



CDWCR seeks to improve the lives and working conditions of caregivers and domestic workers through information, counseling, organizing, support networks, educational and training programs, referrals for legal advice and temporary accommodation.

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## Caregiver Program Under Review: CDWCR Calls for Landed Status Upon Arrival

Early February 2018, the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced that the Caregiver Program - Caring for Children and Caring for People with High Medical Needs were pilot programs that would expire on November 29, 2019. IRCC initially indicated that caregivers who would not complete the required work experience prior to November 29, 2019 could no longer apply for permanent residency under the Caregiver Program. This announcement caught caregivers by surprise and resulted to backlash from various caregiver and labor advocacy groups. Due to this, the IRCC and the federal government made a subsequent announcement that although the Caregiver Program is expiring; IRCC is in the process of reviewing the program to determine how caregivers will apply for permanent residence after the pilots expire on November 29, 2019. According to them, the Government is committed to ensuring that caregivers continue to have a pathway to permanent residence.

The review of the Caregiver Program is actually a positive development, as this provides an opportunity for care workers to point out to the government the many flaws of the current Caregiver Program. This also allows them to recommend alternative programs that would ensure equal rights and protection for foreign Caregivers.



CDWCR members during the February 12 Press conference

The Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights (CDWCR) has been actively participating in various initiatives and consultations to provide inputs in the Caregiver Program Review Process.

- 1) Participated in the Press Conference organized by Filipino Canadian Advocacy Network on February 12, 2018 at BC Federation of Labour Office in Vancouver. Lorina Serafico, CDWCR Steering Committee member and founding member spoke during this press conference. She shared her experience as a caregiver and re-iterated the need to allow caregivers to come to Canada as permanent resident. Lalaine Zamora, an active member and volunteer of CDWCR also spoke during the press conference. Lalaine, who is a caregiver waiting to complete her work experience to be eligible to apply for PR, expressed concerns and worries considering that the Caregiver Program pilot project is ending.

*(Continuation page 3.)*

## AGM Announcement

The Vancouver Committee of Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights (CDWCR) would like to invite all its members in the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) on May 27, 2018. It will be held at the South Vancouver Adult Day Centre, 3076 E. 49<sup>th</sup> Ave. (and Kerr Street), Vancouver unless specified on flyer from 1pm to 4pm with Free Lunch from 12pm to 1pm.

The AGM will be followed by the workshop tackling social media and fake news.

Please attend the AGM and hear updates regarding CDWCR activities for the past year, and also to catch up with members.

### For your Information: BC General minimum wage

- September 15, 2016 - \$10.85 per hour;
- September 15, 2017 - \$11.35 per hour;
- **June 1, 2018 - \$12.65 per hour.**

*If you are receiving below minimum wage, you should talk to your employer.*

## CAREGIVER'S PERSPECTIVE

*The Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights (CDWCR) gives opportunity to every Caregiver to be a part of their advocacy.*

As a new member of CDWCR and having attended some of CDWCR's workshops, I was invited to contribute an article for the newsletter by one of the organizing/core members. I am hesitant at first to accept it because I am not confident about my writing skills. Although, I am also attending CDWCR's ESL class, I am not sure I am able to share a catching point of view. However, it is my pleasure to write in one of the issues of CDWCR's newsletter. I will take this as a chance to let you know that I am thankful for the opportunities offered by CDWCR. It is unfortunate that the advocacy of the group is not being seen by most of the Caregivers who are already here in Canada. Some would come but never showed up after attending one or two workshops. CDWCR organizers and members are inviting and reaching out to the newcomers but most of them prefer to stay in the park, stroll in malls or bond with friends. This is probably due to the fact that they only have one day off per week and considering the stress of the work week, they prefer to relax instead.

I would like to share my experience in attending workshops and events organized by CDWCR. First, I enjoyed getting to know people involved in organizing the workshops and events, those who help caregivers without any cost. Second, the workshops educate and update us with information provided by invited guest speakers. Every detail made marks in the minds of Caregivers who had attended the workshop. And third, the organizers always show their support, and treat us like a family, and making us feel at home every time we are attending the workshops. They are always all ears, listening to every problem and issues we raise and providing us advice that helps us how to manage the present situation of Caregivers with their employer. The patience and efforts they showed in reaching out to the members in every upcoming workshop are very impressive. Helping us as a Caregiver shows their passions and dedications in the CDWCR advocacy. I am happy to be part of that advocacy.

*This article is written by one of the participants of the Care-Net Project 2018 – Annabelle G.Golveo. She is a caregiver who arrived in Canada in 2015 under the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP).*

## Not Your Ordinary ESL Class!

Through the funding support from the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), the Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights (CDWCR) launched its English as a Second Language (ESL) Program last January 2018. Our volunteer instructor is Mary Rowles, formerly the Director of Administration and Finance of BCGEU now retired and a long-time supporter of CDWCR. The program is composed of ten class sessions that started last January and will end in November 2018. The class is offered with a small fee from each participant. The venue for the class is at the BCGEU office.

