Dear Hand in Hand Community,

People often ask me if it is difficult to ask employers of domestic workers to pay higher wages or provide sick days. What I have found—and what many of you already know—is that when employers reflect on how they want their homes to feel, what values they hope to teach their children, what policies they want to see in their own workplaces, their question is often not, “Should I do the right thing in my home?” but, “What is the right thing?”

As the movement for domestic workers rights grows—Domestic Workers Bills of Rights have already passed in NY, CA, HI & MA and we’re gearing up for victories in CT & IL—so does the need to educate employers about the new laws and help them understand what the “right thing” is! Through both organizing and service provision, we are reaching employers one by one and also aiming for big-picture change.

Hand in Hand is uniquely poised to advance a vision for change that includes both workers and employers. As we head into 2015, we will continue to support policies that bring living wages and other benefits to workers—and to advocate for policies that ensure that seniors, people with disabilities and working families can afford care and in-home support.

In the coming year, Hand in Hand will strive to meet the need for our services and expand the campaigns we work on in communities across the country. I thank you for your continued support, which will help us transform this industry to bring fairness and dignity to all who are touched by it.

Onward!
Danielle
My Home is Someone’s Workplace

It was in a Brooklyn living room last year that a Hand in Hand member, Beth Benjamin, said, “We just need to help people understand that their homes are workplaces.”

On April 10, 2014, Hand in Hand held a launch party for My Home Is Someone’s Workplace, our public education initiative that supports implementation of new standards won through Domestic Workers’ Bills of Rights campaigns, as well as higher community standards for the domestic workplace.

Ai-jen Poo, Director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, told the crowd of over 120 people, “I’m so excited about My Home is Someone’s Workplace. This simple acknowledgement...opens up a whole new context for the relationship between workers and employers to grow...it’s about helping us all make a change in our culture – that recognizes the work that goes into raising families and supporting working parents as real work.”

The Fair Care Pledge

With our partners at the National Domestic Workers Alliance, we launched the very first online platform that allows employers to publicly commit to making their homes workplaces they are proud of by being respectful, clear and fair.

SARA SANDERSON is a board member of the Women Donors Network (WDN) and has employed Mirna Ruano as a nanny and a housecleaner for 21 years. Since the passage of the Bill of Rights, Sara has been reaching out to fellow WDN members to join her in signing the Fair Care Pledge.

“I took the Fair Care Pledge because Mirna is important to me and my family. My family is in the midst of working with Mirna to ensure she can retire with dignity. I sign because I want to make sure that all domestic workers are treated with respect.”

AMY SUPLINA owns Brooklyn’s Bend & Bloom Yoga Studio, which offers pre and post-natal yoga, and has begun hosting Hand in Hand workshops for new and expecting parents. Amy employs Allison Julien, nanny and domestic worker organizer, to care for her daughter and son. (photo on page 1)

“I took the Fair Care Pledge because Allison is an amazing caregiver for our children and I want to make sure that our employment practices show her how much we value her work!”

We’re reaching employers and gathering pledges online and in our local communities, collaborating with a range of organizations and businesses. As we head into 2015, imagine—thousands of households proudly displaying on their refrigerators and in their windows: My Home is Someone’s Workplace! I Took the Fair Care Pledge! We’ll turn this growing list of pledges into advocacy when we speak to the media, and show our legislators how many employers are committed to fair employment—and ask them to create public policies that do the same.
My Home is Someone’s Workplace

What it takes to ‘do the right thing’
On a day in October at the Hand in Hand office in lower Manhattan, leaders of Hand in Hand—parents of young children, and family members of aging relatives who need in-home support—came together to learn how to facilitate our workshop for new and prospective employers. Everyone at that table wished Hand in Hand had been there for them when they were looking for caregivers and attendants. We hear this wherever we go.

To support employers to build mutually beneficial relationships with the workers they employ, we launched a new website that is chock full of resources including an Employer Checklist, which is also available as a booklet. And we’ve been leading workshops with new and prospective employers at family-friendly cafes, resource centers that host childbirth/parent education, and congregations with large aging populations.

“As a childbirth educator and a parent, I am excited to help lead Hand in Hand workshops for new and expecting parents. Parents have so many questions about how best to hire and build a relationship with childcare providers, and Hand in Hand has many of the answers!” - Naima Beckles

Disability & Domestic Work
People with disabilities who employ home attendants to support them to live independently are a critical part of the movement to transform the domestic work industry so it works for everyone.

August marked the launch of our Peer Mentorship Program for people with disabilities in the San Francisco Bay Area. This will build the capacity of people with disabilities to develop dignified relationships with the attendants they employ and join the movement as leaders who can organize alongside workers.

“This program is exactly what I have been needing—a space to connect with and learn from other people with disabilities about how to create positive relationships with the attendants I employ. A relationship that is respectful and one in which we both get our needs met.” - Shira Leeder, a mentee in the program

Hand in Hand also built the leadership of workers from across the country by providing political education about disability and ableism — as a part of the Eldercare Dialogue program in New York City; at the Home Care Workers Rising summit in St. Louis, MO; and as a part of the National Domestic Workers Alliance Strategy, Organizing & Leadership program in Monterey, CA.
On the Policy Front:

Wages
During the Home Care Workers Rising summit, Hand in Hand rallied with workers from across the country for higher wages for home care workers in Missouri (right). Soon after the rally these MO home care workers won a new union contract with increased wages.

Overtime
In reaction to the federal extension of overtime pay to home care workers, Governor Brown of California attempted to cap the hours of the CA Medicaid-funded attendant program. Brown’s proposal would have hurt workers who often depend on working overtime to make ends meet, as well as seniors and people with disabilities who often depend on these workers being able to work longer hours and have flexible schedules.

Hand in Hand took leadership in mobilizing our members and partner organizations to fight back against Brown’s proposal—together, we generated a thousand postcards and great turnout for Disability Capital Action Day in Sacramento (photo on page 1). In June, we helped achieve a victory when the cap was rejected and a California 2015 budget was passed that will include overtime pay. The federal overtime regulations will go into effect on January 1, 2015.

Sick Days
Hand in Hand supported the inclusion of domestic workers in New York City’s new sick time law and then joined elected officials in canvassing to make sure that domestic employers know that the workers they employ are now entitled to five sick days a year.

All THANKS TO YOU!
This is a partial list of those whose financial support made Hand in Hand’s work in 2014 possible.


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