

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

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

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554

November 2001



COMPLAINTS RECEIVED ABOUT RECRUITMENT AND OTHER SCAMS

INTERCEDE is again sending a warning against unscrupulous persons who victimize mainly women desperate to find jobs outside their country. Here are some samples of complaints reaching us:

"I need your help..."

could you check if this recruiting agency is legitimate or not. My friend's daughter contacted this office to help her get a job in Canada. This company is asking US\$100 fee up front. I just want to make sure that her money, which is very hard earned, goes to where it should go to help her daughter get a job. Here is the name of the company: Express Canada, Case #394/F, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2L3, or R.T.S. Express Canada, Case #394/F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2T7."

INTERCEDE is warning that the address given is not a physical site, not an office, but only a Post Office box number. Money sent to this post office box does not result in getting a job in Canada, only in victims losing hard-earned money. Complaints we have made to the police and RCMP, to the Philippine Consulate in Toronto, the Canadian Embassy and Department of Foreign Affairs in the Philippines, have merely resulted in thicker files but no effective action. So Express Canada continues to victimize people, particularly Philippine citizens, with no fear of being caught or prosecuted.

You get a call...

from someone who says your name was given to him or her by the Philippine Consulate. You are then invited to a meeting and will be offered a ride to go there. Some people will come to pick you up from your place and at the "meeting" you will be asked to be a member and to shell out \$10 or more. You will be told about the benefits of membership such as "police protection". Then you will be asked to buy a jacket for \$75 with the name of the organization emblazoned on it. You will be told that you will need this jacket for "parades" that the organization is joining. When the meeting is over, the people who gave you a ride will sell you an insurance policy and afterwards they will be calling your telephone number to persuade you some more, to buy insurance, buy this or that, pay fees etc. etc..

INTERCEDE is warning that individuals or "organizations" make false claims such as connections to the Philippine Consulate, or to prominent individuals or legitimate organizations in order to impress newcomers and caregivers. They pretend to have a legitimate purpose and take advantage of the vulnerability and ignorance of newcomers and caregivers in order to deceive them and separate them from their money.

"We were cheated..."

by our recruitment agency in Hongkong and Canada who made us sign contracts with employers

INTERCEDE MEETING

Sunday, November 4, 2001, 3-5 p.m.
At Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.
(one block south of College cor. Spadina)

ONTARIO'S NEW EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT - HOW ARE YOU AFFECTED?

Speaker: Mary Gellatly
of Parkdale Community Legal Services

INTERCEDE grieves with all those who lost their loved ones on September 11, 2001 - we join in prayer with all peace-loving people around the world who seek justice and denounce war.

who turned out to be different from those we are now working for. We are three friends who came at the same time but are working six days a week for less than minimum wage. We signed contracts that specify wages and working hours that are different from what our present employers require. Please help us solve our problem."

INTERCEDE has heard of similar situations over and over again. Recruitment agencies get applicants to the LCP to sign contracts which turn out to be bogus contracts. Or successful applicants arrive and find they have a different employer from the one they knew, and therefore have to apply for a new work permit. Or contracts approved by Visa officers are replaced with a different contract with different hours, wages and other stipulations – which are often in violation of employment laws.

How to stop the scams...

Tell all your friends and relatives, keep warning people about these scams and deceitful operations. Do not make any payment just to get LCP and other application forms which are FREE to begin with. Inquire about agencies, organizations, individuals who are making certain promises and claims in exchange for your money. Share your experiences, get reliable information. Cooperate in stopping fraudulent practices. Report scams to the police and follow-up for results.

HIGHLIGHTS OF AGM 2001

The Annual General Meeting held on October 14, 2001 at Cecil Community Centre was a great success, thanks to all those who attended despite the cold, windy and rainy day.

Martha Ocampo, the out-going treasurer and board member, expressed the continuous stress associated with allocating limited funds and making sure that staff was paid. She highlighted the Board's accomplishments for the past year, including strategic planning and finalizing an anti-racism policy.

Acclaimed as new Board Members were Estrellita "Bong" Castro, Bernice Small, Christie Okonkwo, Cecille Ban-Ang, and Manuel (Manny) Mores who join Leticia Capistrano and Elizabeth Salvilla on the Board.

Fely Villasin, the Co-ordinator of INTERCEDE was pleased to report on the main events of the past year. Through funding by Status of Women Ontario, INTERCEDE was able to do research on the lives of caregivers, including the abuse and violence they experience in their employers' homes. The result was published in book form. An advocacy training for caregivers provided them assertive and leadership skills to help them cope with their work situation. She also reported on the Domestic Workers' Conference, the impact of Bill C-31 on immigrants, and INTERCEDE's many other offerings last year. Appreciation was expressed to out-going Board Members Bing Torres, Genie Policarpio, Agnes Peregrino, Zarah Dhanani

and Martha Ocampo.

