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PM to launch AIDS awareness fundraising campaign at gala night

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Red Ribbon Gala 2002 promises to be a night to remember with the Vienna Boys Choir entertaining with their angelic voices and five famous chefs producing sumptuous fare.

The event at the Shangri-La Hotel on Saturday is the first of many events "In the Name of Love", a fundraising campaign by the Malaysian AIDS Foundation.

The campaign, to last 10 months, will be launched at the Gala and aims to raise RM2 million to support AIDS/HIV work in the country and increase the outreach of AIDS awareness to all walks of life.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali will launch the campaign.

Organising committee chairman Robert Yeoh said the Gala coincided with the Malaysian AIDS Council's 10th anniversary.

Yeoh said the choir, which would be performing the following day at the Dewan Filharmonik Petronas, found out about the charity gala and offered to sing for free.

"The chefs are also donating their services and paying for their own ingredients which mean every sen that is paid for the dinner will go directly to the charity fund," he said.

The chefs who will be at the Gala are Mark Hehir from Restaurant Twenty-One Tokyo, Ken Hoh from The Third Floor Restaurant, KL, Justin Quek from Les Amis Singapore, Emmanuel Stroorbant from St Pierre Singapore and Tetsuya Wakuda from Tetsuya's Sydney.

Hehir's creation will be Ninniku Confit of Lamb Loin, saute of enoki mushrooms and sutsumaimo potato and Hoh will prepare Chocolate Torte and Baked Banana and Cheese in Phyllo Pastry.

Dr Siti Hasmah will also present the Dr Siti Hasmah Award 2002 to an exemplary individual or organisation for outstanding contribution to HIV/AIDS work in Malaysia.

The Vienna Boys Choir's concert performance on Sunday is part of the MAF's fundraising campaign. It will feature two hours of modern classics and songs from the romantic period.

Other events in the campaign include Restaurants Against AIDS, a Movie-Karaoke, Malaysian Aids Council street soccer challenge, Children's AIDS Walkathon and Ride for Life 2003.

Table bookings for the Gala can be made by calling 03-40451033. Tickets for the concert can be obtained from Box Office at 03-20517007.