



LIVING POSITIVELY FOR THE WORLD AIDS DAY

KUCHING, SARAWAK, DECEMBER 1, 2011 - Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) celebrated the World AIDS Day in Kuching, Sarawak with Living Positively, a stage play that featured live storytelling by four individuals infected with, or affected by HIV. Dayang Nurfaizah and Bob Yusof, the Red Ribbon Celebrity Supporters for the MAC were also featured in the stage production.

Living Positively was unveiled to a packed audience at the Grand Ballroom of Hilton Kuching on December 1, 2011. It was officiated by Yang Berhormat Dr Jerip Susil, the Assistant Minister for Public Health Sarawak, on behalf of the Chief Minister of Sarawak. The event was jointly organized by the MAC and its Partner Organisation the Sarawak AIDS Concern Society (SACS). Hilton Kuching serves as the Official Partner of the event by providing venue sponsorship and extending its hospitality to the casts of the production while supplementary supports were also provided by M.A.C Cosmetics and other private donors from Sarawak.

Living Positively was conceived to empower the audience with the truth about HIV, and to make them understand the negative impact of HIV-related stigma and discrimination. This issue gained prominence when it was chosen to be the partial objective for the World AIDS Day, based on chosen theme Getting to Zero - zero AIDS related death, zero new infection and zero discrimination for People Living With HIV (PLHIV).

“Stigma and discrimination are damaging in so many ways because they created a barrier that reduces an individual’s willingness to practice prevention, seek HIV testing, disclose his or her HIV status to others and begin his or her treatments.” as elaborated by Tan Sri Zaman Khan, the President of MAC.

“Being given the opportunity to co-host this year World AIDS Day is an honour for us in SACS. In the last few years, we have held World AIDS Day event in small albeit significant ways as funding has always been our biggest obstacle. This year, we are very fortunate and would like to thank the Malaysian AIDS Council for inviting us to celebrate the event here in Kuching with them and in so doing giving our Society a much needed exposure about our work. More importantly, it gives those Sarawakians living with HIV/AIDS the chance to feel part of this important celebration,” explained Puan Kamariah Ahmad, the President of SACS.

Richard Margo, interim director of operations, Hilton Kuching said, *“Hilton Kuching has always firmly believed in giving back to the community. This partnership with MAC is an excellent cause and further strengthens our commitment to supporting Sawarakians.”*



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Running parallel to the central theme of stigma and discrimination are messages about self-perseverance and empowerment of People Living With HIV (PLHIV). The four narratives in Living Positively were intended by all means and purposes to inspire PLHIV to rise above the challenges, and to urge them not to be defined by their infection status.

"I have been living with HIV for nearly 10 years. It is by the very grace of Allah that I have been blessed with more than what I had asked for - a new lease of life with a loving second husband, two healthy children and the opportunity to contribute back to my community. I am also grateful for the fact that science has made it possible for People Living With HIV to enjoy life meaningfully, thanks to the advent of the anti-retroviral medicines", explained one of the cast members of the Living Positively stage show.

MAC expresses hope that this stage performance would pave the way for greater awareness about HIV and AIDS by the members of the public and perhaps more importantly, greater adoption of our agenda by major stakeholders in Sarawak.

ABOUT MALAYSIAN AIDS COUNCIL

The Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) was established in 1992 to serve as an umbrella organisation to support and coordinate the efforts of organisations working on HIV/AIDS issues in Malaysia. MAC, in partnership with government agencies, private sector and international organisations, ensures a committed and effective response by NGOs working on HIV/AIDS issues in Malaysia. MAC, comprising the Secretariat and its Partner Organisations, work together as a team to provide nationwide coverage and serve as the common voice for the community. Besides coordinating and streamlining programmes with its Partner Organisations, the MAC Secretariat also provides these organisations with the necessary training, funds and other resources to implement effective HIV/AIDS programmes within various communities in Malaysia. For more information on MAF, kindly log on to its dedicated website, www.mac.org.my.

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Kindly contact Media & Communications department, Malaysian AIDS Council for further information.

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if you can't handle me at my worst, then you sure as hell don't deserve me at my best.