The main objective of the program is to help foreign caregivers prepare for the language test required in their application for permanent residence (PR) under the Caregiver Program. In-home foreign caregivers require Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Level 5 to apply for PR under the Caring for Children Pathway and Caring for High Medical Needs Pathway. Some high skilled professions under the Caring for High Medical Needs Pathway require CLB Level 7. The caregivers attending the class are starting to prepare for the requirements to make sure they will not FAIL the language test.

The ESL Class also aims to support CDWCR members who are preparing for their Canadian Citizenship application. The proof of language proficiency for citizenship application is CLB Level 4. Other members who are attending the class would also like to improve their language skills for professional and personal development. I am attending the class for this purpose.

We are fortunate enough to have Ms. Rowles as our instructor who is very accommodating to design the curriculum to address these various needs. She is very approachable and helpful. Her teaching is based on Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS), which are two immigration accredited testing programs that caregivers can take for their English assessment.



*CDWCR ESL Class participants with their instructor – Mary Rowles*

This ESL program is great! It is different from other ESL Classes because of its contents. The topics discussed are not only helping caregivers improve their language skills but they are also empowering the participants. Some of the important topics used as tools for discussions were the History of Caregiving and Domestic Work in Canada, and last March, the History of International Women's Day.

We are also gaining new friends and are networking through this program. We are all excited to attend each class and the topics inspire us to try our best to do all the homework. The class is already full this year and there is already a waitlist for next year's class.

*Article contributed by Judith Diesta, one of the core members of CDWCR.*

## Landed Status Now!... cont'd from page 1

- 2) Organized the CDCWR Care-Net Project Immigration Workshop – held last February 25, 2018. Two resource speakers attended this workshop, Elizabeth Alt – A/Director of the Western Area for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Jenny Kwan - Member of the Canadian House of Commons, Member of Parliament for Vancouver East, NDP Critic for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. During the workshop, CDWCR presented the different issues and questions regarding the current Caregiver Program that they gathered over time from members. CDWCR also sent the copy of these questions to the IRCC representative.
- 3) Attended and participated in the Community Meeting and Rally organized by Filipino Canadian Advocacy Network at BC Federation of Labour Office in Vancouver on March 24, 2018.
- 4) Prepared and sent a Submission to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) on Caregiver Program Review as part of the IRCC written consultation process.
- 5) Participated in the preparation and acted as co-signatory in the joint submission entitled Permanent Status on Landing: Real Reform for Caregivers by: Caregivers Action Centre, Caregivers Action Centre, Caregiver Connections Education and Support Organization CCESO, Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights, GABRIELA Ontario, Migrant Workers Alliance for Change and Migrante Ontario.
- 6) Attended and participated in the IRCC Caregiver Program Consultation in Vancouver last April 16, 2018

In all the efforts and initiatives highlighted above, CDWCR is in unity with the following caregivers' demands:

- A comprehensive and transparent consultation process to address the Caregiver Program:
- **A new Federal Caregiver Program - Federal Workers Program - Caregiver Stream (FWP-C) that provides caregivers and their families with permanent residence status upon arrival in Canada.**
- Reform to protect caregivers who are already in Canada and in the backlog to ensure that no one is left behind. This will involve eliminating the backlog in caregivers' permanent residency applications; removing the 'excessive demand' provision in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA); regularizing the status of caregivers who have become undocumented; and developing immigration criteria that are consistent with what is in fact needed to do the job.

The Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights (CDWCR), feel that caregivers under the proposed Federal Caregiver Program should come in as Permanent Residents but with approved employers from the Federal and Provincial Job Bank, no work permit and not tied to one employer. This is to ensure that caregivers coming to Canada will have an assured job upon arrival in Canada, to allow them and their family to easily settle.

Canada's different immigration policies pertaining to domestic workers and caregivers have shown over the years that Canada has a permanent labour need for foreign domestic workers and caregivers - to take care of its household, its children, its elderlies, and those with high medical needs. Also, over the years, stories of employers' exploitation have been prevalent in this sector of workers. Since 1978, we believe that the employers' exploitation comes from how much the society value domestic and/or caregiving work and how much the society value the workers, mostly women of colour, who provide the work.

This is why these foreign workers come to Canada as temporary workers, though the need for the work is permanent. This is why workers have to prove themselves for at least two years of domestic and/or caregiving work before they can apply for permanent residency. This is why there is no haste in processing their and their families' Landed Status papers. This is why government of the day has allowed over five years of workers' separation from their families. And this is why, though there is a permanent Labour need, these migrant workers are only allowed to come into Canada as temporary workers.

