



GREG HENKENHAF/SUN

The annual International Women's Day march sweeps down Bloor St. yesterday. Participants came from as far away as Honolulu, Chicago and Boston.

# Women want fair break

## Hotel workers join annual march to demand respect and better standard of living

**HIMANI EDIRIWEERA**  
Toronto Sun

With hotel workers from as far away as Hawaii leading the pack, thousands of people marched the streets of Toronto yesterday to draw attention to the inequalities faced by many women.

"The work we do is really tough and we aren't treated well," said Beatriz Munoz, 44, who travelled from Chicago. "We're here to fight so we will be treated like humans and

not like machines."

The International Women's Day March and Rally started at St. George and Bloor Sts. and made its way south to Ryerson University.

Hotel housekeepers joined the city's annual International Women's Day walk to demand a better standard of living.

"This is an epic movement to raise our standard of living and be compensated fairly," said Karen Dublin, a hotel housekeeper with Toronto's

Sheraton Centre. "We work hard and we should be able to live and retire with dignity and security."

The hotel staffers said they are among one million workers in Toronto earning less than \$29,800 per year.

They said hotel chains are prospering with the introduction of luxury standards, but without a corresponding increase in employees, placing additional burdens on housekeepers.

Paulette Brice, of Boston,

said she struggles to make ends meet. The mother of three has been a housekeeper with the Starwood Hotels for 15 years.

"We get no respect," Brice, 53, said. "We are mothers, sisters, women and wives. We need to have respect."

Evelyn Barnatia, who lives in the tropical paradise of Honolulu, said she came to Toronto to support her "sisters and brothers."

"I want them to know that nobody stands alone," Bar-

natia said. "We need to fight for our future and take care of our children."

Dozens of women's groups, labour unions and activists joined the march.

Margaret Hawthorn and her group, Older Women's Network, said every day should be women's day.

"Fifty-two per cent of the population in the GTA are women and mothers to the other half," Hawthorn, 70, said.

himani.ediriweera@tor.sunpub.com