

# DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL N

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

May/June 1998



## CHANGE MIGRATION POLICY OF FILIPINO MIGRAN

Since the mid-1970's, the number of Filipinos going abroad for employment has been steadily increasing. By the 1990's, half a million Filipino workers leave annually to over 130 destinations abroad. Official and media figures place the number of overseas Filipinos at 6 million, some 4.2 million of whom are working for fixed terms or under contract employment.

Along with this increase is the dramatic rise of mysterious deaths and all sorts of abuses committed against overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

\* At least two dead remains of OFWs are repatriated daily. Excluding undocumented workers, this translates to 700 lives lost annually. In 1996, Congress documented at least 150 deaths occurring under suspicious circumstances.

\* Every other day, an overseas worker comes home with a mental disorder and at least daily for having physical disabilities. The National Mental Hospital reported that in 1994, some 200 OFWs were confined at the institution and that OFWs have become the single biggest group treated for mental disorder.

\* Even today, thousands of Filipinos are languishing in jails abroad for various offenses. Among them are hundreds of Filipinos awaiting execution for crimes which many of them claimed as fabricated charges, while others complained of unfair trial or unjust

punishments for ordinary offenses.

A Magna Carta for overseas Filipinos was signed into law in June 1995. Yet, the much-vaunted law has failed so far in curtailing abuses committed against Filipino migrants. They remained virtually unprotected and their basic rights systematically violated with impunity in most countries that play host to Filipino workers. Countless among them continue to experience all sorts of abuses and exploitation, especially Filipino women migrants.

Notwithstanding the risks entailed, the exodus of Filipinos at risk, they also constitute a vast reservoir of human resources that can substantially contribute to national development. Overseas income kept the Philippine economy afloat, with billions of dollars poured into the local economy in annual salary remittances (\$7 billion in 1996 and 1997). A significant percent of Filipino professionals are working overseas as doctors, nurses, scientists, computer and information specialists, economists and educators. Millions of our skilled workers are abroad working on fixed contract employment. Billions of dollars in OFW savings can be invested in agriculture to spur the rural economy and in light manufacturing and local industry.

It is against this backdrop that Kakammpi, in consultation with its members and partner organizations abroad, has formulated its Migrants' Agenda to decisively address some of the most critical issues and concerns of Filipino overseas workers.

*All Domestic/Caregiver Workers, Non-Immigrant Women with Temporary Work Permit and all Newcomers*

*YOU ARE WELCOME TO*

## INTERCEDE MEETING EVERY FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

(if a holiday, meeting is on second Sunday)

**Sunday, June 7, 1998 3 - 5 p.m.**

Cecil Community Center, 58 Cecil Street

Discussion Topic: **Domestic/Caregiver Workers barriers to Integration**

Renew your membership or Apply for New Member at 3:00 p.m.

## Policy Statement

Scrap the prevailing labor export program in favor of a people-oriented migration policy that would give the highest priority on the rights, economic upliftment and social development of Filipino migrants and their families while providing avenues for their meaningful and tangible participation in national development, particularly in the fields of governance, policy development, business, agriculture, education, science and technology.

(to be continued next newsletter)

*Excerpted from Kakammpi, Position Paper on Overseas Migration, April 1998.*

## WHAT WOMEN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MENOPAUSE

Are you around the age of 45 and experiencing hot flashes, irregular menstruation, weakening of the bladder muscles, insomnia, night sweats, bouts of depression, nervousness, irritability, brittle bones, headaches, etc.? Well you may just have MENOPAUSE!

But don't be dismayed, 90% of all women will experience at least one of these symptoms during menopause, which simply means the end of menstruation. It is a natural and gradual change in a woman's body when the ovaries can no longer produce female hormones (estrogen).

Some reports say that women first show the psychological symptoms of menopause as menstrual periods start becoming irregular, and then the physical symptoms after menopause actually begins and the hormonal (estrogen) production ceases.

Each woman's symptoms and experiences during menopause are different. In fact, some of the psychological effects experienced may be as a result of our lifestyle or stressful situations that may arise as we get older.

Although about 75% of all women experience hot flashes, osteoporosis is perhaps the most important health problem associated with low levels of estrogen. It is a disease primarily of postmenopausal woman marked by the eroding and weakening of bones through the loss of calcium, the mineral responsible for strong bones. Our bones reach their maximum strength by about age 35.

