

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

November 1992



OWD rep stresses

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT OPPOSES MANDATORY LIVE-IN

by Carol Salmon

For the first time, INTERCEDE members heard an Ontario government official state clearly that the provincial government "opposes the mandatory live-in requirement" for domestic workers.

Shirley Hoy, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Ontario Women's Directorate, guest speaker at INTERCEDE's 1992 Annual General Meeting (AGM) on October 4, said that forcing foreign domestic workers to live in the home of their employers leaves them open to "potential exploitation, abuse and mistreatment".

This was the most important message that the Acting Deputy Minister brought to Intercede's AGM. Previously, the Ontario Human Rights Commissioner, Catherine Frazee, had written the Minister of Immigration that the mandatory live-in requirement could lead to human rights violations.

Hoy said a number of the issues that domestic workers in this province and country are fighting for are at the heart of concern for all women: the right to work in an environment that is free from racial and sexual harassment, and free from exploitation.

She stressed the need for Federal and Provincial governments to work together to bring about changes that will increase equality for domestic workers and lead to the effective enforcement of their rights. She commended the proposed amendments to the Ontario Labour Relations Act (ORLA) giving domestic workers the right to form a union.

Ms. Hoy added that the provincial government can play the role of advocate on behalf of domestic workers in matters under federal control. She cited the response of Marion Boyd, Minister of Women's Issues and Labour Minister

Cont. Pg 2 Mandatory Live-In

ANTI-RACISM THEATRE HIGHLIGHTS 1992 AGM

INTERCEDE members assisted by Company of Sirens and Carlos Bulosan Cultural Workshop put on a fabulous theatre presentation at the Annual General Meeting titled "Racism Hurts Us All".

In March 1992, INTERCEDE began a series of Anti-Racism Workshops to look at the different experiences of racism that domestic workers face. The resulting product being that the domestic workers attending the workshops would present these experiences in a series of theatre pieces and that the material would be used to educate newly-arrived domestic workers on anti-racism and multiculturalism in Canada.

The audience of over 200 applauded the participants (Beth Daguio, Esther Sacatropez, Emilie Ellone, Nelia Dequitos, Elisa Bisenio, Sherry Lacson, Carmen Pulido and Nieves Andogan) as their performance was both educational and entertaining. It brought to life the discrimination facing domestic workers as women of colour as they try to make a place for themselves in this strange land.

Come to INTERCEDE's monthly meeting on Sunday, November 1, 1992 at 58 Cecil Street (just south of College near Spadina), 3-5 p.m.

2-3 pm New Member Applications and Renewals. Members with ID numbers 2046-2270 must renew or be dropped from members list.

3-4 pm **WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AS A TENANT?**
Presenter: Sam Kuhn, Community Legal Worker, Metro Tenants Legal Services

4-5 pm **Group Bargaining to Improve Domestic Workers' Labour Rights**
Questionnaire and General Discussion

5 pm INTERCEDE Sports meeting

CLASP Legal Clinic open during the meeting.

From Pg 1 - Mandatory Live-In

Bob McKenzie to the new Live-in Caregiver program in which they stated that the new requirements were unrealistic, discriminatory and asking for more than domestic work requires.

With continued persistence and cooperation, Ms. Hoy feels INTERCEDE can succeed in getting full recognition of the value of domestic work in this province and the protection under the law to which domestic workers are entitled.

VIDEO DROP-IN SERIES

Saturday, December 5, 1992

1:30 pm - 5 pm

INTERCEDE

489 College St., Room 402, Toronto

Call 324-8751 if interested

APPEAL FOR DONATIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER; PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP FEE INCREASE TO \$10

To be able to cover the cost of printing and mailing Domestic's Cross-Cultural News, INTERCEDE is making an appeal for donations.

"Current budget for printing and mailing costs is \$18,000, and so far we still need to look for \$5,500 to meet this projected cost," said Eva Jacob, INTERCEDE staff member.

"Meanwhile we need to raise the cost of subscription to \$25 per year", she said. All individual subscribers, agencies/organizations wanting to continue receiving this newsletter must renew their subscription whether paid or free (non-profit organizations). All free subscriptions will be stopped at the end of January unless renewed.

