

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS



October

2001

Toll Free - Canada
1-877-483-4554

INTERCEDE FOR THE RIGHTS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS, CAREGIVERS, AND NEWCOMES

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS AND CAREGIVERS IN THE LIVE-IN CAREGIVER PROGRAM

*(This is a brief orientation which INTERCEDE prepared for women preparing to enter Canada through the LCP.
Thought of publishing it here for the benefit of recent arrivals and other newcomers)*

LCP or Live-in Caregiver Program admits caregivers to Canada on a temporary work permit. To qualify for admission to this program, you must meet its requirements and abide by its rules. Information about LCP requirements for admission can be found at this internet address: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/caregi_e2.html

Be warned against false advertising and scams perpetrated by unscrupulous employment or recruitment agencies. A proper agency will charge a prospective employer, and should not charge you.

Once you do qualify and enter Canada through the LCP, you can avoid problems and complications, such as loss of legal status, by finding out and knowing all you can

about what are the

LCP Conditions:

1. The only work you are allowed to do is live-in caregiving work, that is, you are supposed to do caregiving work and live in your employer's household as a condition of your valid status in the country. This means that you have every right to refuse your own employer's demand to perform any other type of work, such as being a waitress in his restaurant or a receptionist in his clinic. You should also refuse if your employer asks you to also work for his relative or another employer, for example.
2. Your work permit must be valid at all times. This permit must bear the name of the employer you are actually working for. A work permit is issued for one year only, so you must know the expiry date and apply for renewal one month before that date. Do not let your permit expire.
3. You are allowed to work for only one employer at a time, the one whose name appears on your work permit. If you change employers, you must apply for a new work permit which will bear the name of how does hypenation works f your new employer.
4. You are prohibited from working with a new employer until after this employer makes an official request to hire you with Human Resources Canada and receives a Validated Offer of Employment. After your prospective employer gets a validated offer of employment, you can apply for a new work permit with his/her name on it.. Only when you receive a valid new work permit can you legally work again.
5. You can apply for permanent resident status only after completing 24 months of live-in caregiving work under the LCP but

you must complete this 24-month requirement within three years of your arrival in Canada under the Live-in Caregiver Program. should also know that as a temporary migrant worker in Canada you do have, and must assert,

YOUR RIGHTS:

- Be assured that you have every right to leave an employer for any reason and at any time if you choose to do so. Nothing in the LCP prevents you from working in a safe, healthy and stress-free workplace!
- Under the Live-in Caregiver Program, your work is primarily as a caregiver for children, or an elderly person or a person with special needs, with some cooking and cleaning tasks.
- Your travel documents, specially your passport, are your property and responsibility, neither your employer nor anyone else has a right to confiscate or keep them.
 - You never agreed to be a slave nor to give up your fundamental freedoms. No employer has a right to invade your privacy, confine you in their premises and restrict your freedom of movement. Nothing in the LCP allows the violation of your fundamental human rights and dignity.
 - You have a right to be respected and to be free from violence. Outside of your workhours you are free to go out, call people, and live a normal adult life.

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.

INTERCEDE

cordially invites you to its
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Sunday, October 14, 2001
At Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.
(one block south of College at Spadina)
3 p.m. Members' Annual Meeting and
Elections
4 p.m. Program
Speaker: **Marilyn Oladimeji**
(from Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/
Multicultural Women Against Rape)
"Are you in a safe workplace?"
Community Speak-Out
Song Number
5 p.m. Snacks and Refreshments

Laws do protect you as a worker, despite the LCP's stringent conditions. Labour laws or employment standards may vary from province to province, but today, most of them apply to live-in domestic and caregiver workers. Employment Standards Acts (ESA) in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia etc. protect you in most of its provisions including minimum wage and hours of work and overtime. You must find out what your rights are under your province's

Employment Standards, such as:

- standard minimum wage (\$6.85/hour in Ontario)
- overtime pay (regularly 1&1/2 times your hourly rate beyond 44 hours in a week)
- days off (48 hours off weekly)
- paid holidays (at least 8 annually)
- termination notice or pay (one week after 3 months to less 1 year)
- vacation (2 weeks after 12 months or 4% of pay)
- room and board deductions (\$53.55/week)
- no other deductions can be taken out of your salary except for tax, employment insurance and Canada pension.