The average North American woman will likely lose an inch and a half in height a decade, due to this vertebral collapse. By the time an average woman is 80 she will have a 47% bone loss compared to that of her male counterpart who will only have a loss of about 14%. Women most vulnerable to osteoporosis are those who are

thin, Caucasian or Oriental, have small frames, don't exercise, smoke cigarettes and have a family history of the disease. Heavy women rarely develop osteoporosis as bones seem to respond to increased weight by producing new bone tissue.

Calcium and exercise may slow or stop bone loss. Good sources of calcium include milk, yogurt, cheese and dark green vegetables such as broccoli. We should be consuming a daily minimum of 1000 mg before menopause and at least 1200 mg after.

There are estrogen replacement therapies that are available to alleviate postmenopausal symptoms. There are also simple remedies to control the discomfort of hot flashes, such as a cold drink, a cool shower at bedtime, avoid tense situations and spicy foods, etc. Women whose symptoms are severe enough to warrant medical attention should talk to their doctor to discuss the most appropriate treatment and its risks.

It is important for women to know that estrogen should only be given in the smallest needed dosage in a cyclic fashion. If your uterus has not been removed, estrogens should be taken with progestin. Finally no therapy should be attempted without the careful supervision of your physician.

Remember, menopause is a natural change. The more we learn about it, the more we can do to stop, slow or alleviate the onset and effect of the symptoms.

Summarized from the article, Managing Menopause, Earl R. Plunkett, M.D. and Charles Gold, M.D., Toronto General Hospital.

### STRESS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Saturday, June 27, 1998 2 - 5 pm  
234 Eglinton Avenue East, S-205

#### Child Care Training Session I

**May 30 to July 11, 1998** (1-4 pm every Saturday)  
*(workshop will focus on infants to children five years of age)*

#### Child Care Training Session II

**July 18 to August 29, 98** (1-4 pm every Saturday)  
*(workshop will focus on children six to twelve years of age)*

arranged by **INTERCEDE** with **Seneca College**  
for only \$70 each session  
(at Newnham Campus, Finch/Don Mills)

Register with **INTERCEDE** before May 20, 1998

## INTERCEDE WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBER

Please join INTERCEDE staff in welcoming Grace Lanceta, our new settlement worker who will be assisting the needs of Filipino newcomers.

Over the years INTERCEDE has been repeatedly approached by long time members and clients, who are mostly from the Philippines, to provide them with assistance in the sponsorship and reunification of their overseas dependents. And more recently to assist their spouses and children in adjusting to life in Canada.

Because of our unique relationship with our membership and their families, INTERCEDE received additional funds from the Immigration Settlement Adaptation Program (ISAP) to assist new Filipino immigrants for the 1998-1999 fiscal year.

Grace is no stranger to the issues concerning new immigrants. When she first came to Canada, she was alone. Struggling like other immigrants in a new country, she never lost confidence in her potential to make a life for herself in Canada, to become self-sufficient.

Although Grace is a registered nurse here in Toronto, she enjoys and prefers to work in a community-based organization dealing with diverse needs and issues.

She looks forward to working with her colleagues at INTERCEDE and in assisting other new immigrants as they face the challenges of living and adjusting to life in Canada.

### **WELCOME!**

### **NEW FILIPINO IMMIGRANTS SABAY TAYONG MAG-UMPISA SA CANADA!**

### **INTERCEDE OFFERS FREE ASSISTANCE, COUNSELLING AND INFORMATION SESSIONS ON:**

- \* Job and Employment Search
- \* Career and Skills Upgrading
- \* Comparative Studies and Evaluation
- \* Application for Professional Licensing and Registration
- \* Housing Settlement
- \* Transportation and Route Access
- \* Community Referrals
- \* New Immigrant Issues and Coping Abilities

### **INFORMATION SESSIONS ON:**

May 20, June 3, June 17 and July 2, 1998 at 3pm

Call INTERCEDE at (416) 483-4554 or 486-0548  
between 9 to 4pm to register

## QUESTION & ANSWER

Q. I would like to sponsor my 3 children ages 19, 17 and 13 years old who are in the Philippines. Do I need to send them the Sponsorship Agreement form to sign before filing it at the Processing Centre in Mississauga?

