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Gift of orchids for AIDS awareness

THOSE celebrating Valentine's Day tomorrow at selected restaurants and hotels in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya will find orchids, and not roses, being given away to diners, courtesy of the Malaysian AIDS Foundation and Glaxo Wellcome (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd.

Called "Orchids for Valentine's", the project is part of the foundation's ongoing effort to encourage people to spare a thought for those with HIV and AIDS.

Malaysian AIDS Council president and Malaysian AIDS Foundation chairman Marina Mahathir, in a statement, said the project was specially designed to fit the day's spirit of love and care.

"What better time to encourage compassion for those suffering from AIDS than on Valentine's Day? Even if the diners take only a brief moment to remember those infected, it will be a turning point.

"We hope this community project will be the first step in the fight against AIDS discrimination. In accepting our gift, we urge people to take a moment to reflect on the mental anguish of the people living with HIV and AIDS.

"Let us show our support for an end to prejudice, fear and hysteria surrounding HIV and AIDS," Marina said.

For this project, each stalk is tied with the famous Red Ribbon, internationally recognised as the symbol for AIDS awareness, care and support.

An accompanying gift card will carry a message from the foundation.

The flowers were contributed by Glaxo Wellcome (Malaysia), which is part of the world's largest pharmaceutical company.

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