It is also important for you to know that you are covered, and your employer is obliged to pay, for provincial health insurance, workers' compensation, part of unemployment insurance. Your employer is legally obliged to remit to Revenue Canada all deductions from your pay, including federal and provincial taxes. It is not your responsibility if your employer does not comply with this obligation.

If any of the ESA is violated by your employer, you have a right to file a claim in the province's Ministry of Labour and there is free legal

assistance you may access in order to do so. Do not let offending employers get away with violating your rights, it will only embolden them to continue to abuse others.

Remember that Canada is a signatory to international covenants and agreements including the Human Rights Convention, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination, and others. These are legal instruments which are meant to protect you and for which the Canadian government must be held accountable.

FEEDBACK ON INTERCEDE ACTIVITIES

At the September meeting, members of INTERCEDE expressed their satisfaction with INTERCEDE's performance in the past year. Those who had participated in the Advocacy Training funded by Maytree Foundation were particularly vocal about the benefits they experienced from the series of six workshops which ended in July.

Apart from upgrading their skills in communication and conflict resolution, they valued learning about women's issues, reproductive rights and other topics. The women also appreciated the energizing and relaxation exercises which preceded the sessions. "The Advocacy training changed my life and how I look

The **STAFF** and **MEMBERS** of **INTERCEDE** would like to give our **HEARTFELT THANKS** to the estate of the late **TARA WHITE**,
For her generous donation to **INTERCEDE**.
May **GOD** bless you. You will always be in our prayers.

ELDERLY CARE AT SENECA COLLEGE
Registration for Elderly Care course at Seneca College will start on November. Course fees will be \$191.00 and sessions will be once a week from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm.
For registration and further information, please call Anita at (416) 438-4554 ext 21

EMERGENCY FIRST AID with

-Infant Child CPR – Sunday	Oct 14, 2001	from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm
	Saturday	Nov. 3, 2001 from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm
	Sunday	Dec. 2, 2001 from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm
-Adult CPR/Heartsaver		
	Sunday	Oct. 28, 2001 from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm
	Saturday	Nov. 3, 2001 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
	Saturday	Dec. 29, 2001 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Please register at least one week before the start of each training date by sending a cheque payable to **ST. JOHN AMBULANCE** in the amount of **\$65.00 for Infant/Child CPR;**
\$59.00 for Adult CPR/Heartsaver and mail it to:
Intercede
234 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 205
Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5
For further details, please call (416) 483-4554 ext. 21 and ask for Anita Fortuno

at the world," said one woman who used to be unhappy in her work and has now learned to be assertive with her employer.

"You learn to be more objective and to foster smoother group dynamics," said another, who says she used to dominate discussions and didn't give consideration to others' opinions until she was able to observe and critique the same behaviour in others.

A new series of advocacy training and practice will start in October, this time with funding from the City of Toronto's "Breaking the Cycle of Violence" as well as Access and Equity grants. Within a week 15 women had registered for the Advocacy workshops which will focus on a "violence audit" as well as training of trainers and a practical application of learned Advocacy skills.

Meanwhile, members expressed their preference for specific activities such as out-of-town trips and upgrading courses in child and elder care. With more and more recent arrivals coming to INTERCEDE, there was a clamor for group orientation sessions particularly on the Live-in Caregiver Program. There were suggestions to shorten our telephone message and to open for client services on Saturdays and evenings. All of which are for consideration by the Board of Directors for the coming year.

