

December 1st world AIDS day

Epidemic earns global recognition

World AIDS Day (WAD) dates back to 1988. An international summit of health ministers demanded a spirit of social tolerance and efforts to further the exchange of information on HIV and AIDS. Since then, each December 1st has been a day of action to raise public awareness, not just for one day, but for continued awareness every day of our lives. This year's theme is "A Time to Act."

The matching of the Canadian AIDS Society members in the Atlantic Region with their counterparts in Moscow, Russia, is an interesting aspect of WAD in our area. In an effort to internationalize World AIDS Day the Atlantic AIDS Network is coupled with AESOP Resource Center in Moscow. There are very high numbers of HIV positive and AIDS victims in Moscow, and they receive no government funding to help fight the disease. Part of the money AIDS P.E.I. raised on WAD will go to help these people, who are much less fortunate than ourselves.

December 1st was also A Day Without Art

(DWA) - a day of action and mourning in response to the AIDS crisis. DWA recognizes the devastating effect that AIDS has had on the Arts. It was conceived in 1989 by visual AIDS, a New York-based AIDS awareness group. DWA has spread to Canada, Europe and Australia. Support is widely varied: art galleries, theatres, concert halls, restaurants, schools, businesses and retail outlets have been known to blacken their doors and windows, shroud works of art, hang giant red ribbons, showcase video works about the AIDS crisis, co-ordinate AIDS awareness booths, and feature guest speakers, among other activities.

The Confederation Centre Art Gallery and Museum and Ellens Creek Gallery have joined AIDS PEI in "A Day Without Art". Ellens Creek Gallery displayed a framed piece of black fabric. The Confederation Centre Art Gallery and Museum held a special presentation conducted by Sybil Bryant, Executive Director of AIDS PEI. A "non-performance" was held at noon on December 1 in the Confederation Court

Mall to mourn the loss of those who contributed so much to our culture while they were alive.

Booths were set up at UPEI, The Confederation Court Mall, The Charlottetown Mall, The Senators' Game at the Civic Centre, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and The Polyclinic. These booths offered information about the AIDS Pandemic, about AIDS PEI and its fund-raiser, the 12 Days of Christmas Draw. Red ribbons were and will continue to be given out to everyone who supports the draw by buying a ticket.

Of particular interest to UPEI students, staff and faculty was a table set up with information and an "I'm a Poor Student Draw", raffling a sweatshirt donated by The Island Beach Company at a-looney-a-chance. Red AIDS awareness ribbons were handed out to all.

For more information about HIV/AIDS or WAD/DWA please call AIDS PEI at 566-2437

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