

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the International Coalition to End Domestic's Exploitation

Sept 1984

DEPUTY PREMIER AGREES CHANGES NEEDED

On August 22, 1984, INTERCEDE met with Deputy Premier Robert Welch, Minister Responsible for Women's Affairs for the Ontario Government.

The six-member INTERCEDE delegation was led by Co-ordinator Judith Ramirez, and included Linda Lising, President of the Philippine-Canadian Ladies Circle; Desiree Hipplewith, Service Unit Counsellor; Allison Kerr, of the YWCA's Social Action Committee; Carmencita Hernandez, of Kababayan Community Centre and the Ontario Coalition of Visible Minority Women; and Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, of the Ontario Status of Women Council.

Also present at the meeting were Glenna Carr, Executive Director of the Ontario Women's Directorate, and Audrey Swail, Community Outreach Manager for the Directorate.

Judith summarized the recommendations in our brief "Upgrading the Status of Domestic Workers in Ontario", stressing the removal of the wage differential between domestics and other workers, and the inclusion of domestics under the hours of work and overtime provisions of the Employment Standards Act.

Mr. Welch responded by saying that the wage differential was introduced in 1981 "without a clear cut rationale" and that it is currently under review. He also assured INTERCEDE that arguments against continuing the differential have been made by his ministry to Russell Ramsay, Minister of Labour.

Mr. Welch listened attentively as Desiree Hipplewith, former domestic worker from Guyana, described how she had routinely worked 13-16 hour days, 6-7 days per week, for only \$280 per month.

The Minister questioned Linda Lising, a Filipina domestic worker, about whether she and other women from the Philippines also face long hours and low pay. Linda replied that the average work week among members of the Philippine-Canadian Ladies Circle is 65 hours per week. That amounts to 21 hours more than the 44 upon which the minimum rate of \$147 per week is based. The hourly rate, therefore, drops to \$2.26 as compared to the \$3.35 per hour now "required" by Ontario law.

Mr. Welch appeared to be alarmed at the conditions described by the INTERCEDE delegation. We stressed that they are a direct result of the total lack of protection of domestic workers under the hours of work and overtime provisions of the Employment Standards Act.

Both the Minister and Ms. Carr were familiar with the law in Quebec which regulates domestics' hours of work and grants them overtime pay.

The meeting ended with Judith underscoring the fact that Ontario lags significantly behind other major provinces. The Minister assured INTERCEDE that "concrete recommendations for change" are expected to be in place by November 1984.

In the meantime, our letter-writing campaign to Labour Minister Russell Ramsay continues. Domestic workers need your support! For more information contact:

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COCO'S CALENDAR

Recent happenings...

- * on August 2 INTERCEDE attended a reception hosted by the Organization of Caribbean Canadian Initiatives to Launch a new ISAP-funded service...John Roberts, then Minister of Immigration was the guest of honor
- * on August 15 INTERCEDE attended the televised national leader's debate sponsored by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women
- * on August 22 INTERCEDE met with Deputy Premier Robert Welch and Glenna Carr, Executive Director of the Ontario Women's Directorate
- * on August 23 Service Unit staff attended a press conference for Jim Coutts, Liberal candidate in Spadina, sponsored by CONTRAST

Coming up soon...

- * on September 11 INTERCEDE will address the Mayor's Committee on Community and Race Relations on our current drive to change Ontario labour laws
- * on September 22 the Cecil Community Centre will host an OPEN HOUSE from 10am to 5pm... everyone is welcome!
- * the next INTERCEDE MONTHLY MEETING is set for Sunday, October 14, at 58 Cecil Street, from 2 to 5pm. Mark this date in your calendar!!

AND CONGRATULATIONS...

- * to our new landed immigrants : CERELYN ALLEN, LINDA FINDLATER (Jamaica) and NATI DOMETITA, TESSIE RIVERA, PERLY PUNZALAN, CARMEN DURLAO, LITA LUCERO, AIDA CUDANGOS, ESTER MAGO, TESSIE RAYO (Philippines)
- * to MERCELLA MACKINLEY who was married on August 25 to The Reverend J. Daniels... best wishes from all of us!
- * to ELEANOR ALUAT who celebrated her birthday on August 18...many happy returns!
- * to PAMELA SKEETE for a holiday home in Barbados and a new clerk-typist job!

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE SOARING!

On August 12, 1984, INTERCEDE launched a one-month membership drive to add fifty new domestic workers to our ranks. The campaign got off to a strong start with twenty women taking out memberships on the spot!

Mid-way through the membership drive, the number of new people registered has reached thirty-seven, or 74% of our goal! Calls arrive daily at the Service Unit, and over sixty membership forms have been mailed out to members recruiting new people.

Membership Committee member Anita Weretelnikow, from Great Britain, reports that nannies from the U.K. have been slow to join. We urge all domestic workers from Europe to get on the bandwagon and "Support the Group that Supports You" !

Final results of the membership drive will be announced at the INTERCEDE MONTHLY MEETING on Sunday, September 9. All prize winners will also be announced at that time. Let's work together to go over the top!