FREE JOB SEARCH WORKSHOPS FOR CAREGIVERS AND NEWCOMERS

INTERCEDE is offering free Job Search Workshops specifically designed for domestic workers and caregivers working under the Live-in Caregiver Program. Other newcomers are also welcome.

Participants learn skills needed to find work in Canada, such as how to identify their skills, write effective resumes, and handle job interviews with confidence.

In the past three years, INTERCEDE has served over 400 participants and more than 80% have secured full-time or part-time work.

In particular, we assist domestic



INTRODUCING OUR NEW STAFF

Olive Smith was born in Guyana. She recently joined the INTERCEDE staff as a Counsellor. She previously worked in the health and health-related, educational and other multidisciplinary fields. It had always been her desire to work in a capacity which included working with immigrant women and, in particular, women of colour.

Among her educational background, Olive holds an Hon. B.A. in English Literature, African Studies and Women's Studies from the University of Toronto and is also a graduate of the Assaulted Women and Children's Counselling program at George Brown College.

One of her interests was teaching English as a second language. Since INTERCEDE offers a wide variety of services, she hopes that she will finally be able to combine her educational, social service, counselling and medical skills and background.

workers and caregivers with the transition into the broader labour market once they complete the Live-in Caregiver Program.

Participants have overwhelmingly positive feedback about the JSW Program. The following are some examples of client feedback:

"I found this workshop very useful. It taught me the steps to getting a job related to my career, medical technologist. I have been holding myself back because I was not confident in my abilities. I learned it takes a positive attitude to achieve your goals."

"I feel confident that I could look for a job more effectively because I've learned how to prepare a resume and what to do in an interview. I believe I can reach the goal of my dream."

"I have been to many interviews for computer technician and I keep getting turned down. Even though I can do the job, I couldn't get over my nervousness and problems with English; I couldn't answer their questions. Now I know what to prepare for. Thank you for helping me practise my answers for my interview next week."

The four-day workshops are held on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Next dates are **October 14, 21, 28, & November 4 and November 11, 18, 25 & December 2.**

Space is limited, please call Anita Fortuno at (416) 483-4554 extension 21 to register.

This free program is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada; and sponsored by COSTI and OCASI. Participants will receive a Certificate of Completion.



l to r: Joan McKay (George Brown College), Feliza (JSW Graduate) & Fely Villasin (INTERCEDE Coordinator)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWER

Q My two daughters are currently enrolled in a 6 months Live-In Caregiver course with the intention to come to Canada under the LCP. How can they be sure that the course will be recognized by the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines?

A Advise your daughters to verify with the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) if the training centre they are enrolled in has been used by other caregivers/migrant workers who left the Philippines for a Live-In caregiver job in Canada. Also, inquire with the Canadian embassy if they recognize said training centre.

Q I arrived in Canada under the Live-In caregiver Program with the expectation that I would be working with the employer who offered me the job arranged by

my employment agency. Upon my arrival this employment agency advised me that the employer is no longer available and asked me to work for another employer.

A You can only start working for another employer once you have a new Employment Authorization. This employment agency cannot force you to work for just any employers without proper permit.

Q I am an INTERCEDE member. My brother is a newcomer in Canada, he arrived as an Independent Immigrant and is interested to participate in the Job Search Workshop . Can he ?

A Yes, he can call INTERCEDE to register for the next schedule of classes which are held at George Brown College on King Street.

Q I went to the OHIP office to renew my card but I was refused even if I had my employer's letter and copy of my Open Employment Authorization. I was told that I must bring proof of my medical examination. What will I do ?

A Bring a copy of the letter that was sent to you together with your Open Employment authorization which states that you have been approved in principle for landed immigrant status. If you do not have that copy, contact Immigration office in Vegreville, Alberta , by writing or faxing your request to have a copy of that letter.

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

Regular Hours: Mon-Fri 9 am - 4 p.m. (see below)

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 - Intake & Administrative Assistant

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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