

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

INTERCEDE for the Rights of Domestic Workers, Caregivers and Newcomers

November 2004

Toll Free 1-877-483-4554



RECAPPED OF INTERCEDE'S AGM

On October 3, 2004, INTERCEDE held its Annual General Meeting at Cecil Community Centre. It was a three-hour event attended by members, Board of Directors, staff and guests, and facilitated by Martha Ocampo, Treasurer.

The meeting began with approval of last year's AGM minutes and was followed by the financial report of Ocampo. Coco Diaz, INTERCEDE's Program Manager, did a report on client services, the number of clients served, the services rendered and the trends which affected live in caregivers and newcomers. She discussed INTERCEDE's efforts to outreach to clients, from as far as British Columbia and Nova Scotia.

Fely Villasin, back from a long sick leave as part-time Coordinator, then delivered the organization's Annual Report, citing the community development activities and social events of the year. In particular, Villasin reported on the advocacy work related to the Live-in Caregiver Program, which took on international proportions, having been brought to the attention of the United Nations in conjunction with the Canadian government's report on its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Ocampo introduced the nominees for the Board of Directors. She and Maria Belgrave were re-elected to the Board while continuing their terms are Board Members Estrelita "Bong" Castro and Sharon Creedland. Marilyn Oladimeji, Minerva Bannawi and Liza Palmamento were acclaimed new Board members.

Marilyn Oladimeji has been involved with INTERCEDE Board's Black Women's Advisory Committee. She works as Counselor of Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, Multicultural Women Against Rape. Minerva Bannawi was a participant of last year's Leadership and Advocacy Training and has proven her interest in volunteering for the Board. She will soon complete the twenty-four month requirement and eventually apply for permanent residence under LCP. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and would like to share her knowledge and skills. Liza Palmamento, like Minerva, was one of last year's participants in the Advocacy Training. She is enthusiastic to become part of the Board.

This year's AGM was quite emotional because it was the end of Elizabeth Salvilla's term as President of INTERCEDE. She thanked everyone for supporting her in the past and bade farewell to the members, staff and fellow Board members. However, she promised that she will continue to be an active member of INTERCEDE and will keep on supporting its activities. "To Elizabeth, our heartfelt thanks for all of your support and we look forward to having you around in future activities", said Board and staff members in response.

Also thanked were former Board members, Manny Mores and Juliet Bermudez, for their contributions to the Board.

After the approval of 2003 AGM minutes, Annual and Financial Reports and election of the Board of Directors, Diaz introduced our guest speaker, Paul Evans, the Regional Project Coordinator – Employment Standard Act, (ESA) of the Ministry of Labor. He gave information on implementation of Ontario's ESA and how to proceed with complaints against employers who violate its provisions. Evans confirmed that the ESA is meant to protect the most vulnerable workers such as domestic workers. But he also acknowledged that enforcement of the law continues to be a challenge for domestic workers in Ontario.

Snacks and refreshments were provided later and everyone enjoyed the food. Announcements were made on incoming INTERCEDE events.

INTERCEDE would like to thank everyone who attended our AGM and everyone who have been supporting our organization for the past 20 years. We could not have gone this far without your active support and involvement. We look forward to your continued support for the next 20 years to come.

*All Domestic/Caregiver workers,
Newcomers and those on Temporary Work Permit
are welcome to attend*

INTERCEDE MEETING
Every First Sunday of the Month

(if holiday, meeting is on the second Sunday)

Apply for/renew your membership - \$10.

Sunday, November 7, 3-5 p.m.
At Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.
(one block south of College cor. Spadina)

Know Your Rights as Tenants
Federation of Metro Tenants Association

See you there!

STORIES IN THE LCP

With this issue, Domestic's Cross-Cultural News begins a series of stories about women working in Canada under Immigration's Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). All the women's names have been changed to guard their privacy.

A Knock-Out "Punch"

At the end of this month I will be three years in Canada since I first arrived under the LCP. I should have completed 24 months of working as a domestic worker and caregiver under this program, and therefore I should be able to apply for my landed immigrant status. Yes?

No! Unfortunately, it's not as simple as the LCP regulations look.

You see, in the past three years I worked for five employers. Not out of my own choosing but because of circumstances beyond my control.

What happened?

First employer was a diabetic with three kids under 11. Apart from looking after the youngsters, I also had to play nurse to my sick employer. While I tried my best to manage caring for the family including cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing and doing a lot of errands, I was so exhausted after just two months. I was terminated without being issued a Record of Employment (ROE).

Second employer also had three kids under 10. This time there were marital problems between the parents that caused a lot of tension for me. For five months I tolerated the verbal insults and abuses directed at me. Finally I could not stand it anymore and I left the job.

Third employer resented my off days and scolded me when I would return home after 8 p.m. I managed to remain 10 months until the caregiver they had sponsored from abroad arrived and replaced me.

