

# DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

October 1990

## CORRECTION TO CALCULATION OF PAY

In the September issue of Domestics Cross-Cultural News, a typographical error resulted in wrong calculation for the weekly calculation of pay. The correct calculation of pay starting from October 1, 1990 is as follows:

	MONTHLY (12/Year)	BIWEEKLY (26/Year)	WEEKLY (52/Year)
<b>GROSS WAGES*</b>	\$1029.60	\$ 475.20	\$237.60
<b>DEDUCTIONS</b>			
Room & Board**	290.33	134.00	67.00
Income Tax***	126.85	58.30	29.30
Can Pension Plan	17.52	8.09	4.04
Unemployment Ins	<u>23.17</u>	<u>10.69</u>	<u>5.35</u>
<b>NET PAY</b>	571.73	264.12	131.91

Effective October 1, 1990, minimum wage is \$5.40 per hour. Gross Wages\* above are based on a 44-hour week, no overtime included.

Room\*\* is calculated at \$25.00/week for a private room, \$12.50 for a shared room. Board is calculated at \$2.00 per meal. According to a Regulation made under the Employment Standards Act (ESA) that came into force on October 1, 1987, charges for meals or rooms shall not be deducted from the minimum wage of an employee unless the employee has received the meals or occupied the room supplied. You should get an extra \$2.00 in your pay for each meal that you do not eat at your employer's house.

(continued on next page)

## MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:

*you are invited to the*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*and*

## ELECTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Sunday, October 14, 1990, 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.*

*Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street (corner Spadina), Toronto*

*2:30 - 3:15 Reports and Election of the Board*

*3:15 - 4:30 Program*

*4:30 - 5:30 Refreshments*

*All members are welcome. Members up to July 1990 are qualified to vote by showing their INTERCEDE membership card.*

*Non-member Friends, Supporters and Volunteers of INTERCEDE are requested to please call 324-8751 to confirm your attendance as space and refreshments are limited.*

*(No application for membership will be accepted. There will be CLASP legal clinic but no INTERCEDE counselling at this Annual General Meeting)*

**CALCULATION OF PAY (cont'd)**

For example, if you leave your employer's house on Saturday, after breakfast, and return on Sunday night after supper, you should get \$10.00 more in your next weekly pay (5meals x \$2 = \$10).

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

By law, employers must pay your wages with a written statement of how these wages were calculated so that with each pay, you should get the following information:

- the period of time or the work for which your wages are being paid.
- your wage rate (\$5.40 an hour or more)
- the amount of gross wages you have earned
- the amount and the reason for each deduction
- any other payment
- the net wages you are being paid

Example of a written statement of earnings accompanying your pay:

**STATEMENT OF EARNINGS**

Date:	Sept. 21, 1990	
Name:	Linda Lee	
Wage rate:	\$ 5.40/hour	
Pay Period from:	Sept 15 - 21, 1990	
<b>Gross Earnings:</b>		<b>\$237.60</b>
<b>Deductions:</b>		
Room & Board:	\$57.00	(5 meals not taken)
Income Tax:	\$29.30	
CPP:	4.04	
UIC:	5.35	
<b>Total Deductions:</b>	<b>\$95.69</b>	<b>\$ 95.69</b>
<b>NET PAYMENT</b>		<b><u>\$141.91</u></b>

**COCO's CALENDAR**

*Thank you,* everyone who called or sent cards to wish me fast recovery. I am back to work after resting for a long three weeks.

*Big fun in Niagara...* is what four busloads of INTERCEDE members had on August 12. Let's have fun again next summer.

*Congratulations and thank you...* to all the successful participants in the Facilitators' Workshop series who led the small group discussions during the September 16 newcomers' orientation.

*Reminding you...* that you have right to eight public holidays and

the four public holidays coming up are Thanksgiving Day October 8, Christmas Day December 25, Boxing Day December 26, and New Year's Day January 1.

