

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

September 1996



Stop unabated abuse of women migrant workers

RATIFY UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON MIGRANT WORKERS, CANADA ASKED

At the end of a discussion last month, INTERCEDE members decided to launch an appeal to the Canadian government to sign and ratify the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

The Convention was passed five years ago at the United Nations General Assembly but to be in force, it must be signed and ratified by at least 20 member nations. Only six have signed so far, including the Philippines, but not Canada.

Ratification of the Convention has been high on the agenda of migrant groups all over the world because of notorious abuses against migrant women workers such as the summary trial and execution of Flor Contemplation in Singapore and the rape and near execution of Sarah Balabagan in the Middle East. Despite the worldwide condemnation in these two cases, abuses continue piling up.

Recently for example, INTERCEDE received the latest of a series of urgent appeals, this time from a Manila-based Association of Migrant Workers and their Families called KAKAMMPI. KAKAMMPI is seeking justice for a domestic worker, Elisa Salem, who died of torture barely four months after arriving in Jordan.

The International Convention, if ratified and in force, will serve as a basis for holding UN member states accountable for protecting the rights of workers temporarily residing within their territory. While it may not stop the abuses, it will certainly serve as a strong deterrent.

INTERCEDE has asked the National Action Committee on the Status of Women to lobby the Canadian government to sign the Convention. INTERCEDE is also asking all sympathetic individuals and organizations to sign on a Statement of Appeal that is being distributed now. (Call 483-4554 for copies).

PHILIPPINE PASSPORTS NOT TO BE WITHHELD FOR LOANS

Responding to a request made by INTERCEDE, the Philippine Consulate in Toronto has issued a warning to Filipino businesses and individuals not to withhold Philippine passports as security for loans they are giving.

Some domestic and caregiver workers under the Live-in Caregiver Program are jeopardizing their status in Canada because they are not able to produce their passports when being processed for

Contd. Pg 2

You Are Welcome

DOMESTIC WORKERS AND CAREGIVERS

Live-in or live-out, caregiving in hospitals or senior homes,
on temporary or open permit, immigrant or citizen

YOU ARE WELCOME TO INTERCEDE MEETINGS EVERY FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

(if it falls on a holiday, meeting is on second Sunday of the month)

Next INTERCEDE Meeting

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1996 from 3 to 5 pm
Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St. Cor. Spadina

Topic: SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK - DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?

With Chan Nankoosingh, Workers Information & Action Centre of Toronto (WIACT)

2:45 - 3:00 pm Member Application & renewals of Member ID nos. 95-0105 to 95-0114

3:00 - 5:00 pm Orientation for Newcomers

3:00 - 5:00 pm CLASP Legal advice and INTERCEDE counselling available

renewal of work permits or for permanent residence. It turns out that their passports were being withheld illegally by money-lenders and other Filipino businesses as collateral or guarantee for loans or services.

The passport is a property of the Philippine Government and cannot be legally withheld by anyone other than the person to whom it was issued. The Consulate sent out a press advisory to disseminate this information to businesses and moneylenders so that they will realize the impropriety and illegality of requiring Philippine passports as a form of collateral in any of their dealings.

INTERCEDE is advising domestic workers and caregivers on temporary work permits not to surrender their passports except to appropriate government authorities and to report to us or to the Philippine Consulate any person or company that asks to withhold their passport as a guarantee for any loan or service.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

The nature of caregiving and live-in domestic work often requires that these workers provide childcare without using punitive discipline to correct a misbehaving child.

Daniel Gana, a social worker with the Catholic Children's Aid Society, facilitated a workshop to members on ways of solving conflicts with children and between children without using punishment.

His participatory presentation and instructional materials were very beneficial.

Here's one method that has been used successfully by many:

ACTIVE IGNORING

Active Ignoring is briefly removing all attention from the misbehaving child under your care.

