

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the International Coalition to End Domestics' Exploitation

NOVEMBER 1984

WOMEN'S COUNCIL BACKS PROVINCIAL DRIVE

On October 13, 1984, the Ontario Advisory Council on the Status of Women met at the Park Plaza II in Toronto. On their agenda of policy issues affecting women in Ontario was the plight of domestic workers and the need for legislative change. To assist in their deliberations, Acting President Sheila Ward invited INTERCEDE to make a presentation on our brief "Upgrading the Status of Domestic Workers in Ontario".

INTERCEDE Co-ordinator Judith Ramirez led the discussion along with Service Unit Counsellors Columbia Tarape-Diaz and Desiree Hipplewith. They summarized the recommendations in our brief and stressed the urgency of removing the wage differential between domestics and other workers and including domestics under the hours of work and overtime provisions of the Employment Standards Act.

Council members were well informed on the issues and appeared to be quite knowledgeable of INTERCEDE's work on behalf of domestic workers' rights.

The hour-long session was brought to a close with a motion by Ceta Ramkhalawansingh that all the INTERCEDE recommendations to Queen's Park be endorsed in principle. The motion was passed unanimously.

The members of the Council are appointed by Premier William Davis and they meet regularly with Cabinet Ministers to advise them on women's issues.

In addition to endorsing our recommendations, the Council assured us that it planned to meet with the Minister of Labour and the Minister Responsible for Women's Affairs to indicate their support for immediate changes in the Ontario labour laws.

RAMSAY REPORT DELAYED!

Last summer Ontario Labour Minister Russell Ramsay commissioned a province-wide study on the "prevailing wages and working conditions of domestic workers in Ontario". To be prepared by DEMAND Research Consultants, a division of Currie, Coopers and Lybrand, the report was originally scheduled for completion by October, 1984.

Recently INTERCEDE wrote to Mr. Ramsay requesting a copy of the report as well as an opportunity to respond in writing and to meet with the Minister, personally.

We have just received a reply from Mr. Ramsay informing INTERCEDE that the first draft of the report is not expected until mid-November due to delays in the field work. The Minister also wrote:

" I appreciate your offer of continued co-operation and I will be in touch with you once the final consultants report has been received."

FLORA MACDONALD REPLIES

New Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald sent the following letter to the INTERCEDE Steering Committee in reply to our recent message of congratulations:

" Thank you so very much for your kind words of congratulations on my appointment to Prime Minister Mulroney's Cabinet.

As the new Minister of Employment and Immigration, I look forward to tackling the exciting challenges that lie ahead...I am deeply grateful for your encouragement and support. "

COCO'S CALENDAR

Recent happenings...

- * last month we had another round of mainstream media coverage on our provincial drive...an article in the GLOBE AND MAIL on October 10... an interview with Joe Cote on CBC's METRO MORNING...and an appearance on CBC's CBLT MORNING
- * we received many calls after the Rogers Cable TV show ETHNICITY featuring Judith Ramirez and Desiree Hipplewith was aired on October 23
- * on October 28 INTERCEDE attended a productive meeting with Chaviva Hossek, President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and other feminists concerned about the rights of domestic workers

Coming up soon...

- * INTERCEDE'S monthly members meeting on Sunday, November 4, 2 - 5pm, at 58 Cecil Street
- * on Saturday, November 17, the Philippine-Canadian Ladies Circle is hosting a dance at ILDICOS DINNER LOUNGE at 7pm...Tickets: \$5 per person. For information call 449-3828
- * on Sunday, November 18, the Kababayan and Silayan Community Centres are sponsoring a FORUM FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS at Saint Basil's Parish Hall. For information call 532-3888
- * next month's INTERCEDE members meeting is set for Sunday, December 2, 2 - 5pm, at 58 Cecil Street

AND CONGRATULATIONS...

- * to our new landed immigrants: EMILY ABAJA, CELIA FRANCISCO, VIRGIE CALANTOG, PAULINE DAWI, TACIANA MARZAN, IRENE SUMIBCAY, ELSIE SUARES, from the Philippines; and BERYL TUCKER, SONIA THOMAS, from the West Indies

That's it for this month, folks!

- Columbia Tarape-Diaz

SERVICE UNIT THRIVING!

The figures for the second quarter show that the Service Unit is still going strong! During the period June - August, 1984, our counsellors handled 270 inquiries from domestics, employers and agencies.

A total of 178 domestic workers, or 87% of all inquiries, were counselled by staff. Of these, 71 came to the Service Unit for face-to-face interviews; 33 received in-depth pre-assessment counselling, 15 were rejected for landing and their cases were under review, and 23 received general counselling and information.

Of the total number of domestic workers counselled, 42% were from the Caribbean, 32% from the Philippines, 22% from Europe and South America, and 4% from the U.K.

Of the total number of people dealt with, 85% were in Canada on temporary work permits. The vast majority, a full 91%, approached the Service Unit on immigration matters relating to the Foreign Domestics Program.

In addition to our Service Unit counselling, 13 domestics were seen at our monthly CLASP legal clinics, bringing the three-month total to 191 domestic workers assisted.

At the six-month point in the Service Unit's operation (August 1984), 596 inquiries had been handled representing 383 domestic workers. Based on these figures, when the Service Unit's one-year grant runs out in February, 1985, over 1000 inquiries will have been handled representing over 750 domestic workers.