All subscribers from outside Canada are also requested to send in a renewal form. There are sub-

scribers to the newsletter from the U.S., Mexico, Hongkong, Japan, South Africa, Jamaica and the Philippines.

Staff is proposing an increase in membership fee from \$5 to \$10 per year. A Member's fee covers free newsletter subscription for one year. Member's subscription is renewed with renewal of membership. Eva reminds members to **notify INTERCEDE of any change of address** so that we don't waste money.

All those interested to become members of INTERCEDE or wanting to renew their membership are reminded that applications can only be made during the monthly meeting at Cecil Community Centre. **No mailed application for membership will be processed nor returned.**

INTERCEDE welcomes any comments about the proposal to increase membership fees from \$5 to \$10. Write to INTERCEDE, 489 College St., Rm. 402, Toronto M6G 1A5.

REUNION HISPANA

INTERCEDE invita a las trabajadoras hispanas del "Live-In Caregiver Program" (antes "Foreign Domestic Movement program") a una importante reunion el dia domingo, 22 de Noviembre de 3:00 a 5:00 pm

Oficina del INTERCEDE
489 College Street (cerca de Bathurst)
Cuarto no. 402, Toronto
Tel. 324-8751

We wish to thank the Employment and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Secretary of State; Multiculturalism and Citizenship; Ontario Ministry of Citizenship; Ontario Women's Directorate; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); and the City of Toronto Grants Review Board for their continuing support.

TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS (Does not apply to current members)

INTERESTED TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER? SEND THE FORM BELOW WITH PAYMENT.
IF NO RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION BY END OF NOVEMBER, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION :

NEW SUBSCRIPTION :

CHANGE OF ADDRESS :

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

Please send DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS to :

MEMBER ID NUMBER : _____ NAME : _____

ADDRESS : _____

CITY/PROVINCE : _____

POSTAL CODE : _____ TELEPHONE : _____

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$20.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$25.00

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PAY FROM NOVEMBER 1ST

There has been an increase in Ontario's minimum wage as at November 1, 1992. It is now \$6.35 an hour.

	MONTHLY (12/year)	SEMI-MONTHLY (24/year)	BIWEEKLY (26/year)	WEEKLY (52/year)
GROSS WAGES	\$1,210.73	\$ 605.36	\$ 558.80	\$ 279.40
DEDUCTIONS:				
Room & Board	341.25	170.62	157.50	78.75
Income Tax	168.80	83.10	77.10	38.40
Canada Pension Plan	22.66	11.33	10.46	5.23
Unemployment Insurance	36.32	18.16	16.76	8.38
NET PAYMENT	\$ 641.70	\$ 322.15	\$ 296.98	\$ 148.64

Even though your employer/worker agreement or "contract" may have stated your wage at less, your employer must pay you the current legal minimum wage.

COCO's NOTES

by Columbia Tarape-Diaz

Legal Aid and Justice...

The story of Felicidad Doctolero shows that you can obtain justice without having to pay legal fees beyond your means.

Felicidad came to Canada from Singapore where she had worked for six years with only one employer. But here in Metro, she went through three employers within hardly one year and went through an unforgettable and harrowing experience with her third one.

Less than a month after being told to "pack her things", Felicidad was surprised at her apartment by two policemen who came to arrest her for theft of over \$1000.

Felicidad sought our help and we referred her to a Legal clinic. With legal aid, Felicidad was able to have a good lawyer represent her. Even if she tried to look for a new employer, no one would hire her while she was waiting for a court hearing for a case of theft.

Five months later, Felicidad went for a last court appearance where the case against her was withdrawn by the Crown Attorney because the complainant did not wish to proceed with the theft charge and it would be extremely difficult to prove that an offence was committed.

Felicidad's lawyer, Jacqueline Garrity stated that "there was no evidence" she was "ever seen taking any items" nor could her employer verify that all items were in her home prior to Doctolero's employment.

MEETING OF CARIBBEAN DOMESTIC WORKERS

Sunday, November 15, 1992
3 pm - 5 pm
INTERCEDE Office
489 College St., Room 402, Toronto
Call 324-8751 for more info

Many witnesses were willing to testify on Felicidad's behalf and as character witnesses to her honesty and trustworthiness.

Felicidad is now putting her life back together after this unfortunate experience. Her advice to other domestic workers: just because you don't have money doesn't mean you can't have a lawyer; you can get legal aid.

