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Activism Against Gender Based Violence continues to be observed



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Written by Administrator
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Mary Open Doors clothesline

Sixteen days of Activism against Gender Based Violence continues to be observed this week, under the theme, Unite to End Violence against Women and Children. The series of activities will take place country wide. These range from HIV testing as well as personal safety for women and girls, and, in some cases, males. The observation started on November 25th and will end on December 10th. The activism coincides with the launching of a three-year project to carry on all activities as outlined by the national plan of action to end gender based violence.

As part of the observances, a panel discussion was held at the Benque Viejo House of Culture on Tuesday night. The panel presenters were Kathleen Pate, Women's Development Officer for the Cayo District; Emma Gabourel from the San Ignacio Community Hospital; and Enrique August from Help for Progress. Pate highlighted

in her presentation the links between HIV and domestic violence while August talked about the Conventions on Human Rights that Belize has signed on to.

The launch and opening of the Sixteen Days of Activism, says an organizer, is an opportunity for partnership with other sectors of society.

"It is not one that [only] the Women's Department observes...it is an activity for different agencies and other Government projects to look at ways of how to strengthen whatever activities they are currently presenting in this area", says Cynthia Williams, Human Development Coordinator and one of the organizers for the Sixteen Days of Activism.

One such organization that took full opportunity of the Sixteen Days of Activism is the Non-Government Organization Mary Open Doors, a non-profit based in San Ignacio that provides services to persons that are victims of domestic violence. Director of Mary Open Doors, Ana Silva, set up a 'clothes line' near the Social Security Building in Santa Elena Town this past Monday, urging victims of domestic violence to stop by and write down their feelings and thoughts about domestic violence on a T-shirt. Such expressions, says Silva, can help women psychologically. According to Silva, the Sixteen Days of Activism can create the change that is desired.

Other activities are being scheduled, with a conference on Domestic Violence and the link to HIV on November 30th, at the San Ignacio Resort Hotel, which is being organized by Mary Open Doors. This will be followed by a Mini Health Fair on December 1st at the Columbus Park in San Ignacio, this time organized by the Cornerstone Foundation from San Ignacio Town. On December 5th, 12 the George Price Centre in Belmopan will be the venue for educational topics related to sexual violence, which is being organized by Cayo's Women's Department.



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