

1 SEX INDUSTRY BIZ NEWS

1.1 'World AIDS Day ' STOP AIDS, KEEP THE PROMISE.

All of us are responsible for HIV prevention! 1 Dec is the World AIDS Day. AFRO would like to once again remind you of the importance of safer sex and regular checkup. You may also want to remind your friends and families to STOP AIDS and KEEP THE PROMISE, and to show concern and support to people living with HIV.

1.2 What can we do with harassing phone calls?

To keep contact with their customers, sex workers usually leave their numbers on the internet or newspaper ads. Sometimes they may be bothered by harassing or anonymous phone calls. AFRO has also experienced this problem and asked the police for advice. A phone call is considered to be harassing, if:

1. It is made constantly and without a purpose. For example, if a person calls more than 50 times within an hour and does not say anything, it is considered to be a harassing call.
2. The caller says something threatening or obscene.

When you report a case, the police will inquire about the content and assess whether it is a harassing call. The police will also ask you to authorize them to contact your telephone service provider and investigate. The police will check your call record and trace the identity of the owner of the calling number. The police will arrest and charge that person if it is proved that he/she is the harasser,

There are still two things that we need to bear in mind:

1. The police can trace the identity of the owner of the calling number, only in case you are using a lan-line or a mobile number with a monthly plan. If you are using a mobile number with a value added card, you may consider getting a monthly plan.
2. The police can trace the record even if it is an anonymous call. However, it is advised that we can apply for additional service from the service provider and reject all anonymous calls.

2. WORK REPORT

2.1 2010 Walkathon

AFRO' ANNUAL Walkathon was held on 7 Nov. 35 persons attended the event and the amount raised up to date is HK\$29890. Please be reminded to collect donations from your sponsors and send them back to us by 8 Dec 2010. Please make the cheque payable to ACTION FOR REACH OUT and send it together with the donation form to PO Box 98108 . Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office. Donation receipts will be sent to you by the end of December. Kindly distribute them to the sponsors. Thank you very much!

Please contact us at 27701065 or contact@afro.org.hk should you have an enquiry.



2.2 River of Wisdom -Animated version of the Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival

On 26 Nov, we went on a trip to the Asia World-Expo, and enjoyed the animated version of the Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival, which was previously showed at the China Pavilion of Shanghai World Expo.

Although it was a long trip, we were all so excited in this stunning exhibition. The exhibition was crowded with people, everyone were busy in search of the best view of the picture.

The trip gave us a valuable experience, to strengthen our understanding of ancient Chinese culture.

Girls, have you spotted the piggy on the bridge?

3 FUTURE WORK

3.1 Christmas Party

It will soon be the end of 2010. Every year, we celebrate the last festival of the year with sex workers at our centre. The Christmas party this year will be held on 20 Dec and our student intern and volunteers will plan for the event. Let's celebrate!

3.2 AFRO's Fund Raising Bazaar

Want to make Christmas shopping more meaningful? Come to AFRO's Fund Raising Bazaar!

Your support is very important to us! Please come!

Details:

Date: 5 Dec 2010 (Sun)

Time: 10 am - 6 pm

Venue: Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry

3.3 International Human Rights Day Carnival (12th Dec)

From 1998, a number of NGOs co-organised International Human Rights Day Carnival in Dec every year, aiming to raise the consciousness of the public on various human rights issues. This year, as one of the organizers, AFRO will continue to participate in the event.

The theme of AFRO's activity this year is harmonious neighborhood. Through board show and games, we will let the public know more about the difficulties and discrimination facing sex workers.

Date: 12 Dec 2010 (Sun)

Time: 2-5 pm

Venue: Pedestrian Zone, Sai Yeung Choi Street , Mong Kok

3.4 The International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers (17 Dec)

On the day before this meaningful day, AFRO will release the result of a survey on the relationship between street-based sex workers and the community.

Details to be announced on AFRO's website.