You should not tolerate abuse...

Luz Ybanez worked for almost a year as a live-in housekeeper and babysitter, tolerating abuses until she gathered enough courage to leave and make a claim with the Ministry of Labour for unpaid wages, unpaid overtime and holiday pay.

Luz worked 15-16 hours each day, sometimes starting at 5 in the morning and finishing at midnight. For the period of 11 months she worked, Luz received \$3,800 and \$1,200 that went to her plane fare - a total of \$5,000. On occasions she was threatened with deportation. She lost weight and became physically weak from overwork.

INTERCEDE not only helped in the documentation of her claim, but kept her from being discouraged through-

FACILITATORS' MEETING

First of Three

Sunday November 29, 1992

10 am - 5 pm

Centre For Christian Studies
77 Charles Street West
(Bay Subway. South of Bloor, West of Bay)
Toronto

Open to INTERCEDE members who have completed a one-day Orientation for Newcomers, this series will focus on domestic workers' rights and protection under Ontario union laws. The rest of the series will include discussions on self-assertiveness, women empowerment, anti-racism and leadership.

Call 324-8751 -- Free lunch

out the process. After many exchanges between the Ministry of Labour and INTERCEDE, the employers agreed to pay an amount much lower than Luz had claimed. She finally accepted a settlement for \$2,700.

Warning against pots and pans...

Alma (not her real name) called to complain that credit collectors are after her for more than a thousand dollars worth of pots and pans. She had signed an agreement to buy without understanding fully what she was signing.

It seems that Alma was convinced by her fast salesperson acquaintances that buying expensive pots and pans would look good on her application for permanent residence; that she could show she had the "financial ability" to make such a purchase.

Even if Alma did not have the ready cash for the items, the salesperson offered to make the first downpayment and asked her to sign on the dotted line.

Moral of this story: you don't need more than three pots and pans at any one time and neither do you need to pay more than \$25 for one.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council	345-9312
Employment Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	323-9986
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933
OHIP	482-1111
Toronto	1-800-263-3814
Scarborough	
Mississauga	275-2730
Ontario Human Rights Commission	326-9511
Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Workers' Compensation	927-9555
Revenue Canada (taxation)	869-1500

Toronto Rape Crisis Center (24 Hr line)	597-8808
Assaulted Help Line	863-0511

EMERGENCY HOUSING

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

LEGAL SERVICES

Parkdale Community Legal Services	531-2411
CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic	736-5029
Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Serv.	363-0304
Metro Tor. Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic	971-9674
Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic	971-8832

Come and Bring your Friends to A CHRISTMAS DANCE PARTY

Saturday, December 19, 1992
7 pm - 1 am
Pearson Ballroom of the Primrose Hotel
111 Carlton Street
(corner Jarvis, east of College Subway)
DJ: PLAYHOUSE
Sandwich Buffet included in \$15 Ticket
Attire - Semiformal

NEW BOARD MEMBERS ACCLAIMED

Six women will begin a two-year term as new members of INTERCEDE's Board of Directors following the Annual General Meeting October 4. Two others made a bid for reelection. As no nomination was presented from the floor, all eight were acclaimed elected and no balloting took place.

The new members are a representative group of Filipino, Caribbean and Spanish-speaking women. Four are currently in the Live-in Caregiver Program, one is from a community-based organization, one is a lawyer. They are: Leah Guion, Jennifer Hyman, Sherry Lacson, Carmen Pulido, Denise Stewart and Toni Schweitzer. The two repeaters are Pura Velasco and Amy Dizon, outgoing president and secretary respectively.

The rest of the Board members making a total of 13 are: Ellen Benigno, Joan Grant Cummings, Deepa Chakraborty, Ginger Chung and Enid Singh.

ENGLISH CLASS FOR CHINESE DOMESTIC WORKERS

offered by ILGWU to garment homeworkers

Start Sunday October 18, 1992 and
Every Sunday, 1-4 pm
ILGWU Building, 33 Cecil Street

Register Now 324-8751

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place : 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ont.
Time : Monday - Friday, 9 am - 4 pm
Telephone : (416) 324-8751 Fax No. 324-8790

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c/o INTERCEDE
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FIRST CLASS