*Contact the Ministry of Health...* about your OHIP if you change your name or address, if your card is stolen or lost, if your status has changed from the FDM to open permit or to landed immigrant status, if you are leaving Ontario permanently or if you will be outside of Ontario for more than 6 months. To record any of these changes, obtain the correct form from the Ministry of Health office nearest you (blue pages of the phone book).

*See you at the AGM (Annual General Meeting) on October 14th!*

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

**NEW SUBSCRIPTION:**

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:**

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

Please send DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS to:

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

CITY/PROVINCE: .....

POSTAL CODE: ..... TELEPHONE: .....

**YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES:**

Intercede Members:	FREE	Non-member Domestic	\$ 5.00
Non-Profit Organizations	FREE	Others	\$10.00

# DOMESTIC WORKERS MUST BE INCLUDED IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT

(Continued from September issue)

## Environmental dangers in the home workplace

Asbestos, lead, PCBs, formaldehyde and aerosols are known dangers in the home environment.

Asbestos is a known carcinogen, for example, and can irritate lungs. Asbestos may be present specially in older house insulation, ceiling tiles, dry-wall patching compounds; also in humidifiers, hair driers, ironing board covers, oven mitts and some baby powders. Asbestos-free building products are available; cracks in older houses must be sealed; corn starch is a substitute for baby powders.

Lead can cause irreversible brain damage, can be absorbed by pregnant women and lead to miscarriages. It is found in house paints and in solders of milk cans for example. Long term exposure to PCBs can damage liver, heart and blood vessels, cause asthma and chronic bronchitis and limb numbness. PCBs are found in cork wall tiles, kitchen film wraps, drinking straws, plastic baby pants. In Canada, use of PCB has been banned and unleaded gasoline is advised because dust contaminated by leaded gasoline affects the environment.

Formaldehyde causes respiratory problems and cancer in animals and is used in foam insulation and the manufacture of particleboard, plywood and fabrics. The use of urea formaldehyde foam has been banned in Canada.

Aerosols can cause heart and lung problems. Aerosolized deodorants, disinfectants and room fresheners are inhaled deep into lungs and are specially dangerous in poorly ventilated places - these products must be avoided.

## Dangers from some appliances

Gas stoves emit carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxides in varying amounts. Daily exposure to these can cause a wide range of chronic conditions including anxiety, physical fatigue, rheumatism, arthritis, muscle pain and headaches. Forced draft ventilation to the outside may help.

Refrigerator drip pans are settings for growth of bacteria that circulate in the air and can cause respiratory problems. Drip trays must be cleaned outdoors once a month or more.

Microwave ovens - radiation leakage through faulty seals can cause tissue damage, especially to the eyes; nerve tissues and white blood cells are also vulnerable to the thermal effects of microwaves. Never insert objects around oven door seals or tamper with locks. Do not clean seals with abrasives; stay at least three feet away from oven while

operating.

Television, specially, older sets emit radiation above maximum allowed so avoid older TV models and view at least seven feet away.

## Physical Stress in house work

Household workers often lift heavy or bulky items, do repetitive movements for long periods of time and work in unnatural and uncomfortable positions that put strain on muscles, back and joints. Household workers commonly suffer muscle soreness, pain and swelling of hands, wrists, and other joints, stiffness, arthritis, hernia, bursitis and even back injury. Some develop varicose veins from prolonged standing.

It is important to learn to lift properly (bend from legs not from back) and to have help lifting too heavy objects; avoid unnatural positions when straining and reaching; watch for slippery surfaces; and wear gloves for working.

## Psychological stress

Domestic workers complain of loneliness and isolation, feelings of depression, boredom and frustration. Foreign domestic workers suffer anxiety about their immigration status and are often intimidated from complaining about work conditions and ill treatment such as excessive hours of work. Some of them may be married with children and suffer from being separated from their families for years.

Establishing social ties by making friends and joining social activities and groups, networking and getting organized are important for these workers.