It can be used to discourage these behaviors:

- * Whining and fussing
- * Pouting and sulking
- * Loud crying intended to "punish" caregiver/parents
- * Loud complaining
- * Insistent begging and demanding
- * Holding breath and mild tantrums

Steps to follow:

1. Briefly remove all attention from the child
2. Refuse to argue, scold or talk
3. Turn your head and avoid eye contact
4. Don't show anger in your manner or gestures
5. Act absorbed in some other activity - or leave the room
6. Be sure the child's bad behavior does not get him/her a material reward ie. cookies, favourite lunch, new toy
7. Give the child lots of attention when his/her bad behavior stops

REMEMBER: Both good and bad behaviour are strengthened when rewarded. So develop the habit of praising the specific behaviours and actions you want strengthened. And avoid rewarding the child's bad behaviour. Be patient and good luck!

DID YOU CHANGE ADDRESS ?

Please inform us by phone or mail so that you can continue getting your newsletter and we don't waste postage for returned mail!

TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS since July 1995 (Does not apply to current members)

INTERESTED TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER? SEND THE FORM BELOW WITH PAYMENT. IF NO RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION BY END OF AUGUST, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION NEW SUBSCRIPTION CHANGE OF ADDRESS

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite 205, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5

Please send **DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS** to :

NAME : _____
 ADDRESS : _____
 CITY/PROVINCE : _____
 POSTAL CODE : _____ TELEPHONE : _____

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$20.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$25.00

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q. I am a baby sitter under the Live-in Caregiver Program applying for permanent residence and completing such documentation as proof of two-year work, medical certification etc.. However I am unable to provide a Police Clearance from the country where I worked for five years before I came to Canada because I was with no documentation or illegally there. Should I submit my application anyway?

A. The lack of police clearance should not delay submission of your application for permanent residence. You may include in your application proof of your effort to secure the police clearance from the country where you were not officially documented as a worker or resident.

Q. In all my immigration papers, I stated that I am separated from my husband. My children, whom I sponsored for concurrent processing with my application for permanent residence, have submitted all the requirements. I was surprised that the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines requested them to undergo a medical together with their father. I was separated from my husband seven years ago. What should I do about this?

"My daughter was only five-months old when I left the country. She just arrived. She is now 15. We're strangers to each other"

"My husband still has not found a job since he and the children joined me last January. He expects me to be the same person who left six years ago."

"Our mother keeps bugging us about how much she had to sacrifice to support us. I'm getting fed up."

Sound familiar? Come to a Theatre Workshop on:

**CONFLICTING ROLES OF WOMEN
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1996;
1 - 5 pm**

Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St.

This is a creative workshop for women who are adjusting to their families after long separation.

**Facilitator: Pilipinas Support Network
Call 483-4554**

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS

Will be held on **Sunday, Oct. 6, 1996**
Cecil Community Centre
58 Cecil Street, Toronto.

**Theme: The Future of INTERCEDE
depends on its Members**

Guest Speaker: JOAN GRANT-CUMMINGS

President

*National Action Committee on the
Status of Women (NAC)*

A. Contact Canada Immigration Center (CIC) in Mississauga or the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines and explain that you do not intend to include your husband in your sponsorship because you have been separated for a long time and no reconciliation is possible. Also, you may seek assistance from a Family lawyer who can assist in the processing of legal separation papers. In any case, please contact INTERCEDE.

Q. My employer asked me to take two Fridays off every month during summer because they would go to their cottage and did not need me. No deductions were made out of my salary but when I asked for my two weeks paid annual vacation, she told me that I had already taken it and no money was owing to me for the two weeks that I will be off. It is unfair and I feel cheated!

A. You are right to feel the way you do. Assert your right to your paid vacation leave and tell your employer you never agreed to the "convenient" arrangement made in the summer to parcel out the two-week paid vacation you are entitled to. If the disagreement persists, please make an appointment with INTERCEDE.

YOU MIGHT BE MISSING SOMETHING IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED YET...

