. Again, she was advised to file her claim through the Employment Standards Branch of the Ministry of Labour. A fact finding meeting was scheduled where both parties were present at the office of The Ministry of Labour, followed by a settlement meeting. All substantial evidence presented ruled out that Kara's claim was valid and her former employer was ordered to pay her.

A feeling of relief was expressed by Kara specially after she found another employer who are very happy and satisfied with her job performance. Her employment was again interrupted when Immigration refused to renew her Employment Authorization due to the pending result of her Child Abuse case.

In one of Kara's hearing, an INTERCEDE staff was called as a witness. In this hearing, staff testified in court that there was no child abuse mentioned during the first visit of Kara's employer at the office nor during those meetings at the Ministry of Labour. In fact, the employer even brought their children and prompted them to make some obviously rehearsed statements of Kara's activities while still a live-in caregiver for their family.

Kara is thankful of the assistance of her Legal Aide Lawyer, her friends who believed in her and at INTERCEDE. Kara deserves much credit for her courage and persistence!

*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 for/renew your membership - \$10.

Sunday, May 6, 2007, 3 - 5 p.m.
at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St
(one block south of College, cor. Spadina)

HEALTHY EATING TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF CANCER **By: Pauline Wisdom-Gilliam, Registered Dietitian** **Oncology Dietician at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre**

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

NIAGARA FALLS SPRING TRIP



SIGHTSEEING TO:

**Niagara on the Lake, Winery, Floral Clock,
Reg's Candy Kitchen,
See Tulips of different colours
and Cherry Blossoms in full bloom,
and of course,
the breathtaking beauty of
Niagara Falls**

On Saturday, May 26, 2007

- 8:30 a.m. - Assembly Time
- 9:00 a.m. - Departure Time - Toronto,
Meeting Place: York Mills Subway Stn.
(at Shell Gas Stn., Southeast of Yonge)
- 6:30 p.m. - Arrival time in Toronto

For only \$35.00

***Please Note:**

Entrance Fees (ef) ranging from \$10 to \$16, will be paid separately by every individual to the following places if you want to see.

- Butterfly Conservatory (ef)*, Bird Kingdom (ef)*,
The Whirlpool Aero Car (ef)*,
Botanical Delights (ef)*, White Water Walk (ef)

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

ONTARIO'S MINIMUM WAGE TO INCREASE TO \$10.25 OVER THREE YEARS

(An excerpt from <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca>)

The MacGuinty government has committed, through its 2007 budget, to raising Ontario's general minimum wage by 75 cents per hour annually over three years.

Effective the following dates, the basic minimum wage would increase to:

- ☞ \$ 8.75 as of March 31, 2008
- ☞ \$ 9.50 as of March 31, 2009
- ☞ \$10.25 as of March 31, 2010

For further information call: 1-800-531-5551

A SUCCESSFUL TAX CLINIC DAY FOR ASSOCIATION OF FILIPINO-CANADIAN ACCOUNTANTS (AFCA) VOLUNTEERS

We would like to thank the group of the Association of Filipino-Canadian Accountants (AFCA), led by Al Tupe, for their unending support to INTERCEDE to serve the community. It was another successful day!

There were 18 AFCA volunteers who prepared the tax for 65 members of INTERCEDE on Tax Clinic Day, April 15, 2007 from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.

More power to AFCA!



AFCA Volunteers

INTERCEDE BLACK SUPPORT GROUP

On Saturday, May 12th come and participate in a workshop on writing stories about your life. This workshop will be co-facilitated by Bernice Small and Dianah Smith. Dianah Smith is a writer, community organizer and teacher who was born in Jamaica and grew up in Canada. Dianah writes stories about family, community, culture and identity. You don't have to be a 'writer' to take part in this workshop. Come with an open heart and a willingness to participate. Please arrive on time!

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

INTERCEDE

is planning a trip to Quebec & Montreal on

August 17 to 19, 2007

- Depart Toronto = August 17 - Friday mid-night (12:00 a.m.)
- Arrival in Montreal = August 18 - Saturday morning (07:00 a.m.)
- Depart Montreal = August 19 - Sunday morning (08:00 a.m.)
- Arrival in Quebec = August 19 - Sunday morning (10:00 a.m.)
- Arrival in Toronto = Sunday evening (10:00 p.m.)

Cost to be announced

Please call Genie for further information at 416-483-4554 ext. 21

Q & A

By: INTERCEDE Counsellors

Q: I am a live-in caregiver and I received my open work permit on August 2006. I got married to a refugee claimant whose application has been refused by CIC Refugee Board. At the time of our marriage, his appeal for the refusal of his refugee claim was still in process. After we got married, I informed the Case Processing Centre in Alberta about the change in my status at the same time, I requested for concurrent processing for permanent residence of my husband.

CIC-Mississauga sent him a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA) application kit which we immediately sent to CIC hoping he would be given another chance to stay in Canada and be accepted as a Convention Refugee.

Last March 2007, I received a letter from CPC-Vegreville, Alberta stating that my application for permanent residence could be refused since my husband could not meet the requirement for permanent residence because he is subject to removal order from Canada. I was asked to make a decision regarding my request for concurrent processing of my husband within sixty days; what should I do now? What are my chances now of being approved for permanent residence under the Live-in Caregiver Program?