Apart from activities such as the monthly meetings, the orientation workshops, the facilitators' workshops, the recent trip to Niagara, etc. INTERCEDE is introducing a form of supportive counselling to address stress problems suffered by domestic workers. With the help of mental health workers, supportive counselling will be available to domestic workers once a week at INTERCEDE's service unit.

*(Excerpts from a presentation and materials given by DAVID LEITCH, Lawyer/Director, Toronto Workers' Health and Safety Clinic; and "Health Hazards of Household Work" published by South Riverdale Community Health Centre (461-2494)*

***INTERCEDE's next monthly meeting will be on Sunday, November 4, 1990 from 3 to 5 p.m. at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street.***

***Our topics will be Aptitude Assessment, Career Counselling and Upgrading for domestic workers in the FDM and on open permit.***

***There will be a CLASP Legal Clinic and INTERCEDE counselling.***

## NINE NOMINATED TO INTERCEDE BOARD

INTERCEDE members will be replacing nine members of the Board of Directors who are leaving or whose terms have ended. The following have been selected by a nominating committee and will be presented for election during the AGM:

1. **EUGENIO AREVALO** - is in the FDM program and an active member of INTERCEDE who has completed a series of Facilitators' Workshops and led workshop groups during the past two newcomers' orientation meetings of the organization.
2. **AMELIA DIZON** - is in the FDM program. An active member and volunteer, she completed a series of Facilitators' Workshops and led a workshop group in the last newcomers' orientation.
3. **CARMENCITA HERNANDEZ** - is currently INTERCEDE Treasurer and has agreed to be nominated for another term. She is outgoing chairperson of the Coalition of Visible Minority Women, is one of YWCA Women of Distinction for 1990, and serves on several other community organizations' Boards.
4. **MARY JARRELL** - is current President and has agreed to serve another term in the Board. She is a lawyer in private practice, specializing in labour law.

5. **HERMINIA PALANCA** - is in the FDM. She has been a longtime member and volunteer and completed the Facilitators' Workshop series by leading a workshop group in the Sept. 16 newcomers' orientation.

6. **ELAINE PRESCOD** - is Coordinator of the Job Development Training Program of the Coalition of Visible Minority Women and is an accountant by profession.

7. **MARIA RAMOS** - is an active member and volunteer who has finished under the FDM program and is now on open permit.

8. **ANDREA TIMOLL** - has been an active member and volunteer of INTERCEDE since her student days at York University. She is continuing her studies in Law at the University of Windsor.

9. **PURA VELASCO** - is in the FDM, is an active member and completed the Facilitators' Workshop series. She led a group workshop in the last newcomers' orientation. Pura spoke for domestic workers in the TV program W5 entitled "Living on the Job".

Those leaving the Board are Magdalena Aguada, Herminia Andrade, Clementina Martinez, Judy Rebick, Joyce Stanford, Celia Tababan and Brenda Wall. Remaining to serve the rest of their terms are Thelma Coolen, Sedef Arat-Koc, Rosemary Seymour and Annie Wong.

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Employment Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Revenue Canada (Taxation)	869-1500
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933
Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council	971-5893
Toronto Rape Crisis Centre (24-hour line)	597-8808
<b>LEGAL SERVICES</b>	
Parkdale Community Legal Services	531-2411
Chinese & SouthEast Asian Legal Clinic	971-9674
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
<b>EMERGENCY HOUSING</b>	
Nellie's Hostel	461-1084
Evangeline's	762-9636

Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Ontario Human Rights Commission	326-9511
OHIP	Toronto 482-1111
	Mississauga 275-2730
	Scarborough 1-800-263-3814
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	367-1388

#### INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario  
 Time: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
 Telephone: (416) 324-8751

#### INTERCEDE STAFF

Coordinator/Editor: Fely Villasin  
 Counsellors: Columbia Tarape-Diaz  
 Teresa Mak Karen Serwonka

### DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

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

FIRST CLASS