**No amount of protection can be realized if this sector of workers are marginalized and are treated unfairly. We believe that allowing foreign caregivers and their families to come to Canada as permanent residents under the proposed Federal Workers Program - Caregiver Stream (FWP-C) is a step towards achieving justice and equality for foreign caregivers and a step towards providing real protection for these migrant workers.**

### **CARE-NET Project 2018 Updates**

CDWCR Care-Net workshops are continuing this year. To date, we have completed four workshops already. Following are some of the highlights:

Feb 4: Study on Caregivers Immigration and TFWP  
This workshop aimed to provide an opportunity for caregivers to study and understand the Caregiver Program and the Temporary Foreign Workers Program. Volunteers from CDWCR facilitated the workshop. About 16 participants attended this workshop. At the end of the workshop, CDWCR consolidated the questions and issues raised during the workshop.

Feb 25: Caregivers Immigration Workshop  
Two resource speakers attended this workshop, Elizabeth Alt – A/Director of the Western Area for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Jenny Kwan - Member of the Canadian House of Commons, Member of Parliament for Vancouver East, NDP Critic for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. About 45 individuals participated in this workshop. This workshop was very important this year, due to the recent announcement that the government is reviewing the Caregiver Program.

*Continue page 4*



## ANNOUNCEMENT

### 2018 Care-Net Project Schedule

Jun 10: Retirement – Planning for the Future  
Sep 9: Study on Employment Standards Act  
Oct 14: Employment Standards Workshop  
Nov 4: Career Path Workshop

### 2018 CDWCR EVENTS

May 27: CDWCR Annual General Meeting and Social Media Workshop  
Jul 1: Canada Day Walk/Picnic  
Aug 18: Summer Fundraising Dance  
Dec 15: CDWCR 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Christmas Party

CDWCR AGM and Care-Net Workshop will be held at South Vancouver Adult Day Centre, 3076 E. 49<sup>th</sup> Ave. (and Kerr Street), Vancouver unless specified on flyer from 1pm to 4pm with Free Lunch from 12pm to 1pm. Other events' venues and times will be announced closer to the date of the events.



Care-Net Project is funded by BCGEU (British Columbia Government & Service Employees Union)

## ANNOUNCEMENT:

Due to the increasing printing and mailing cost, CDWCR will be sending out copy of Newsletter to its members though e-mail. If you want to receive your copy through email, please send your email address and updated contact information to [cdwcr.org@gmail.com](mailto:cdwcr.org@gmail.com). Print out can be availed by attending CDWCR workshops. Thank you for your understanding.

## CARE-NET Project 2018 Updates (continued from page 3)

During the Immigration Workshop, CDWCR took this opportunity to present some of the issues and questions that CDWCR consolidated from the previous workshops. Based on the discussions during this workshop, following are the additional questions and issues that came out:

- 1) What will happen to foreign caregivers who arrived in Canada in 2016 to 2018 who will be at risk of not completing the 24 months work experience before November 2019? Will they will be able to apply for permanent residency? These caregivers can be potentially more vulnerable considering that they will likely to stay in the employer even if they are experiencing abuse rather than change employer due to fear of not meeting the 24 month work experience prior to November 2019. The process to change employer can take up to an average 8 months (LMIA and work permit application).
- 2) Considering the that Caregiver Program Pilot Project is ending in November 2019, is IRCC still issuing work permit for foreign caregivers under the TFWP?
- 3) There was one caregiver who attended the workshop that is affected by the Medical Inadmissibility for Excessive Demand. Although, no final decision has been made yet, her application is on hold for several years now, resulting to prolong family separation and uncertainty on her immigration status even though she already completed all the requirements to qualify for permanent residency. CDWCR supports the repeal of the Medical Inadmissibility for Excessive Demand.

All these questions along with the questions raised during the previous workshop were sent to IRCC and we are still waiting for their response.

Mar 18: Income Tax Preparation- This workshop was facilitated by Lorina Serafico, CDWCR member and Home Financing Advisor from Scotiabank. The workshop was attended by 22 participants.

Apr 15: Financial Workshop – This was facilitated by Nathaniel Narciso and Mary Jane Wee of Vancity. It was attended by 24 participants. Some of the topics discussed were basic banking and savings, how to detect fraud, how to build credit history, how to protect your identity, and how to check your credit score. These provided participants valuable financial information that would help them and their family settle in Canada.

There will be four more workshops scheduled in 2018. We invite all caregivers to attend these workshops.

## We wish to thank:

- BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)
- Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)
- Movement of United Professionals (MoveUp)
- Vancouver and District Labour Council (VDLC)
- BC Employment Standards Coalition
- Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter (VRRWS)
- Migrant Workers Centre (formerly called Westcoast Domestic Workers Association)
- Immigrant Services Society of BC

We also want to acknowledge everyone's effort in putting our newsletter together. Thank you very much for all your contributions.

## Membership Form

Mail to: CDWCR PO Box 37033, Vancouver, BC V5P 3X0 For inquiries: (604) 874-0649

Yes, I want to help the Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights (CDWCR)

Sign me up! I want to become a CDWCR member (membership is \$5/year)

**Date of Membership:** \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a donation to CDWCR 's work. (Sorry, we are not registered for tax deductible donations.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number : Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_