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Photo exhibition on AIDS

Anne Francis

THE Malaysian AIDS Council and Malaysian AIDS Foundation are organising a touring photo exhibition called Positive Lives: Positive Responses to HIV in a bid to remove the stigma and discrimination faced by those suffering from HIV/AIDS.

The exhibition, to run for 10 months, will tour major cities and towns in Malaysia. The photographs will be displayed in libraries, hospitals and private colleges.

Council president Datuk Paduka Marina Mahathir said one of the main factors leading to delayed treatment and counselling of people with HIV/AIDS is the "invisible" lives they lead as a result of prejudice against the disease.

"`Positive Lives' aims to bridge the gap between the world of people living with HIV/AIDS and that of the general public. We hope all Malaysians will be motivated and inspired by every photograph which represents an act of courage, bravery, pain and compassion of the affected and infected," said Marina.

The exhibition, comprising 120 photographs on the lives of HIV/AIDS sufferers in the Asia Pacific region, was created by the Terence Higgins Trust of Britain and Network Photographs. It is being held with the support of Levi Strauss Malaysia.

Levi Strauss Asia Pacific Division community affairs manager Nick Goodwin said the company's involvement in the exhibition is not only because it is the right thing to do but also because it has to be done.

"We feel that we have no choice but to get involved in such a project because eliminating the spread of AIDS is the responsibility of every person. Only by using positive images and messages to reach out to a wide audience will we be able to remove the ignorance and fears attached to HIV/AIDS," said Goodwin.

At a special launch of the exhibition at the Central Market in Kuala Lumpur, Goodwin presented a cheque for RM114,000 to Marina to fund the Positive Lives project in Malaysia.

For more information on the exhibition, call Azrul Mohd Khalib at 03-40451033 or e-mail azrul@mac.org.my.
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