Fourth employer had good manners and a polite way of talking to me...but shared me with two other families so they could save on my salary.

As for the fifth employer, after working six months she terminated me without any notice on the pretext that I had drank some of their holiday punch!

The LCP requires 24 months of caregiving within three years of arriving in Canada before we can apply to become permanent residents.

By this time, even if I am now three years here, I have completed only 23 months of service, one month short of the 24 required. Know why?

Because each time I left an employer, it took from two to three and even more months to accomplish and wait for the following:

- ★ find a new employer;
- ★ then have the employer apply at (Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) for approval to hire me based on our employment contract;
- ★ then after the new employer receives HRDC authorization, I have to apply for a new work permit from Canada Immigration and Citizenship (CIC).

So what will happen next? CIC will not allow me to apply for landed status because I did not meet the 24 months in three years requirement. If I am lucky I will be allowed to reapply to the LCP and begin all over again.

This is the story I brought to INTERCEDE. I hear it's a common one.



Important Contact Numbers
Keep these numbers for handy reference



- Citizenship and Immigration.....1-888-242-2100
- Canada Employment Insurance Centre.....1-800-206-7218
- Ministry of Labour(416) 326-7160
- OHIP(416) 314-5518
- Canada Customs & Revenue.....1-800-959-8281
- Canadian Consulate/ Immi. @ Buffalo ...1-800 267-8376
Website: (<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/buffalo/>)
- Centro Para Gente de Habla Hispana.....(416) 533-8545
- Community Information Services
(416) 392-0505 or dial 211
- Human Resources Development.....(416) 973-6915
- Community Legal Educaiton Ontario(416) 408-4420
(CLEO)
- Ontario Human Rights Commission..... (416) 314-4500
- Passport Office.....(416) 973-3251
- Record of Employment Assistance..... (416) 952-4473
- Toronto Rape Crisis Centre (24/7).....(416) 597-8808
- Assaulted Women's Help Line.....(416) 863-0511
- Women's Health in Women's Hands.....(416) 593 7655
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.....(416) 344-1000
(WSIB)

Important Web Sites:



- Information on the Ontario Government-
www.gov.on.ca, www.settlement.org
- Government of Canada Main Website - www.canada.gc.ca
- HRDC Canada – www.toronto-hrdc.sto.org
- Information and Kits- www.cic.gc.ca
- OHIP - www.gov.on.ca/health/
- Passport Office – www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca



Caribbean Connection Black Support Group

Next Meeting: Saturday, November 13, 2004
INTERCEDE Office
2:00-4:00 p.m.

*If you have any questions please contact Bernice at
(416) 483-4554 x 22

Q & A

Q- *My husband and our three children arrived in Canada last March 2003, three months after I received my permanent resident status under the Live-In Caregiver Program. Five months after their arrival my husband abandoned us to live with his townmates. Recently I learned that he is living with another woman. Since then, I have considered myself separated and, for over one year, have not had any communication with him. Can I now file for divorce? How much will it cost me?*

A - Absolutely, you can already file for divorce. It is obvious that there has been a marriage breakdown when he left you and started living with another woman. You have also proof that you have been living apart or separately for over one year which means that you are no longer a couple. A divorce can be granted even without your one year separation if you can prove that your marriage had broken down because he had committed adultery. Contact a family lawyer, or a Legal Aide clinic nearest you or call INTERCEDE for a referral.

Q- *I came to Canada as a Permanent Residence under the Independent Immigrant category but I misrepresented that I have two children and was in a common-law relationship with the mother of my children for seven years. Will I be made to leave Canada because of my misrepresentation?*

A- Yes, no matter how long you have lived here, you can still lose your status as permanent resident because of your misrepresentation. Other reasons for losing status are if you:

- ★ lived outside Canada for more than 3 years in a 5-year period;
- ★ gave false documents when you applied for permanent residence;
- ★ gave false or incomplete information when you were granted permanent residence;
- ★ were sponsored by someone who gave false or incomplete information on the sponsorship or undertaking application;

You may start correcting your misrepresentation by getting legal help or consulting INTERCEDE for referrals.



**POT LUCK CHRISTMAS PARTY
COME ONE COME ALL**

Sunday, December 5, 2004, 3 pm
Cecil Community Centre
58 Cecil St., Toronto
(S of College, E of Spadina)

**Guest Speaker: Human Resources and
Skills Development Canada**

Please bring a Gift of \$10+ for Exchange
And call to give us your idea for the Christmas Program
Tel. 416 483 4554 ext 21

COCO'S CORNER**211-your Community Connection**

As a newcomer it is important to know the difference between the telephone numbers 911 and 211.

