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EDITOR'S NOTE



As the Editor of this Newsletter FOA – Au Pair Speaks, I welcome all the readers and contributors. Many of them have known FOA – Au Pair Group and some of them whom we want to have a continuous communication and contact.

The FOA – Au Pair Board members decided to make this newsletter and the idea is to make this a dynamic forum and a way of communicating au pairs all over Denmark through their own stories, poems, comments and events.

This is the first issue of FOA – Au Pair Speaks and this will be sent in a monthly basis and we will provide a hard copy on a quarterly basis so we are welcoming au pairs and contributors to send us your comments, suggestions and contributions for the enhancement and success of this newsletter.

In this issue, we featured FOA and Au Pairs, Au Pairs story, facts about autumn and announcement of events and etc.

I also want to congratulate the whole team of FOA – Au Pair Speaks, the board members of FOA - Au Pair Group as well as to all contributors who made this issue a success.

You can send your comments and suggestions or your stories at this email foa.aupairgroup@gmail.com or call us at +4524945901.

WINE

by Maribeth Escobar – Klampenborg

Long time in searching for the quality fruit,
Long time in process of fermentation,
Long time in waiting to have the great taste,
Long time to wait the right time to taste...

Long time searching for the world ,
That's full of beautiful things..
Long time searching for the world,
That's full of loving creatures.

Long time waiting for the person
Who will take me in the cosmic world
Long time waiting for the person
Who will love me equal to own world...

But this time it's still in the process
In the process of searching
In the process of knowing
And in the process of waiting.

But when the right time comes
There will be sweetness and love
There will be caring and importance
If true and honest, it will be eternal.

AU PAIRS' COLUMN

"I'm Katya, 30 years old. I started to work as a domestic helper in Hong Kong to help my family in the Philippines and to give my son a good future and education. Life in Hong Kong was quiet hard.

I had given a chance to work here in Denmark as an au pair. In 3 months working in my host family, I didn't mind the long working hours, I kept in mind that they were good and the work was not as hard as what we have experience in Hong Kong.

I didn't know the rules as an au pair, I am scared of complaining and facing the consequences and I'm thinking of my family way back in the Philippines. I have friends and I started to know my rights but still I am working extra hours without being paid. I didn't have a chance to enroll in a language school and learn Danish Language and culture as what cultural exchange is. My host family told me that it's a waste of time and its useless coz my I'm doing domestic duties; working all house chores, child care and even gardening. My host family even threatened me if I will terminate the contract, they will inform the authorities that I have a child and I can't process my papers anymore. I am scared of losing my job.

I started to join FOA-Au Pair Group and be a member. I knew now what my rights are as an au pair. Since that my host family that I am a member of FOA, they started to change and my condition was getting better. And now I am going to work in Norway as an au pair too. I used all the knowledge that I learned in involving a group like this. I am thankful to FOA-Au Pair Group and also to all my friends coz I learned a lot and I want to share my knowledge to my fellow au pairs and friends that need help and assistance. Let's unite and be strong and be open to learn and know our rights."

KATYA – Holte

"I'm Andrea, 28 years old. I have experience working in Hong Kong for few months and my aunt here in Denmark help me to be an au pair and work in a family in Holte. I am their first Filipino au pair. When I arrived here I already knew that things would be as expected working as a domestic helper. I had to get up 6 am and start to work and almost working a day for 6 months doing babysitting, household chores, cleaning windows inside and outside windows and gardening. One thing also that bothered me was I am calling my host family ma'am and sir which is not what I heard to other au pairs. They called their host family by their names.

One day, my neighbor introduced me to get involved to a Filipino organization and also to FOA Au Pair Group which I learned a lot. I joined several meetings in FOA and I got courage to spoke to my employer that I've been working in a long hours. We discussed things and they decided to pay me instead for my extra hours of work."

ANDREA – Holte

"I'm Faye, 29 years old. I worked in Singapore for 4 years and I applied as an au pair here in Denmark. I've been an au pair for 1 year now. At first I am expecting hard works as what I have experience in Singapore but here it's difference coz off course we are here as a cultural exchange. I don't have an idea what is really a cultural exchange is; light housework and learning Danish Culture and language. But for me, I don't have a chance to learn Danish Language. I do all housework and had this feeling that everything here you need to work fast and cleaned hard. I need to finish all my works within 5 hours.

My focus now is to support my brother and sister in the Philippines and after this I don't know yet. Because of my age, I don't have a chance to work or apply in Norway or in other countries here in Europe. I admit that I work extra outside my host family because the allowance/salary alone is quiet small to support my family and in addition to that I have also my own expenses. Everything here in Denmark is very expensive.

My host family wanted to help me but they can't, they even told me that Danish Law was quiet stupid; Why can't they renew me and kept me working with them coz they already get used that I'm working in their family and now they hire new one again and learn to adjust every time."

FAYE – Vedbaek

"I'm Kate 25 years old. I've been working in Philippines for 3 years as a quality assurance in a semiconductor company. My sister and my cousins who worked in Denmark encouraged me to work abroad even though I don't want because I've heard a lot of migrant workers maltreated in other countries but they explained to me that in Denmark it's different; it's a cultural exchange not a domestic worker.

