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# 700 free condoms snapped up

## Mary Chin

MORE than 700 free condoms were distributed to the public at the Gaya Street Fair, Sunday, to mark the World AIDS Day 2011 celebration at Kasih-level.

With the theme "Stop AIDS", it was organised by the Sabah AIDS Support Services Association (Kasih), formerly known as The Kota Kinabalu AIDS Support Services Association.

President of Kasih, Joseph Benedict, led his team in distributing condoms and information leaflets published by the State Health Department's AIDS/STD Unit.

Kasih, which was established in 2003, is supported by the Malaysian AIDS Council, Ministry of Health and State Health Department.

"We managed to raise RM1,044.20 from the sale of cup cakes (priced at RM1.50 each) and individual donations from the public. Many came forward voluntarily to sign up as members or contribute to our kitty. I thank them for their concern and support," Joseph said.

Also present were Kasih's Vice-President Agnes Khaw and Secretary, Anita Kong. Meanwhile, Joseph appealed to employers not

to discriminate against HIV-infected employees.

On hand to assist in the public awareness campaign were 11 volunteers from M.V. Logos Hope. They also staged a drama to educate the public on the difference between HIV and AIDS.

Stefan Becker, 33, a carpenter from Germany and Alex Qiu, 24, a translator from China, who now resides in Italy, helped to distribute free condoms.

Silvana da Silva, 39, from Brazil was the clown who drew the crowd with her antics while colleagues, Marika Suominen, 21, from Finland, Natalie Edwards, 20, from St Vincent, Caribbean Island, Jenny Oberst, 26, from the United States and Cynthia Ong, 52, from Singapore helped out in selling cup cakes and distributing information leaflets.

The public are invited to a Session on HIV Awareness dubbed Channel of Hope on board the ship on Dec. 8 from 10am to 5pm. It will be conducted in English with focus on protection and stopping AIDS stigmatisation.

The local ukulele band was also in attendance, belting out numbers which dispel myths about HIV/AIDS.