A: Yes, your application for permanent residence maybe refused because of your husband being subject for removal from Canada. I will give you two options:

ca Write a letter to CIC informing them that your husband submitted a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA) to Citizenship and Immigration Canada office in Mississauga and that you are both waiting for the decision if your husband will be given a chance to stay in Canada. If he gets positive result from his PRRA that means he can stay legally and can be processed concurrent with your application for permanent residence from within Canada. However, if CIC Case Processing Centre in Alberta will not give you consideration and will not wait for the result of his PRRA, then your application might be refused immediately.

ca Another option, write a letter to CIC and advise them that your husband will voluntarily go home to the Philippines without waiting for the result of his PRRA. You will request for his concurrent processing for permanent residence at the Canadian Visa Office in Manila. Case Processing Centre in Vegreville will continue processing your application and they will forward your husband's information to the Visa office in Manila for processing.

However, I am not sure what would be the consequences of his being a refugee claimant to your application because there might be some issues affecting his security clearance. He applied as a refugee because he fears that if he goes back to his home country, his life would be in danger for whatever reason. I am concerned that he might have a criminal case/record pending in his home country and it will appear on his police record clearance. If this happens, your husband will be "criminally inadmissible" to Canada and your application might still be refused whether you included him or not in your application for permanent residence.

Q: I recently received my Permanent Residence status under the LCP. My niece who is in the Philippines was sponsored by my employer to replace me as their live in caregiver. She completed all the requirements and only waiting for the issue of her visa to travel when she received a letter from the Canadian Visa Office requesting the prospective employer to provide their Financial status like copy of T4 or assessment from Revenue Canada. This made my employer furious because exposing their income and financial status to an office outside Canada would be considered a violation of their privacy. My employer is losing interest to proceed in hiring my niece. What should I do?

A: We contacted the Foreign Worker Division of HRSDC Ontario Region and we were informed that the Visa Office want confirmation that the employer has the capacity to hire and pay the salary of the caregiver. Also, it is another way of confirming that a caregiver will arrive in Canada to work for a genuine employer and not just for the purpose of bringing a caregiver. It is worth letting your employer know that they can contact the Visa Office to keep the information they are providing confidential.

Q: My employer is having another child before the expiry of my Employment Authorization and I agreed to renew for another year. I was advised that there would be an increase of my salary. I am receiving a net income of \$1,200 looking after two children five and three years old and I do light house-keeping. What is the acceptable percentage of my current salary that I can ask?

A: Under the Employment Standard Act (ESA), there is no suggested amount when there is an increase in the responsibility other than minimum wage. You can negotiate with your employer whatever reasonable increase you want in your salary that compensate your additional work. Good luck!

Q: I am a newcomer in Canada under the Live-in Caregiver program and I have been working with my employer for only two weeks. However, I am not happy with my situation and I would like to change employer. At the start of my employment, my employer took my work permit because according to her, it is her property since it was issued under her name. If I decide to leave, can I get back my work permit?

A: I am very sorry to hear that you are not happy with your employment. Nevertheless, before you decide to leave the job try to discuss your concerns with your employer. Let her know why you are not happy and maybe both of you could find a solution to your problem with out you leaving your employment. You should never give your passport or work permit to your employer because it is not your employer's property. These documents are your property and you are responsible for it while working in Canada under the Live-in Caregiver Program. If your employer has your work permit or passport and she refuses to give it back to you, your can contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada at 1-888-242-2100 or call INTERCEDE office at 416-483-4554 and ask any of the counselors for assistance.

JSW PROFILE

JOB SEARCH NETWORKING

Majority of the Jobs Available are not published. And so it is important that a job seeker employs all the proper techniques in looking for jobs, such as *EFFECTIVE NETWORKING*.

Here are 10 tips to make your networking fruitful:

1. **Prepare an "elevator speech."** Write a summary of what you want people to know about you that can be delivered in less than 30 seconds. **Master it!**
2. **Use your existing ties.** Spread the word that you are looking for a job and ask friends, acquaintances and families if anyone has a contact who might be able to offer advice or help.
3. **Target trade groups.** Join the dominant trade or industry group in your targeted area. Consider volunteering in one of the group's committees to meet members.
4. **Show interest in others.** Stop focusing on yourself alone and take genuine interest in the other person. Ask questions and get the contacts to talk about themselves and their career experiences.
5. **Don't ask for a job immediately.** It may force the other person to say no to you. People are likelier to be generous with their time if you ask for their counsel. Don't worry if you seem qualified for an opening, they will refer you to the right person to set up an interview.
6. **Build relationships.** Strangers won't put their reputation on the line for you. Build ties with a new contact before asking for help.
7. **Don't be selfish.** Remember that networking is a two-way street.
8. **Don't abuse relationships.** There is no definite rule on how many phone calls are too many. Try to gauge if you are coming across as always looking for a favor.
9. **Follow through.** Nothing can kill a budding relationship faster than not writing a proper thank-you note. In many cases, you can e-mail it; a three-line message with a smiley face won't cut it
10. **Maintain your network.** Cultivate ties even when you are not currently job hunting.

For more Job Search Information, join a Job Search Workshop at INTERCEDE. Call 416-483-4554 ext. 21 or 30.

FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS & NEWCOMERS

WHEN: SUNDAY
 May 6, 13, 26 & 27, 2007
 June 3, 10, 17 & 24, 2007
 July 8, 15, 22 & 29, 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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Toronto Ontario
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Fax: (416) 483-9781
Toll-Free: 1-877-483-4554
Web Site: www.intercedetoronto.org
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; and the Municipality of Toronto CSP for their financial support.

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



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