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## Cosmetics firm launches AIDS fund

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MAKE-UP Art Cosmetics or MAC launched its AIDS Fund in Malaysia to celebrate the official launch of MAC products in the country recently.

Held at the Lot 10 Kuala Lumpur, the event saw a joint mock cheque presentation to the value of RM10,000 by Isetan Kuala Lumpur managing director Toshiyuki Asano and Suria Meriang Sdn Bhd managing director Robert Kot.

President of the Malaysian AIDS Council Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir accepted the mock cheque on behalf of the Malaysian AIDS Foundation.

In her speech, Marina applauded MAC's contribution and said the cosmetics company's acronym was in fact the same as that of the Malaysian AIDS Council.

The MAC AIDS Fund was created to give back to the community through an AIDS-related fund-raising programme. It was incorporated as a charity in 1994 to facilitate the distribution of funds to local organisations working to improve the quality of life for men, women and children living with HIV and AIDS.

For the fund, the company launched its Viva Glam lipsticks whereby 100 per cent of the retail selling price will go directly into the MAC AIDS fund.

The first Viva Glam was a deep neutral red colour and endorsed by drag queen diva RuPaul who acted as spokesperson for the MAC AIDS Fund.

In 1997, MAC launched Viva Glam II to maintain its fund raising momentum. Its muted mauve pink colour was created for broad appeal.

With international recording artiste k.d. lang as its spokesman, Viva Glam II raised more than US\$1 million (RM3.8m) in its first seven weeks worldwide. The lipsticks are priced at RM55 in Malaysia.

Wherever MAC products are sold around the world, the funds raised go directly to the region in which those funds were raised.

The money is donated to various HIV/AIDS organisations to be used for education, prevention, emergency services and support. The fund requires that the proceeds be used to help those in need rather than cover administrative or operational costs.

According to MAC retail manager Shirly Lee: "MAC has contributed RM45 million worldwide in terms of total retail sales to the fund. In Malaysia, we hope to sell about 100 to 150 units per month.

"If our estimation meets its mark, we will be contributing about RM80,000 to RM100,000 per year for our AIDS fund," she added.

Also on the calendar is the launching of Viva Glam III either in December or January worldwide. The new chocolate brown or coffee colour is expected to be just as popular as its predecessors.

Part of the community project involves a special programme called Kids Helping Kids. Introduced in 1994, it addresses the impact of HIV and AIDS on children and babies.

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