

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights
October 1988 (INTERCEDE)

DOMESTICS HOLD AGM; ELECT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Honourable Barbara McDougall, Minister of Employment and Immigration and federal Minister responsible for the Status of Women, was the keynote speaker at the annual general meeting (AGM) of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights (Intercede) on October 3, 1988, at the Cecil Community Centre.

Speaking to about 300 women and men, Minister McDougall announced additional funding for language and skills training for immigrant women. At present, women on work permits as domestic workers are not eligible for language and skills training programs for immigrant women.

Maria Ciampi of the Montreal Household Workers' Association also spoke at the AGM on organizing in Quebec. Representatives from our funding agencies, Virginia Trevurza of the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP); Henry Chong of the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Stella Ng, of the Secretary of State for Women's Programs, also attended.

For the first time, the members of Intercede directly elected all their board of directors, totalling 13, who are to serve terms of one or two years.

Cornelia Soberano, would-be first Filipino-Canadian lawyer in Ontario, was elected President. Her initial involvement with Intercede began four years ago as a law student doing volunteer work for domestic workers.

"As domestic workers become aware of their rights, it is imperative that the corresponding and necessary support system and services be made available and accessible," said Miss Soberano. "The members of the new board see this as one of its major tasks."

Joyce Stanford, presently a domestic worker and a long-time volunteer of Intercede, and Mary

Jarrell, a volunteer for injured workers who will be called to the Ontario Bar as a lawyer in early 1989, are First and Second Vice-Presidents, respectively. Magda Aguada, presently a domestic worker and formerly a schoolteacher, was elected Secretary. Soon-to-be lawyer Yola Grant, a West Indian feminist activist, was elected Treasurer. The election of the Executive was held on October 16, 1988, at the new offices.

Black activist, labour organizer join board

Eva Smith, a well-known community activist and a member of the Jamaican Canadian Association and the Congress of Black Women, has also been elected to the board of directors. Ms. Smith has been working with domestic workers from the Caribbean since the 1970s. Ms. Smith's presence and participation with Intercede is a definite asset to the organization. "It is very important that we link up with community organizations that would support us in our work," Ms. Smith said.

Brenda Wall, director of the Education Centre of the Labour Council of Metro Toronto, was also overwhelmingly elected to the board and is a member of the Intercede Personnel Committee. Ms. Wall has many years of experience working in solidarity with South African trade unions.

Other members of the board include Dolores Alapide, a current domestic worker and formerly a secretary; Eusebio Aquintey, a union organizer from the Philippines and the first male domestic worker to join the board; Nessie Gascon, currently a domestic worker and formerly a schoolteacher; Intercede past president Clementina Martinez; Eugenia Yuen, formerly a domestic worker from Malaysia and now an early childhood educator, and long-time volunteer and community activist Carmencita (Ging) Hernandez.

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 services 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 Commission;
- 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 a holiday) and are presently held at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street, from 3 to 5 p.m. A free legal clinic and an informal social hour are part of the afternoon's activities.

Stanford, Yuen to attend conference in Ottawa on immigrant and visible minority women

Intercede Vice-President Joyce Stanford and board member Eugenia Yuen will attend the biennial conference of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (NOIVMWC) to be held in Ottawa on November 10-13, 1988. Intercede participated in the founding conference of NOIVMWC in Winnipeg, Manitoba, two years ago.

NOIVMWC, the united front for more than 500 immigrant and visible minority women's groups in Canada, was given the mandate to form a united national voice and to liaise with other national women's groups to improve the status of immigrant and visible minority women.

The group's objectives are to implement strategies to combat sexism, racism, poverty, isolation and violence; to act as an advocate on issues dealing with immigrant and visible minority women; to

heighten public awareness of the status of this constituency and to work with all levels of government and public and private agencies, to develop effective strategies.

Workshops during the biennial conference include language training, employment equity, mental health, violence, racism and the women's movement, and how immigrant and visible minority women can access and affect the political system.