I'm here in Denmark and for 2 months already and luckily my host family is good and they treated me nice. I admit that my 5 hours a day is not enough to finish everything inside the house especially a big house like us. Although they treated me good but doing all these house works and I've heard some au pairs who have problem especially long working hours. "

KATE – Rungsted Kyst

FOA (Fag og Arbejde) AND AU PAIRS

FOA can assist in providing a network with other au pairs. FOA considers the au-pair-scheme a good way of cultural interaction and we want to secure to focus on this. However it is our experience that some families consider their au pair more as cheap way of having some work done and sometimes forget that their au pairs are not allowed to work more than 30 hours a week without being paid the normal wage for the same work in Denmark. FOA will make sure that you are paid for all extra work.



Unions in Denmark have participated in securing good working conditions for Danish employees compared with conditions in other countries. In Denmark the majority of the employees are covered by a collective agreement. An agreement in Denmark is signed by a union - as for instance FOA - and an employer, and in the agreement working hours, time off and holidays are defined. Au pairs are covered by a government agreement regulating working conditions. FOA seeks political influence on this agreement to improve conditions. As an au pair you can draw on FOA's experience with securing the rights of the employees and help FOA working politically for better agreements for you and other au pairs. In Denmark the unions ensure that the employers respect working hours and pay the correct wages. Therefore it is important to us that you have good conditions in FOA as au pair. In Denmark it is FOA who watches the employers and secures payment by current rules in the au pair job.

Jade Carreon: "FOA assisted me when my family asked me to work 15 hours a day. FOA helped me to obtain compensation to the amount of 22.884,75 Danish kroner in lost wages and holiday payment."

History of FOA

The union FOA - Fag og Arbejde has always worked for the rights of housemaids, young girls working in private homes and babysitters. It lies in our nature to help you as an au pair, as it is the same functions you will have to fulfill in your new family.

Originally FOA was founded in 1899 by a woman called Marie Christensen. She went to visit all housemaids in Copenhagen and invited them to participate in a founding meeting and she founded Københavns Tjenestepige Forening – Society of Housemaids in Copenhagen. This

society eventually became the Society of Housemaids in Denmark – the later Husligt Arbejder Forbund (Society of House Workers). The society worked for:

- Elimination of working at night
- Working hours from 7 am to 7 pm
- Healthy and sufficient food for each housemaid
- A proper room for each housemaid
- All housemaids should have time off every second Sunday from 3 pm at the latest
- All housemaids should have time off each day for 1-1 ½ hour before 7 pm

These conditions are very similar to the conditions of au pairs today - only their working hours were much longer back in 1899 than they need to be nowadays. Be aware that as an au pair you only have to work 30 hours a week and you have the right to one weekly day off.

In 1974 a new professional group – teaching assistants - was founded. Their aim was to secure uneducated people working in child care good working conditions when taking care of children. Besides continuously taking care of housemaids and child care FOA has many other occupational fields and today FOA has approximately 200.000 members.

Since its foundation FOA has always worked together with other parts of the Danish unions for the rights of employees. During the last century we have achieved a reduction of the working week from no upper limit to 37 hours. Thanks to the unions in Denmark employees are paid decent wages for their work and all employees have a right to at least 5 weeks of holiday. If a Danish employee does not receive the proper wage or works more hours than he or she is paid for the union may bring a case against the employer in order to make the employer pay the proper wage. In your case the union is FOA.

A membership of FOA costs 25 Danish kroner a month. For this amount you also receive a magazine, life insurance, discount card to a selected shops and free counseling and help in your local FOA branch.

Au pairs can join and be a member by calling **80202030/24945901** or send us an email at foa.aupairgroup@gmail.com or visit us at facebook group page: FOA – Au Pair Group.

FACTS ABOUT AUTUMN

Autumn or **fall** is one of the four temperate seasons. Autumn marks the transition from summer into winter, in September (Northern Hemisphere) or March (Southern Hemisphere) when the arrival of night becomes noticeably earlier.

The equinoxes might be expected to be in the middle of their respective seasons, but temperature lag (caused by the thermal latency of the ground and sea) means that seasons appear later than dates calculated from a purely astronomical perspective. The actual lag varies with region. Some cultures regard the autumnal equinox as "mid-autumn", others with a longer lag treat it as the start of autumn. Meteorologists (and



most of the temperate countries in the southern hemisphere) use a definition based on months, with autumn being September, October and November in the northern hemisphere, and March, April and May in the southern hemisphere.

In North America, autumn is usually considered to start with the September equinox. In traditional East Asian solar term, autumn starts on or around 8 August and ends on about 7 November. In Ireland, the autumn months according to the national meteorological service, Met Éireann, are September, October and November. However, according to the Irish Calendar which is based on ancient Gaelic traditions, autumn lasts throughout the months of August, September, and October, or possibly a few days later, depending on tradition. In Australia, autumn officially begins on March 1 and ends May 31. According to United States tradition, autumn runs from the day after Labor Day (i.e. the Tuesday following the first Monday of September) through Thanksgiving (i.e. the fourth Thursday in November), after which the holiday season that demarcates the unofficial beginning of winter begins.

Source: www.wikipedia.org

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ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

- **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

(Au Pair Network)

Cafe Cadeau, H. C Ørstedes Vej 28, 1879 Frederiksberg
6th of October 2012 at 16:00 – 21:00

- **UNION ORIENTATION** (New members)

FOA Main Branch, Staunings Plads 1-3, 1970, København
20th of October 2012 at 13:00 – 14:00

- **FOA – AU PAIR YEAR END PARTY**

29th of December 2012

(Venue and time to be announced soon)

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