- Columbia Tarape Diaz

JOIN INTERCEDE

\$5 YEAR

SUPPORT THE GROUP THAT SUPPORTS YOU !

A special thanks to the following women who are serving on the MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: Cecilia Grave, Desiree Hipplewith, Linda Lising, Elvira Boncato, Coco Tarape Diaz, and Anita Weretelnikow...you're doing a **great job!**

Newsletter Committee:
Columbia Tarape Diaz, Cecilia Grave, Desiree Hipplewith, Judith Ramirez, Pamela Skeete, Sonia Thomas, Daphne Tucker

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

On October 1, 1984, the Ontario minimum wage for domestic workers is going up to \$3.50 per hour. Therefore, the federal immigration minimum for foreign domestics will rise by 25%. If you are working in Ontario as a temporary domestic on a work permit, your new rate of pay will be:

<u>Monthly</u>	\$ 827.00 Gross Pay
	238.00 Room & Board
	78.25 Income Tax
	11.89 C.P.P.
	19.02 U.I.

That leaves you with: 479.84 Net Pay

<u>Bi-weekly</u>	\$ 413.50 Gross Pay
	119.00 Room & Board
	45.50 Income Tax
	6.06 C.P.P.
	9.15 U.I.

That leaves you with: 233.43 Net Pay

If you have any questions about what your employer is legally-required to pay you contact:

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT (416) 929-3240

- Cecilia Grave

SETTING GOALS!

On Sunday, August 12, 1984, INTERCEDE members and friends heard an informative and inspiring talk from our second speaker in the Summer Speakers Series, Jean Augustine, Principal of St. Felix Separate School.

Originally from Grenada, Jean came to Canada in 1959 under the one-year domestics program. She immediately began upgrading in her chosen field of teaching and has since become a respected educator.

In her remarks Jean emphasized the need for dedicated effort towards the success-

full achievement of your goals. "Goals", she stressed, "are based on patterns which are set up by the individual". Speaking from personal experience she emphasized that "being around a circle of friends who generate a positive influence gives you the urge to undertake your affairs in a more organized and disciplined way".

Jean offered practical tips to domestics seeking landing in Canada to help them meet their vocational and educational goals:

- setting goals; draft a "guide" that you can carry around with you. Make a pattern on a sheet of paper and mark down your goals and the steps needed to achieve them. From time to time look at your "guide" and check your progress by ticking off the steps you have already completed
- education; any public library provides materials that you can read and consult to develop special interests, eg. how to upgrade your present skills, how to start your own business, etc.
- community involvement; participate in community activities of your choice. Join an organization or club in order to communicate with people who can give you ideas and encouragement

Many women present responded to Jean's presentation with personal accounts of how they had learned to be persevering in the pursuit of their goals. When Jean asked for a show of hands of how many women had ever put down their goals on paper, many said they would go home and do it that night!

The thought-provoking session ended with Jean urging everyone present to:

"Work hard, review your goals, and stay on track!"

- Desiree Hipplewith

Special thanks to Desiree Hipplewith for co-ordinating the Summer Speaking Series!

JUDITH HONORED BY FILIPINAS

On August 12, 1984, the Philippine-Canadian Ladies Circle held a Thanksgiving Party to celebrate the landing in Canada of hundreds of Filipina domestics under the new immigration policy.

Formed in 1981, the Ladies Circle has a core of sixty active members, many of whom worked long and hard in the landed status campaign. The group organizes social and recreational events for Filipina domestics and it also participates in lobbying and educational events.

President Linda Lising, who was also elected to the INTERCEDE Steering Committee last June, presided over the festivities on August 12. The celebration began with a well-attended Thanksgiving Mass officiated by Father Ted Valencia, Chaplain for Filipinos, at Saint Basil's Roman Catholic Church.

Following the service, a reception was held in the beautifully decorated church hall. Against the backdrop of an immense banner which read "Thank You Judith and Landed Status Supporters", a plaque of appreciation was presented to INTERCEDE Co-ordinator Judith Ramirez for "outstanding service in achieving recognition for the rights of foreign domestic workers".

In accepting the award, Judith thanked the crowd of over two hundred people and said that "the work for which you honor me is not the work of a single person but of many dedicated women who persevered together when all we had was our own determination to end injustice". She then introduced se-

veral members of the audience including: Carmencita Hernandez, of the Kababayan Community Centre; Desiree Hipplewith and Lynette Munian, of INTERCEDE; Linda Lising; and myself.

After the ceremony, a mouth-watering buffet supper was served. Among the many invited guests were: Tony Archangel, Board Member of the Ontario Council of Filipino-Canadian Associations; Mila Valdivia, Filipino Working Group; Susan Woolner, from Osgoode Hall Law School's C.L.A.S.P.; and members of the Filipino Homemakers' Club and the Philippine Women's Guild.

The Thanksgiving Party ended with a spirited dance which brought everyone to their feet!

- Columbia Tarape Diaz

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HOURS: Monday - Friday 9:30am - 4:30pm

Evenings and week-ends leave a message on our machine and we will return your call promptly!

All INTERCEDE services are confidential and free

DON'T FORGET!

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