

Hong Kong AIDS Festival 2008

Thursday, 03 April 2008

PRESS RELEASE

March 30, 2008.

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TAKE THE LEAD!

THOUSANDS CALL FOR ACTION AGAINST AIDS IN THE
AIDS FESTIVAL 2008

Under the same blue sky, thousands of participants from different cultures and nations gathered together, taking the lead to fight AIDS.

Organized by the St John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre (the Centre), the AIDS Festival 2008 was successfully held on March 30, at the Chater Road Pedestrian Precinct, Central, Hong Kong.

The theme for this year AIDS Festival is "Take the Lead, Stop AIDS – Universal Action Now!";, aiming at raising awareness of AIDS among the public and ethnic minorities, and enhancing racial harmony. It also calls upon all leaders in society to take the lead, to confront HIV/AIDS through prevention, cure, support and care.

"AIDS is an incurable but preventable disease," pinpointed by Elijah Fung, 2008 AIDS Festival Coordinator, "HIV/AIDS and the concerning problems are continuously threatening the globe; it is a serious problem to be dealt with."

According to UNAIDS, there were 33.2 million (30.6 – 36.1 millions) people living with HIV in 2007; half of them were females (15.4 millions) and children (2.5 millions) aged under 15. Every day, more than 6 800 people become infected with HIV; and over 5 700 die from AIDS. There are approximately 4.9 million HIV-infected patients in Asia.

"The threat of AIDS is never weakened," said Fung, "there is always the possibility to get infected, whoever, whenever and wherever you are."

Fung emphasized the importance in recognizing the disease and its prevention.

AIDS Festival has been held as a big carnival for the fifth year. Groups from different nations this year brought along a series of performances to the public (including drama, dancing, singing and national shows), symbolizing the goals of racial harmony and preventing the spread of AIDS.

With greetings to the Beijing Olympics, the opening ceremony in the AIDS Festival 2008 took reference from the Olympic Games. Led by the singing and dancing by Mabama Organization Malibcong (MOM-ATIS HK), group of guests and volunteers entered the venue with the large flag of the Festival.

Guests of the day included:

The Very Revd Andrew Chan, Dean, St. John's Cathedral
Ms. Dolores Balladares, Chairperson, United Filipinos in Hong Kong
Mr. Nugroho Aribhimo, Consul , Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia
Ms. Indra Jayanthi Ranaweera, President of Association of Sri Lankans
Ms. Bungon Tamsorn, Chairperson of The Thai Region Alliance in Hong Kong
Ms. Eni Lestari, Chairperson of The Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Hong Kong (ATKI-HK)
Ms. Ran de Silva, Director of Global Diversity, UBS
Ms. Shirley Cheung Shui-ye, RSW, Volunteer Programme & Service Manager, Agency For Volunteer Service
Ms. Carol Smiley, D. Julve, Reporter of Service to the Filipino SUN
Ms. Vicky Casia-Cabantac, Chairperson, MIGRANTE, Hong Kong Chapter
Revd. Desmond Cox, Chairperson, St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre
Ms. Bowen Kong, Volunteer, St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre

Ms. Elina Ng, Master of Ceremony, AIDS Festival 2008

Ms. Elijah Fung, 2008 AIDS Festival Coordinator, St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Centre

Followed by a series of performances by Sanggar Budaya Indonesian Consulate and other national groups, the Festival ended in the harmony of "Top of the World" (an English folk song), sang by all guests and performers on stage.

Participating Groups

- Abra Tinguian Ilocano Society
- Agency for Volunteer Service
- Asian Migrants Theatre Company (AMTC)
- ASECA-Asian Sports Entrepreneur Cultural Association
- Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers
- in Hong Kong (ATKI-HK)
- Association of Concerned Filipinos
- in Hong Kong (ACFIL-HK)
- Association of Sri Lankans in Hogn Kong
- Borneo Dancers
- Business Studies, SCS,
- Chinese University of Hong Kong
- Christian Action –
- Domestic Helpers & Migrant Workers' Programme
- CK'FUNKY Dancer
- Crossroads Communications
- Dance in Freedom (DIF)
- HKSKH Lady MacLehose Centre
- Hong Kong Auxiliary Police
- League of Overseas Filipino Midwives – HK
- MOVERS
- Multi-Sectoral Party (MSP) Naguilian,
- Isabela Sub-Chapter (Hong Kong)
- Far East Overseas Nepalese Association (FEONA)
- Nicka Babes Dancers
- (Sanggar Budaya Indonesian Consulate)
- Shine Dancers
- St. John's Ambulance
- TeenAIDerS, Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong
- Teralie Dance
- Thai Regional Alliance
- The Bethune House Migrant Women's Refuge Ltd
- The Chinese Rhenish Church Hong Kong Synod - Foreign Domestic Workers' Programme
- The Hong Kong Bayanihan Trust
- The Nesbitt Centre
- Mabama Organization, Malibcong (MOM-ATIS HK)

"Fighting against AIDS is a very challenging mission," the Very Revd Andrew Chan, Dean of the St John's Cathedral.

"Stop AIDS – Universal Action Now!" is never an easy mission to accomplish. It is turn for all nations to unite and work out to stop AIDS together!

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The Organization

St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Center is the first faith-based organization to embrace HIV/AIDS education

and prevention services in Hong Kong. The Centre was established in 1995 in order to induce awareness to the rapid spread of HIV in Hong Kong. The Center is the outreach ministry of St. John's Cathedral, and is managed by a Board of Directors.

St. John's Cathedral HIV Education Center has been holding various events related to HIV/AIDS prevention and education. To respond to the needs of society, the Centre has, in recent years, provided education on sexual health and reproductive rights to women, youth and ethnic minorities. The aims of the Center are to promote HIV prevention and education through different activities, to limit the spread of HIV infection in Hong Kong, to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of HIV pandemic, and to help people living with HIV/AIDS gain acceptance from public.

At the international level, the Centre combines the energies and resources with many international women's groups, faith-based organizations and UN agencies to combat the AIDS pandemic. For more information about the Centre, please visit <http://sjhivctr.com>.