"The need to address women's issues in specifically designed government policies and programs has been a historic development. With the general recognition of women's issues as it relates to the overall socio-economic development of Canadian society, it is important to focus on the specific needs of immigrant and visible minority women," said Betty Lee, President of NOIVMWC.

UPGRADING COURSES

Toronto Office Skills will be offering courses on Access Data Services starting January 9, 1989. The courses were especially designed for domestic workers, based on questionnaires filled out by our membership at a previous monthly meeting.

The courses are:

- Computerized Bookkeeping
- Business Writing and Word Processing
- Job Search

The courses will be held on Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will also be other classes on Monday and Wednesday evenings. The annual fee will be \$35.

Please call Toronto Office Skills at 595-9920 or the Intercede office at 324-8751 for further information.

COCO'S CALENDAR

* On October 5, 6 and 8, counsellor Coco Diaz attended the Ontario Council of Associations Serving Immigrants (OCASI) workshop conference and annual general meeting at Geneva Park.

* Intercede's next monthly meeting will be on Sunday, November 6th at 3 p.m., at Cecil Community Centre.

* Happy Birthday to Lina Flor Seat, Cristy Perilla and Lydia Pinto!

* Congratulations to the members of the new Board of Intercede!

* Special thanks to Lina Flor, Manolita Repolliza and Juliet Liban for their active participation during Cecil Community Centre's open house.

Columbia Diaz

Minimum wage rises

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

As of October 1988, the Ontario minimum wage went up from \$4.55 per hour to \$4.75 per hour.

If you're a live-in domestic worker, the cost of room and board has gone up from \$247 per month to \$255 per month.

The following are what your pay and deductions, at minimum wage, should look like for three different pay periods.

Monthly (12 times a year)

<u>Gross Wages*</u>	\$905.66
<u>Deductions</u>	
room and board**	255.85
income tax***	87.60
Canada Pension Plan	13.78
Unemployment Insurance	21.28
<u>NET PAY</u>	\$527.15

Bi-weekly (26 times a year)

<u>Gross Wages*</u>	\$418.00
<u>Deductions</u>	
room and board**	119.00
income tax***	40.75
Canada Pension Plan	6.36
Unemployment Insurance	9.82
<u>NET PAY</u>	\$242.07

Weekly (52 times a year)

<u>Gross Wages*</u>	\$209.00
<u>Deductions</u>	
room and board**	59.50
income tax***	19.90
Canada Pension Plan	3.18
Unemployment Insurance	4.91
<u>NET PAY</u>	\$121.51

NOTES

* Gross Wages are based on a 44-hour week with no overtime.

** Board is calculated at the rate of \$1.80 per meal or no more than \$37.50 per week. You should get an extra \$1.80 in your pay for each meal you don't eat at your employer's home. For example, if you leave your employer's house on Saturday after breakfast and return on Sunday night after supper, you should receive an extra \$9.00 in your pay (5 meals x \$1.80 = \$9.00). Room is calculated at the rate of \$22.00 for a private room and \$11.00 for a shared room, per week.

*** Income tax deductions are based on Code 1 exemptions. If you are supporting dependent children, your tax deductions will be lower and your net pay higher. Income tax is calculated on gross wages minus CPP and UI deductions.

For work over 44 hours per week the rate is time-and-a-half, which is \$7.12 per hour at minimum wage. Your employer may offer you straight time off in lieu of money for overtime. You have the right to refuse time if you prefer money.

Joan Ann Gravesande

CHRISTMAS PARTY on December 4

At our monthly meeting on November 6th we will be striking committees to plan our Christmas Party on December 4th. We need volunteers for the food, entertainment and decorations committees.

Our special guest at the Christmas Party will be Raj Anand, head of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Mr. Anand's speech will centre on the role of the commission and how it affects the lives of domestic workers.

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

Search for new coordinator/ executive director

We have advertised for a new coordinator/executive director in both the ethnic and mainstream media. We have had a very good response to our ads and hope to fill the position very soon.

The vacancy arose from Judith Ramirez's resignation as coordinator after the board meeting on September 11, 1988.

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.

Next monthly meeting on **NOVEMBER 6!**

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

First Class