A. **Yes, your dependent child who is 19 years old must sign the Sponsorship Agreement and send it back to you so that you can include it in your application to sponsor members of the family class.**

Q. I heard that I can no longer send a money order or certified cheque for the processing fees for my application for permanent residence under the Live-in Caregiver Program. Can you tell me the new process for paying my fees?

A. **Your permanent residence application under the LCP states that all fees for workers residing in Ontario are to be paid through the National Bank of Canada. Immigration will require a stamped receipt by the Bank and for you to fill out the form enclosed in your kit if you paid by credit card.**

Q. I am a Medical Technology graduate from my country and am presently in Canada on a Student Authorization since last year. My student permit will expire on November 1998 and I do not intend to continue with my studies. Can I stay and work in Canada?

A. **You can only stay in Canada if you have valid immigration status such as a visitor's visa, student visa, work permit or permanent resident status. In order to work in Canada you must first obtain a job offer from an employer that has been approved by the Human Resource Centre (Canada Employment Centre). Applications for an employment authorization will then be processed at a Canadian Embassy outside of Canada. Please call INTERCEDE for further advice 416-483-4554.**

## INTERCEDE

### *Welcome Summer Dance*

**Saturday, June 20, 1998**

**Best Western Primrose Hotel - \$15**

**Get Your tickets Now!**

## TESTIMONIES OF APPRECIATION TO INTERCEDE STAFF

I declared my marital status as separated in my application permanent residence without any legal supporting papers. INTERCEDE guided and assisted me in securing the necessary papers to support my claim and I was able to bring in my children! In addition, I was referred to a legal clinic and am happy to report that because of INTERCEDE I did not have to spend for any lawyer fees. Thank you and more power to INTERCEDE!

With the help of INTERCEDE I was able to receive approval of my claim at the Employment Standards Branch of the Ministry of Labour. Although I had been working as a live-in domestic worker looking after an elderly, I had problems in the approval of my claim to receive unpaid overtime wages due to my job title of elderly "companion". Companions are not covered by many of the provisions under the Employment Standards Act that protect domestic workers. Thank you to INTERCEDE for assisting me with my claim and clarifying my actual position with the Ministry of Labour. My claim was approved!

After six years in Canada, I finally received permanent resident status! It only took 8 months from the time I contacted INTERCEDE for my situation to be straightened out and my application to be processed for landing. Good work INTERCEDE, I saved money not going to a lawyer and can now afford to go visit my family!

From visitor's visa to working visa and no lawyer! A million thanks to INTERCEDE staff for guiding me through the process of applying to work in Canada and for listening to my many anxieties.

### VANCOUVER CDWCR

*Committee for Domestic Workers' &  
Caregivers' Rights*  
(an INTERCEDE Affiliate)

Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 874-0649

*We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Canadian Heritage; Multiculturalism Program; Ministry of Citizenship, Culture & Recreation (NSP); Women's Program, Status of Women; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); the City of Toronto Grants Review Board, Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) for their financial support.*

Workshop on:

### "WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?"

*(A Continuing Education to End Violence Against Women)*

**Sunday, May 31, 1998 2 - 5 pm**

Please register by calling 483-4554

## WHAT'S UP! INTERCEDE CAREGIVER'S COOPERATIVE

OUR Mission is to improve the working conditions of domestic workers/caregivers, by ensuring a safe working environment, opportunity for employment benefits, and personal/career growth.

OUR Service Orientation is to provide an efficient, secured and dependable caregiving and domestic services to Ontario families.

### *Planning For The Best*

INTERCEDE Caregiver's Cooperative will have a strategic planning workshop on June 6, 1998 at Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre located at 2 Carlton Street, Suite 500 Toronto.

The goal of the workshop is to develop a strategic business plan to effectively promote and operate the caregiver's placement agency and increase cooperative membership. The workshop will be open to interested caregivers/domestic workers, cooperative members and non-members.

### *Searching For More....*

INTERCEDE Caregiver's Cooperative is on the process of strengthening its employer's data base for caregivers/domestic workers needing immediate placement.

Support INTERCEDE's Caregivers Cooperative. If you know an employer needing a caregiver or domestic worker, live in or live out, please refer them to the Cooperative at (416) 486-0548.

### INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 205,  
Toronto, Ont. M4P 1K5

Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm

Tel: (416) 483-4554 Fax: (416) 483-9711

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