

06/12/2003

Collective drive to raise AIDS awareness

Hizreen Kamal

TO commemorate International World AIDS Day, PT Foundation recently launched the World AIDS Campaign 2003 to raise HIV/ AIDS awareness among Malaysians.

The campaign is also aimed at providing care and support to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. This year, PT Foundation continues its focus on overcoming stigma and discrimination under the slogan "Live and Let Live".

Launching the campaign at Sungei Wang Plaza's concourse was Malaysian AIDS Council president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, also chairman of Malaysian AIDS Foundation (MAF).

For the campaign, PT Foundation collaborates with the United Nations, Malaysian AIDS Council and The Body Shop.

The highlight of the campaign is an HIV/AID awareness party, Mardi Gras 2003, which will be held at the Atmosphere@twelveSI on Dec 28.

Other events planned include a photo documentary of Malaysians living with HIV/AIDS, which features 24 photographs by photographers Mary Wilson and Kamal Solhaimi Fadzil. The exhibition will be held at the foyer of Sungei Wang Plaza until Dec 26.

As part of its campaign effort, The Body Shop managing director Mina Foong said they were selling a pack of five condoms at RM10 each and all proceeds will go to the PT foundation.

Apart from that, Foong said, candles with four different scents were being sold at RM15 each with RM12 going to PT Foundation, MAF, Women's Aid Organisation or Malaysian Nature Society, depending on the buyer's choice.

PT Foundation executive committee chairman Hisham Hussein said negative attitudes could create a climate in which people became more afraid of the stigma associated with the disease than of the disease itself.

"When fear and discrimination prevail, people may choose to ignore the possibility that they may be HIV positive, even if they know they have taken risks," he said.

Also present at the launch were United Nations resident coordinator and United Nations Development Programme resident representative Dr Richard Leete and UNDP/UNAIDS inter-country programme adviser for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, Angeline Ackermans.