Marilyn Oladimeji, from Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape, presented on the topic "Are you in a Safe Workplace?" Marilyn outlined the meaning of sexual assault and the myths and truths about sexual abuse. Having worked as a nanny twenty years ago, Marilyn is fully aware of the vulnerable situation in which most live-in caregivers and nannies find themselves. They are vulnerable because they are isolated, and financially dependent on their employers. She pointed out that this volatile situation is compounded by caregivers' fear of losing their jobs and having to find new employers before they become landed immigrants. This is why some caregivers choose to sacrifice their safety and tolerate abuse from their employers for the ultimate outcome of having their families united with them in Canada. Marilyn also pointed out that since abuse continues when no one else knows about it, women must talk about it and hopefully those in authority will listen and be more accountable for the welfare of live-in caregivers under the Live-in Caregiver Program.

Guests like Steven Boujikian from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, (ISAP), said he was impressed with the members' dedication and active participation in the AGM. Stella Ng, from Ontario Status of Women, was also pleased with the proceedings. The program highlighted a short ceremony of lighting a candle for peace in the world.

Coco's corner:

The Importance of Life Insurance....

All of us know our birthday and other anniversaries and significant dates of our life but there is one thing that all of us don't know but can't avoid: Death! No one knows when Death will happen but we can avoid adding to the grief and burden of our family members, especially the financial consequences of our passing. Everyone needs to have a Life Insurance Plan. Contact an Insurance broker/agent and discuss a plan that is suitable and affordable with in your budget. You can buy basic coverage for a start and get additional coverage as your income increases.

Some of us or our family members may want our remains to be sent and buried in our birth country or we may want to be buried here in Canada. Either way can be very costly, but having a Life Insurance Plan will help ease the burden.

The sudden deaths of Erlinda Antiporta and Janet Sibug, prompted me to share these following thoughts with clients and members. To the bereaved families of Erlinda and Janet, our deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences.

QUESTION AND ANSWER:

Q- I will complete 24 months of live-in work on February 2002 and will file my application for permanent residence. My wife and my two children recently arrived on a visitor's visa and allowed to stay for a maximum of 6 months to April 2002. My two children are now on a student visa while my wife stays home. Can I request Immigration for their papers to be included in my application or do they still need to go back to the Philippines to be sponsored?

A- You can request for your dependents' papers be processed concurrently with your application for permanent residence under the Live-In Caregiver Program. However, you have to make sure that their student visa or visitor's visa are always valid while your application is in process.

Q- I downloaded from the Internet an application to renew my Employment Authorization together with the receipt needed to pay the related fee in the bank. I photocopied the forms for a friend who also needed to renew her visitor's visa but I was not aware that the receipt has a serial number. My application was returned to me because the receipt was also used by my friend. My Employment Authorization has expired, a letter from Immigration advised me to pay another \$ 350. Will pay again and why?

A- Yes, you must pay \$200 for re-instatement and another \$150 for extension of your Employment Authorization. The returned receipt you received is refundable from the bank where you paid. Next time you download a form from the Internet, make sure to use it only for yourself.

Q- My daughter who is 16 years old was originally scheduled to travel with me to the U.S., but due to changes in my work schedule, I had to cancel my trip. However, my daughter still has to go, what will I need to do?

A- Inform the travel agency or the airline that your daughter, who is still a minor needs assistance. In addition, you may write a letter of consent allowing her to travel and that you are aware of her travel arrangements.

Q- I am a live-in caregiver, working 40 to 50 hours per week and getting the correct pay. My employer informed me recently that there is now a change in the number of working hours before charging overtime. Are caregivers/domestic workers affected by these changes ?

A- There is a new Employment Standards Act (ESA) that took effect on September 4, 2001 and all workers in Ontario are affected. In order to know and learn about the changes and how they affect caregivers/domestic workers, come to INTECEDE meeting on Sunday November 4, at Cecil Community Centre. Mary Gellatly from Parkdale Legal Services will be happy to answer your questions.

NEW LAW ON HOLIDAYS

In the coming Christmas season, there will be three Public Holidays: Christmas Day December 25, Boxing Day December 26 and New Year's Day January 1.

Ontario's new Employment Standards Act (ESA) which

INTRODUCING OUR NEW STAFF

Genoveva Policarpio is our new Administrative Asst./Intake Worker. She worked as a Domestic Worker for 9 years abroad and as a Live-in-caregiver for 3 years and 8 months here in Canada. She was a Board Member of Intercede for a year.



Among her educational background, Genie graduated in Secretarial and Business Management. She participated in the programs like: JSW, Bridging Course for Women, and Advocacy Training that Intercede provides. She is currently taking Accounting courses at George Brown College.

