
Inventory of the Household Workers' Rights Records, 1982 - 1985 (continuing)

Accession number: 1987/005

Labor Archives & Research Center

San Francisco State University
San Francisco, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Household Workers' Rights Records,

Date (inclusive): 1982 - 1985 (continuing)

Accession number: 1987/005

Creator: Household Workers' Rights

Extent: .5 cubic feet

Repository: San Francisco State University. Labor Archives & Research Center
San Francisco, California 94132

Shelf location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Center's online catalog.

Language: English

Access

Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

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Access Points

Industrial Welfare Commission - health
Maupin, Joyce - housekeeping
minimum wage
minority women
non-toxic cleaning
sexual harassment
women

Introduction

The files of the Household Workers' Rights were placed in the Labor Archives and Research Center in January 1987 by Joyce Maupin the main staff person. The group is a Bay Area non-profit women's association.

History

Household Workers' Rights was organized March 1979 by employee members of the Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Board # 15. In 1976, the IWC had first covered household workers with benefits such as lunch breaks, overtime pay, and reporting time pay (household worker reports to place of employment but is locked out and thus unable to work.) Because of the nature and isolation of household work, law enforcement was problematic. Household Workers' Rights, originally a Union WAGE project, attempted to alleviate some of the problems which were faced by the workers, mostly women and two-thirds of them minority women.

Their first program had three points emphasizing legal rights: 1) to get employment agencies to advise workers and employers of laws; 2) to provide legal assistance to workers when necessary; and 3) to draw up contracts which could be presented at the time of hire. This contract included legal requirements of Wage Order # 15, sick leave, vacation pay and holiday pay.

When Union WAGE disbanded in 1982, Household Workers' Rights continued on its own. In January 1984, Household Workers' Rights became a membership organization with an elected board and member participation in the decision making. At that time the group organized an employment referral service. A non-toxic environmental housecleaning service was offered, in addition to sponsoring conferences, compiling a chart in Spanish and English on alternative non-toxic cleaners and conducting workshops on non-toxic cleaning. At the time of this writing (June 1987), a newsletter is being published every two months.

In January 1986, the group divided due to financial problems and ideological differences. Only a small number of women, operating out of an office in Berkeley, continued to concern themselves with a non-toxic cleaning service, putting out the newsletter and maintaining a referral service.

In addition to Joyce Maupin, who has done much of the organizing, fundraising and work on the newsletter, Regina Ryerson has been the group's non-toxic expert and Lucia Diaz has been responsible for Spanish outreach and translation.

Scope and Content

These files reflect the concerns of Household Workers' Rights. The questionnaire, modeled after a survey by the Women's Occupational Health Resource Center in New York, delves into the specific problems faced by household workers. Information includes women's ages, their children's ages, childcare concerns, length of time household work has been performed and other jobs held. Using diagrams of the human body on which to point out health concerns, this survey inquires about job injuries, aches and skin problems. Other subjects mentioned are flu, depression, over-tiredness, medical insurance and sexual harassment. There are 170 responses to this 1982 survey; 40 of which are in Spanish.

In the newsletters, information is given regarding household workers in other countries, alternative non-toxic cleaners, the minimum wage hearings and legal aspects relating to household workers. One issue (April 1983), contains a sample contract. In 1986, the newsletter title changed from *Household Workers' Rights*, to *Housecleaners News*, a reflection of an organizational division.

The inactive registration forms record information for the referral service. This information includes names (which researchers are required to keep anonymous), type of work, and desired pay, additional skills such as CPR or animal care, whether the applicants speak English, whether they have transportation and how far they would travel, what pet peeves and problems they encounter in household work and whether they are aware of their rights.

Nineteen photographs from the early 1980's have been removed and placed in the Archive's photograph collection. Subjects include: the Union WAGE ten year celebration; organizational meetings and parties; a February 1984 meeting with Debra Dadd, author of a book on non-toxic alternatives; a demonstration at Oakland City Hall; the Bay Area Labor Theatre; and a Black Repertory benefit.

Related Collections

Union WAGE, Labor Archives & Research Center, SFSU

Folder Folder 0 **Descriptive Guide**

Folder Folders 1 **Survey conducted in 1982 to find job-related problem areas in workers' lives. One file is in Spanish.**

Folder Folders 4 **Newsletters: *Household Workers' Rights*, 1982-1985**

***Housecleaners News*, June 1986 - April 1987**

Folder Folders 6 **Inactive individual registrations of household workers arranged alphabetically by name. Restricted access for confidentiality. See staff.**

Folder Folder 9 **A non-toxic cleaning chart in Spanish and English compiled by the group.**

Non-manuscript material

Additional Note

19 photographs have been placed in the Archives' photograph collection.

A t-shirt sporting a graphic design depicting household workers (1986) has been placed in the memorabilia collection.