4 AFRO' S NEWS READING

Dutch prostitutes learn new tricks

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gVKl9gE1bB_GCdJ381fcRdxSHt5Q?docId=CNG.8a715e6abb8e8888f916a64a424e6b92.12f1

By Mariette le Roux (AFP- 25 Nov 2010)

AMSTERDAM Dutch prostitute Terry van der Zijden proudly points to a photo she took of the bedroom in which she plies her trade; a sexless still-life neatly mounted on the wall of an Amsterdam art gallery.

"There is my bed, that is my bureau," she states matter-of-factly in front of a picture of a room with tranquil green linen, scatter cushions and potted flowers -- part of an exhibition entitled "This is my workplace" by sex workers who completed a photography course in June.

Van der Zijden works at home in the south Netherlands

"It is a multi-functional space. It is suitable for having sex, but it is also where I sleep," explained the 65-year-old in a chaste skirt suit and red, high-heeled, leather boots.

Van der Zijden, whose pictures seem tame among those of dildos and studded leather restraints taken by some of her colleagues, said she hoped the exhibition will challenge people's prejudices.

"When people think about prostitutes, or whores as some call us, they have a certain image in their heads. I wanted to show that a sex worker can be making her living behind any arbitrary door," she said, pointing to another photo of her living room with a Humphrey Bogart poster on the wall, book shelves and a computer.

"Prostitutes are not just women who lie on their backs. We can also be photographers. We also have other interests."

Ex-prostitute and labour unionist Metje Blaak, 61, said the course she presented was paid from a government empowerment grant.

Twenty women took part, aged 20 to 65 from around the country, of whom 12 are exhibiting at the small Vriend van Bavink gallery around the corner from Amsterdam's famous red light district.

"Part of our aim was to help the women realise 'I can do more than that'," said Blaak, referring to sex work. "We want to give them confidence.

"Our goal is not to encourage women to leave the trade. But we want them to learn new skills so that they can leave if they want to."

Blaak, who quit the sex trade after 25 years in 1995 to become a professional photographer, said many women find it difficult to leave.

They have trouble putting aside a nest egg, often had few marketable skills, and lived in a cocoon they found hard to break free from.

"I myself was very afraid of the big, bad world," Blaak recalls of the time she decided to quit.

Blaak said the women reacted enthusiastically to the idea of learning photography, eagerly soaking up the finer skills of portraiture, composition and lighting during one-to-two hour, weekly classes presented over a month.

"At the end, I gave them an assignment to photograph their work rooms. The results were so good that we decided to put on an exhibition," she said.

The result was 50 pictures that provide a revealing look behind the scenes: men trawling the streets for sex, a whimsical lipstick smear on a coffee cup, and ironic depictions of multi-coloured dildos, lingerie, whips and chains.

Brothel owner Willy van der Sloot, 57, halts at a picture she shot inside the room of one of her tenants.

"Those clothes pegs are for clamping nipples," she points and explains, giggling playfully.

Van der Sloot believes it is good that people "get a glimpse behind the curtains".

"I know how curious people are. It is nice that they see what is inside, that they can get an idea of what happens there, to understand better."

Though the world's oldest profession was long tolerated in the Netherlands , it was only legalised in 2000.

According to Blaak's De Rode Draad (The Red Thread) labour union, there are about 25,000 sex workers in the Netherlands, working the streets, behind windows, in nightclubs, brothels, private homes, massage parlours and escort agencies.

Gallery owner Ruben Bunder said the opening of the exhibition was "one of my biggest ever" in five years, explaining that "sex always attracts clients".

A dozen of the photographs have been sold for up to 400 euros (about 550 dollars) each, the proceeds of which will go back to De Rode Draad for future projects.

Hundreds of people have seen the exhibition since it opened on November 3, said Bunder.

"Due to popular demand, we have decided to extend the exhibition by a week, to December 3."

Comments:

Many people may have stereotyped or negative impression towards sex workers. But if we are willing to spend some time to understand, probably we can see the different side of them and their various talents.

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