INTERCEDE Caregivers Cooperative, Inc.
Giving our best service, Getting the best benefits
Call 486-0548

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PAY

Effective July 1, 1996

	MONTHLY (12/year)	SEMI-MONTHLY (24/year)	BIWEEKLY (26/year)	WEEKLY (52/year)
GROSS WAGES	\$1,306.07	\$ 653.03	\$ 602.80	\$ 301.40
DEDUCTIONS:				
Income Tax	187.60	93.30	85.40	43.60
C.P.P	28.40	14.20	13.11	6.55
U.I.C	38.53	19.26	17.78	8.89
Room & Board	<u>369.42</u>	<u>184.71</u>	<u>170.50</u>	<u>85.25</u>
Total Deductions	\$ 623.95	\$ 311.47	\$ 286.79	\$ 144.29
NET PAYMENT	\$ 682.12	\$ 341.56	\$ 316.01	\$ 157.11

Minimum wage in Ontario is currently \$6.85 per hour. Even though your employer/worker agreement or "contract" may have stated your wage at less, your employer must pay you the current legal minimum wage.

Gross Wages are based on a 44 hour work week with no overtime. If you work more than 44 hours in a week you should get overtime pay or, if you agree, paid time off instead.

Overtime pay is "time-and-a-half" your regular hourly wage. If you are paid the minimum wage of \$6.85 per hour, your overtime pay is \$10.28 per hour. You may or may not agree to take paid "time-and-a-half" off instead. For example, if you worked ten hours overtime, you should get 15 hours off with pay within the next 12 weeks.

The maximum deduction for board is \$53.55 per week (\$2.55 per meal). However, if you miss all six meals

during your two days off, only \$38.25 (\$53.55-\$15.30) should be deducted.

Room is calculated at a rate of \$31.70 per week for a private room or \$15.85 per week for a shared room.

Income Tax deductions are based on Code 1 exemption. Your employer is required by law to withhold Income Tax deductions, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and Unemployment Insurance (UI) Premiums from your gross wages. Your employer sends these deductions together with their own contributions to Revenue Canada every month. Each pay day, your employer is also required by law to give you a:

Written Statement of Earnings: July 1,

Name of Employee: **Maria Gonzalez**
 Hours worked: 44 hours
 Pay Period: July 1-7, 1996
 Salary: \$6.85 per hour

Gross Wages:		\$ 301.
Overtime:		0.00
Deductions:	Room	\$ 31.70
	Board	38.25 (6 meals not taken)
	Income Tax	43.60
	CPP	6.55
	UI	<u>8.89</u>
Total Deductions:		\$ 128.99
Net Payment:		\$ 172.41

CARIBBEAN GROUP MEETING
 Call Carol for time and place
 Tel. 483-4554

GRUPO HISPANA REUNION
 Llama a Coco
 Tel. 483-4554

VANCOUVER CDWCR
 Committee for Domestic Workers' &
 Caregivers' Rights
 (an INTERCEDE Affiliate)
 Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 874-0649

We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Canadian Heritage; Multiculturalism Program; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); the City of Toronto Grants Review Board, the Trillium Foundation, and Urban Rural Mission for their financial support.

FREE FREE FREE

(For INTERCEDE Members Only)

BEGINNERS COMPUTER COURSE
 When? *Every Saturday, 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.*
Oct. 5, 1996 through Jan. 27, 1997
or every Sunday, 1:30 - 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 6, 1996 through Jan 28, 1997
or every Monday evening 6:00 to 10:00 p.m.
Oct. 7, 1996 through Feb. 10, 1997

Where? **Metro Labour Education Centre**

* Course will be accredited with
George Brown College
 * Space for each schedule is limited.
 Register NOW 483-4554

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 205,
 Toronto, Ont. M4P 1K5
 Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm
 Tel: (416) 483-4554 Fax: (416) 483-9781

INTERCEDE STAFF

Coordinator/Editor: Fely Villasin
 Counsellors: Columbia Diaz
 Carol Salmon
 Intake Worker: Eva Jacob