911 is the number to call in emergencies like fire, accidents, break-ins or for other types of immediate assistance. Be specific if it is the Fire Department, Police or Ambulance that you need.

211 is a number to call for free information about community, social, health and government services in Toronto. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and offers multilingual information. When you call 211, a trained staff person will listen to your situation and link you with the services you need, such as:

- ▲ an after hours medical clinic nearest your home;
- ▲ emergency housing or overnight shelter;
- ▲ available programs for a family member who is alcoholic, or has a drug addiction;
- ▲ lost purse or wallet with your immigration papers and other identification cards and where to go for replacements;
- ▲ employment training or volunteer work;
- ▲ looking for a home support or seniors' home for an aging parent,
- ▲ and many others....

211 is your call for information about child care, language classes, job searches, housing, health services, family counselling, financial assistance, emergency assistance and more.

**JSW Success Stories**

Congratulations!



to newcomers who recently found jobs they really can feel good about.

The success of our clients in hurdling their challenges as newcomers, gives us a sense of pride. It gives us strength and inspiration to hear "*the good news*" from those who participated in the Job Search Workshops or who walked- in our office for assistance in resume or mock interviews.

Regardless of their immigration status--- as caregiver or landed immigrant, many of past JSW participants, now look back to their grueling job search experience as newcomers and regard the barriers or road blocks they encountered as part of their success.

Vivian Cañete, now practices her profession as nurse at Bridgepoint Hospital downtown. **Rhen Balunsit** is one of the medical technology instructors in one of the community colleges in Toronto. **Sol Gasilan** was ecstatic to inform us that she's hired as the patient relations staff at the Kingston Lodge, a newly opened retirement home.

Then there's **Rene Nacianceno** who was recently hired as quality control, chemical analyst/technician for the makers of Minute Maid and Frutopia beverages. There's **Loire Ann Lim-boc** who worked a microbiologist in Philippines, and is now doing the same work at Apotex, a pharmaceutical company. And yes, **Lannie Basilio**, a math teacher for years at the University of the Philippines High School, now enjoys being in the same profession in Toronto. There are many more who attended our workshops in the recent past who have met with similar successes.

JSW Updates

ON THE RIGHT TRACK WITH CAREER PLAN AND POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Delta Beverages Incorporated, the makers of Minute Maid and Frutopia drinks in the City of Vaughan, Ontario, just hired **Rene Nacianceno**, as a quality control (chemical process/analyst) technician .

As a newcomer who is with his family here in Canada, Rene had the right mind-set. He realized that:

- * he needed to maximize his time, energy and resources, to find a first job in the fastest way possible;
- * it is unlikely he would find exactly the same job he had back home. So he conditioned himself to the fact that it will take time before he will be back on track – doing well in a career which relates to his background. With his wealth of experience as a chemical analyst, Rene was the head of the production department of Coca-Cola Philip-pines;
- * it pays to reach out and network with previous co-workers, including subordinates from his past workplace;
- * getting help from available resources in the community is an important way to start.

He had participated in INTERCEDE’s JSW in August 2004. He carefully customized his resume based on the prospective employer’s requirements, focusing on what the employer would want to see in a resume.

“Preparing before an interview is just as important as polish-ing one’s resume” Nacianceno affirmed.



INTERCEDE ‘s First meeting in the New Year

Sunday January 9, 2005, 3 pm
Cecil Community Centre
(one block south of College cor. Spadina)

**FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOP
FOR CAREGIVERS & NEWCOMERS**

WHEN: SUNDAY
November 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2004
December 4, 5, 11 & 12, 2004
January 22, 23, 29 & 30, 2004

TIME : 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

WHERE: INTERCEDE
234 Eglinton Ave E., Suite 405
Toronto, On, M4P 1K5

Please call (416)483-4554 ext. 30 or 21 to sign up.
Seating is limited.

Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada & sponsored by COSTI & OCASI

INTERCEDE

Address: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 405
Toronto Ontario
M4P 1K5

Regular Hours: Mon-Fri 9 am - 4 p.m.
Telephone: (416) 483-4554
Fax: (416) 483-9781
Toll-Free: 1-877-483-4554
E-mail: info@intercedetoronto.org

INTERCEDE STAFF:

- Jo Alcampo** — Interim Administrative Co-ordinator
- Des Balce** - JSW Facilitator
- Fely Villasin** - Part — Time Facilitator
- Columbia Diaz** - Settlement Counsellor & Program Manager
- Anita Fortuno** - Settlement Counsellor
- Bernice Small** - Settlement Counsellor
- Genie Policarpio** - Intake & Administrative Assistant

We wish to thank: Citizenship and Immigration Canada - ISAP Program and Job Search Program with COSTI-OCASI; Ontario Status of Women; the Municipality of Toronto CSGP, Maytree and Trillium Foundations grant programs, for their financial support..



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