She is interested in continuing her education in Women's Studies.

took effect on September 4, 2001, makes changes to public holidays which you should know about. To get answers to your questions, call the Employment Standards General Inquiry Line at 416-326-7160 or

1-800-531-5551 on weekdays from 8:15 am to 5 pm. Or get information through the website <http://www.gov.on.ca/LAB/es/ese.htm>.

AN AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE TO EXPENSIVE DENTAL WORK

The University of Toronto, Faculty of Dentistry, offers services in fillings, dentures, braces, bridges, implants, children's dentistry, root canals, crowns, treatment of gum disease, extraction of wisdom teeth and more, at reduced and very affordable fees. These services are especially good for patients without dental insurance to cover their dental work.

To become a patient at the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Toronto, call the receptionist at (416) 979-4927 for a screening appointment. **No screening takes place during July and August, when the school is closed.**

Because this is a teaching facility for dentists, trained dentists examine clients to decide if they are suitable as patients. Students provide services to patients under the supervision of trained dentists. Once you are selected as a patient, you are given an appointment for x-rays of the mouth and teeth. Basic x-rays cost \$35, which you can take to a private dentist if you decide to do so. A basic oral diagnosis appointment costs \$35. Students begin work on your teeth based on their availability, so it can take weeks or months before you are assigned to a student.

If you live out of Toronto, you can also be a patient. You must, however, be willing to **accept collect long distance calls** when the student calls you to book your appointment. You must also be able to keep your appointments with little disruption to the students' learning. Appointments are usually once a week and last two hours or longer, depending on the treatment you are receiving.

Fees: Your student will discuss your treatment and cost with you. The cost is usually much lower than a private dentist's fee. Your student will tell you which of the dental work you must pay for in advance. You can pay with cash, visa, MasterCard, debit cards and some cheques. If you have dental insurance, your student will help you to fill in the form.

Emergency Treatment: The faculty of dentistry gives a limited number of emergency appointments. Call reception at (416) 979-4927 to inquire about a one-day emergency appointment. You can also call the Oral Surgery Receptionist at (416) 979-4923 if you need tooth extraction and no other dental treatment.

Childcare: You are advised not to bring children with you since there is no babysitting service in the faculty of dentistry.

The Faculty of Dentistry, University of Toronto, is located at: **101 Elm Street, Toronto, Ontario**
This is two blocks north of Dundas Street West, and east of University Avenue.

You are invited to

**INTERCEDE'S
CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Sunday, December 2, 2001

at Cecil Community Centre,

58 Cecil Street, Toronto

(one block South of College)

from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Program * Pot Luck * Games * Gift Exchange

(Min. \$10.00)

ADVOCACY TRAINING SCHEDULES

FOR THE YEAR 2001 TO 2002

After the Orientation session on October 28, 2001, the following sessions will be on Nov. 18, Dec. 16, 2001, January 20, Feb. 17, March 17 and April 21, 2001.

For January 20, 2002, the topic will be on Violence Audit. All training sessions will be at George Brown College, Room 323- A, from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Good luck to all participants!!! You will enjoy every session and definitely you will learn a lot.

INTERCEDE

Address: 234 Eglinton Avenue East,
Suite 205, Toronto, Ontario,
M4P 1K5

Regular Hours: Mon-Fri 9 a.m. – 4p.m.

Telephone: (416) 483-4554

Fax: (416) 483-9781

Toll-Free: 1-877-483-4554

E-mail: info@intercedetoronto.org

INTERCEDE STAFF:

Jo Alcampo – JSW Facilitator

Columbia Diaz – Settlement Counsellor

Olive Smith - Settlement Counsellor

Anita Fortuno – Outreach/Counsellor

Genie Policarpio – Intake & Administrative Assistant

Fely Villasin - Coordinator

INTERCEDE Offers Free Job Search Workshops for Caregivers, Newcomers and their Families

You will learn how to:

- identify your interests, skills & career goals
- write an effective resume
- conduct successful job interviews
- gain self-esteem and confidence in a supportive environment

Classes will be at George Brown College
200 King Street East, Toronto, Room 325-A

Schedules of classes are as follows:

November 4, 11, 18, & 25;

December 2, 9, 16, & 23, 2001

Call Genie Policarpio for more information and for registration at (416) 483-4554 ext. 21, space is limited

Certificates of completion to be issued

Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Sponsored by COSTI & OCASI

We wish to thank: Citizenship and Immigration Canada – ISAP Program and Job Search Program with COSTI-OCASI; The Federal Status of Women & Status of Women Ontario: the Maytree Foundation, and the Municipality of Toronto CSGP, Access & Equity and "Breaking the Cycle of Violence" grants program, for their financial support.

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