

# Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

November 1988

(INTERCEDE)

## RESOLUTION ON DOMESTICS PASSED AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

*"Women working as domestic workers suffer the worst forms of inequality in Canada. Working long hours, very little pay, worried about their immigration status, they suffer a great deal."*

Thus read the preamble of the resolution put forward by Ms. Joyce Stanford, First Vice President of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights (Intercede), at the first biennial conference of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada on November 10-13, 1988, at the Skyline Hotel in Ottawa. Ms. Eugenia Yuen, board member of Intercede, also represented Intercede at the conference. The resolution is as follows:

"BE IT RESOLVED that the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (NOIVMWC) support full equality for all domestic workers and that the NOIVMWC ensure they receive at least the minimum wage; and that NOIVMWC lobby in order that domestic workers in all the provinces and territories are protected under their respective provincial/territorial employment and/or labour standards legislation."

Betty Lee of Fredericton, New Brunswick was re-elected president of NOIVMWC. Lucy Spencer of Ottawa was elected vice-president of the Ontario region and Dorothy Ellis was re-elected Ontario representative.

Other members of the board of NOIVMWC include Glenda Simms, representing the Congress of Black Women, Amy Go, Chinese Canadian National Council Women's Issues Committee; Elvira Sanchez Malicki, Hispanic Council. Board Member Andrea Garcia of Nova Scotia has particular concerns about the status of domestic workers in her own province and other parts of the country.

Ms. Stanford and Ms. Yuen also met with Honourable Gregory Sorbara, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues; Ms. Naomi Alboim, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD); Dr. Christina Lee, Policy Analyst, OWD; Ms. Sylvia Gold, president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW); Ms. Jackie Claxton, Secretary of State Women's Program, and representatives from other provinces and territories.

# KNOW YOUR ORGANIZATION

What is the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights?

**The Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights (Intercede)** is an advocacy and lobby group for domestic workers. It was formed in 1979 as a coalition of community, women's and immigrant organizations.

It is incorporated as a non-profit organization in the Province of Ontario and its work is coordinated by a board of directors elected by the membership at the annual general meeting.

## Service Unit

Intercede has a Service Unit to work in cooperation with the community and immigration officials in ensuring that all foreign domestic workers benefit fully from the landed status program.

At present there are two counsellors, Coco Diaz and Joan Ann Gravesande. They:

- provide in-depth counselling on how to meet landing criteria;
- liaise with immigration officials;

- provide escort service to government offices;
- provide counselling on employment-related problems;
- liaise with Canada Employment Centres;
- do advocacy work with the Ministry of Labour and the Human Rights Commissions;
- provide information and referral on health, social services and emergencies;
- provide workshops, forums, seminars on domestic workers' rights.

Other activities of the organization include lobbying for legislative change, speaking at conferences and community events, publishing a monthly newsletter, organizing social and recreational and other events.

**Monthly meetings** take place every first Sunday of each month (second Sunday if 1st Sunday is a holiday) and are presently held at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street, from 3 to 5 pm. A confidential and free legal clinic and an informal social hour are part of the afternoon's activities.

## COCO'S CALENDAR

*Congratulations to . . .*

- \* Adela Pacleb, board member Eusebio Aquintey and Zenia Aquintey who recently received their landed status.
- \* Liza Bacolcol who is engaged to be married.
- \* Gloria Thomas and our board member Clementina Martinez who celebrated their birthdays.
- \* Olive Martin and her newly born baby girl.

*Happenings in November . . .*

- \* **Nov. 10-13, 1988 - First biennial conference of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada.** First Vice President Joyce Stanford and board member Eugenia Yuen attended on behalf of Intercede. (Story on page one.)
- \* **Nov. 23, 1988 - "Equality Rights Challenges",** a forum sponsored by "Breaking the Silence", Ottawa Public Library, Ottawa.

## Applying for landed status?

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

If you are on the Foreign Domestic Program, you are required to satisfy certain criteria so that your application for landed status would be favourably considered.

After working as a domestic for one year, you will be called to one of the Canadian Immigration Centres for your "first assessment."

The assessing officer will question you on the following:

- \* The state of your finances. The officer will assess your ability to become self-sufficient. You will also be required to provide the assessing officer with proof of your savings. You must bring with you your updated bank book, your investment certificates, bonds, etc.
- \* Your ability to manage your finances. You should also be able to provide the officer with receipts of your tuition or registration fees, proof of money sent home to your family. (This would be a concrete way of showing the assessing officer that you have financial management skills.)
- \* Your educational attainment from your home country. The assessing officer would like to find out if you have completed any upgrading courses since your arrival in Canada. If said officer feels that you do not have the language skills (English or French), you may be required to upgrade your language skills.
- \* Your career plans. As upgrading is a factor that is considered in your assessment, it is important that the courses you are taking are related and/or lead to your career path.
- \* Your various activities and integration into the community. What you do during your days off, whether you are a member of a church, an organization, if you do volunteer work. Bring letters indicating your contribution and/or participation from your church, organization you are a member of, the place where you do volunteer work, etc. The assessing officer may also want to find out what your cultural and recreational activities are and if you know the city well.
- \* Your employment record. It is important that you have with you letters of employment from your past and present employers. This is one way of establishing your work history.

**Joan Ann Gravesande**

## COCO's CALENDAR..

(continued)

Participants will include a representative from LEAF (Women's Legal and Action Fund), Intercede and an immigrant women's counselling service. **Yola Grant**, Treasurer will represent Intercede.

- \* **Nov. 23, 1988 - Employment Equity Awards Dinner** at the Four Seasons Hotel, Toronto. Hosted by Honourable Gregory Sorbara, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. **Mary Jarrell**, Second Vice President, and **Nessie Gascon**, board member will be representing Intercede.

## Christmas away from home . . .

Let us celebrate Christmas with friends!

For some it may be their first Christmas away from home. For others it may be their third or fourth. . . But the feeling remains the same. For the majority of domestic workers, the annual Christmas party of Intercede is an event that is not to be missed. In addition to being an information sharing session, the first Sunday of December is always a day of celebration.

Special guest at the December 4 meeting is the Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Raj Anand. His speech will centre on the role of OHRC and how it affects the lives of domestic workers.

The program for the afternoon includes poetry reading, songs, dances, skits, more music and food (pot luck). Intercede will provide drinks and finger foods.

**December 4 meeting starts at 1 p.m.**  
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**We will have a Christmas party.**

Volunteer Labour

**Next monthly meeting on Sunday, DECEMBER 4 starts at 1 p.m.!**

### DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

c/o INTERCEDE  
489 College St., Suite 402  
Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

First Class Mail

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Unemployment Insurance	973-4727
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933
Employment Standards Enforcement	965-5251
Ontario Human Rights Commission	965-6841
Revenue Canada (Taxation)	869-1500
OHIP	965-1000

### EMERGENCY HOUSING

Nellie's Hostel	461-1084
Evangeline's	762-9636

### LEGAL SERVICES

Parkdale Legal Clinic	531-2411
CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic	736-5029
Legal Aid	598-0200

## INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 489 College St., Suite 402  
Toronto, Ontario

Time: Monday-Friday  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Telephone: (416) 324-8751

Free and confidential counselling to all domestic workers on immigration, employment, human rights, etc.