JOIN INTERCEDE

\$5 Year

SUPPORT THE GROUP THAT SUPPORTS YOU

Newsletter Committee:
Columbia Tarape-Diaz, Cecilia Grave,
Desiree Hipplewith, Judith Ramirez,
Pamela Skeete, Sonia Thomas, Daphne
Tucker

MARVIN ROMERO LANDED!

Marvin Romero is a domestic worker from the Philippines who came to Canada in November, 1980. She was refused landing under the Foreign Domestic Program in November, 1983, but never received the notice sent to her by immigration officials.

On July, 6, 1984, Ms. Romero reported to Immigration to have her work permit renewed, and she was shocked to learn that she had been refused landing and was expected to leave the country by October 5, 1984.

Ms. Romero came to the Service Unit and, as her counsellor, I asked the local immigration officials to review her case. In a letter to Mr. Walter Bye, Supervisor of the Foreign Domestic Program at the 130 Bloor Street West Canada Immigration Centre, I requested a re-assessment on the grounds that Ms. Romero had made significant improvements in the areas where she had previously been weak.

On October 2, 1984, Ms. Romero was re-assessed by Walter Bye and was refused landing again due to the lack of documentation on her educational and employment history back home.

INTERCEDE appealed to the Regional Office of Immigration and Ms. Romero was granted a 2-week extension of her visa, to await the arrival of her documents.

After a flurry of calls and cables to the Philippines, the documents arrived in Toronto, and Ms. Romero was interviewed again by Walter Bye. INTERCEDE is happy to announce that Marvin Romero has just been accepted for landing! Congratulations, Marvin!

- Columbia Tarape-Diaz

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THE
NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

If you want to be on our mailing list
call 929-3240

RE-ASSESSMENT FOR PATRICIA FIGUEROA

Patricia Figueroa is a Filipina domestic worker who arrived in Canada in December, 1981. She was refused landing under the Foreign Domestic Program in February, 1984, and was notified to leave the country by November 13, 1984.

On July 12, 1984, Ms. Figueroa came to the Service Unit and, as her counsellor, I interviewed her about her educational attainment, employment history, upgrading in Canada, and future plans. I then contacted the local immigration office and asked them to review her case. In a letter to Immigration Officer Donna Headecker, of the 130 Bloor Street West Canada Immigration Centre, I argued that Ms. Figueroa had taken substantial initiatives to strengthen her application for landing.

On September 20, 1984, Patricia Figueroa was favorably re-assessed by Donna Headecker and on October 25, 1984, she was accepted for permanent residence!

Congratulations, Pat!

- Columbia Tarape-Diaz

DULICE BENJAMIN IS BACK!

Many of you will recall Dulice Benjamin, a domestic worker from Antigua, who was forced to leave Canada in 1982 after a long battle with immigration officials.

Ms. Benjamin had been working for an unscrupulous employer who paid her only \$50 per week. She quit to look for another job but, before her new employer could get the necessary clearance from the Canada Employment Centre, Dulice Benjamin's work permit ran out and she became "illegal".

INTERCEDE launched a public appeal to then-Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy to grant Ms. Benjamin a Minister's Permit and land her in Canada. After many months of delay and much hardship for Ms. Benjamin, she decided to return to Antigua.

Although Lloyd Axworthy had refused to overturn the decision of local immigration officials, in a telegram to INTERCEDE he promised that, if Ms. Benjamin applied for re-entry to Canada under the Foreign Domestics Program, she would receive "special consideration".

We are happy to announce that last month Dulice Benjamin returned to Canada and is hoping to become a permanent resident.

Welcome back, Dulice!

-Desiree Hipplewith

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT
348 College Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1S4
MONDAY - FRIDAY, 9:30am - 4:30pm
Tel. (416) 929-3240
Evenings and week-ends leave a message on our machine and we will return your call promptly!
All INTERCEDE services are confidential and free of charge!

Mark this date!!!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, !

INTERCEDE members meeting and Christmas social...bring your families and friends!

SUPPORT MELROSE MORGAN!

DOMESTICS CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS
c/o INTERCEDE
348 College Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1S4

First Class

MELROSE MORGAN GAINING SUPPORT

Support has come pouring in for Melrose Morgan, a domestic worker from Jamaica, who through no fault of her own, is in Canada without status.

Victim of a broken promise by former Immigration Minister John Roberts, Mrs. Morgan failed to receive a third assessment under the Foreign Domestics Program even though she successfully completed the required upgrading.

At the October 14 INTERCEDE members meeting, dozens of her fellow-domestic workers signed an urgent appeal to Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald calling on her to grant Mrs. Morgan the promised re-assessment.

In a recent interview on CBC's NEWS-HOUR, Melrose Morgan told reporter Nancy Ng how hard she had worked to qualify for landing in Canada so she could make a future for herself and her children.

A number of influential groups are lobbying on Mrs. Morgan's behalf, including the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and NDP Immigration Critic, Dan Heap.

As of October 1, 1984, Mrs. Morgan has been in the country illegally, unable to work, and awaiting the decision of the new immigration minister.

INTERCEDE urges everyone who cares about justice to stand up for Melrose Morgan. Write or call:

The Honourable Flora MacDonald
Minister of Immigration
Place du Portage
Phase IV, 14th Floor
Hull, Quebec

Tel. (819) 992-4883

Place
Stamp
Here