

Candle in the Dark

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The past year has proved to be a unique experience for Irene Ng, Service Co-ordinator of RainLily, Hong Kong's only one-stop centre for rape victims. Since the centre opened its doors in 2000, the emergency support service has helped hundreds of victims survive their personal traumas, but in the past twelve months, Irene has been looking for help of another kind - financial assistance, in order to keep RainLily in operation when funding from the Jockey Club was coming to an end.



Campaign to Save RainLily

When news about RainLily's impending closure due to lack of funding broke out in late 2005, the community showed enormous support to keep it going. Survivors of rape took the courage to speak out for RainLily, while legislators urged the government to provide long-term financial assistance to RainLily at a LegCo panel hearing.



Irene Ng, Service Co-ordinator of RainLily, provides timely counseling service.

Victims of sexual violence need timely support from organizations like RainLily, which works closely with emergency units in hospitals and runs a 24-hour one-stop service. Instead of having to repeat their traumatic experiences to different parties including the police, hospital staff and social welfare personnel, victims call RainLily's hotline to talk to an experienced counsellor, who will then accompany them every step of the way through the medical and judicial procedures. Another crucial service provided by RainLily is the follow-up care and counseling which empowers them to get on with their lives.

Irene talked about what Annie (not her real name) had to go through before she sought help. "Like most children who had been sexually abused, Annie thought that she was the one to blame. Annie had been raped by her father since she was ten. She swallowed all the shame and pain until she could no longer bear it. Finally, she sought help and her father was exposed. When her father, the only breadwinner of the family, was prosecuted, her family was forced to move to a run down apartment. Her mother, shocked by what she considered to be a betrayal of her husband, made Annie the culprit. Her sister and brother also laid all the blame on Annie. In desperation, Annie attempted to commit suicide."



RainLily came to Annie's help after her suicide attempt. With the support and counseling of RainLily's social workers, Annie has gradually recovered from the trauma and regained strength to carry on with her life. RainLily has helped her learn that she is not the one to blame for what had happened to her and her dignity has not been taken away despite her traumatic experience. Annie has decided not to let her past ruin her future, and is now studying at a tertiary institution. Her mother has come to realize what her daughter has gone through, and the whole family has started a new life.



RainLily's publications promote gender equality and combat sexual violence.

A Common Plight

Sexual violence is not uncommon in Hong Kong. A study conducted by RainLily revealed 78.9% of the victims knew or had prior contact with the assailants. In particular, 39.3% of the assailants were friends, 13.2% were intimate opposite-sex partners, and 19.8% were family members. Only 21.1% of the assailants were strangers.



Irene continued, "For many, rape is an unspeakable trauma. Victims usually feel guilty and ashamed of themselves. They suffer from mood swings over trivial things. Some of them become socially withdrawn, with their trust in people shattered. Some have problems with dating, marriage and sex. More seriously, half of the victims have self-mutilating behavior as they think life is no longer worth living."

"Usually, the psychological hardship is far more acute when the attacker is a family member. Victims who were raped by strangers or friends receive support from their family, but assaults by family members take away this most important resort. To make matters worse, some families choose to sacrifice the victims to protect the assailants, and the victims, as in the case of Annie, suffers a double blow," explained Irene.

Irene believed that patriarchal values that put men in a more superior position run deep in Chinese culture. "In a way, it legitimizes men's control over women, deprives dignity and endless tragedies have happened," said Irene.

The inequality between the two sexes is shown by the alarming statistics collected by the Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women. According to its Study Report on the Sexual Violence of Hong Kong Secondary Students 2002, as many as 13% of the male respondents believed that forcing their girl friends to have sex with them was a symbol of masculinity, which they thought was valued by most girls. About 16% of male respondents thought that girl friends should satisfy their sexual needs while more than a quarter or 26% of the male respondents, and 17.8% of the female respondents agreed that having sex with their boy/girl friends would not be considered as rape, even if their partners remained unwilling.

These figures indicate that even today, teenagers still carry traditional misconceptions about sex.

Equality between the Sexes

"Support and assistance to victims are crucial. It is also important to recognize the root of the tragedy and stand up for equality between the two sexes. Women are not sex objects of men. They have the right to be free from sexual threats. We should not blame the victims of sexual violence. Victims who are sexually assaulted by their partners or family members should never suffer in silence for the sake of maintaining a superficial harmonious relationship. Men and women are equal counterparts, give women the respect they deserve and stop future tragedies."



In the Centre's eleventh hour, the Community Chest came to the rescue and pledged to provide RainLily with funding until early 2007. A campaign is now under way to save RainLily, which needs HK\$2.2 million a year for its operating expenses (campaign details: <http://www.rapecrisiscentre.org.hk/angelaction.htm>). RainLily continues to bring hope to victims of sexual violence in their hour of need, before the Community Chest grant runs out in March 2007.

(Illustrations provided by "RainLily")

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EO Reaches the Community

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Building a cohesive and vibrant Hong Kong - EOC Chairperson Mr Raymond Tang, Unison HK Chairperson Mr Raj Tiwari and Pakistan Islamic Welfare Union Chairperson Mr Ai-Haj Malik officiate at the Friends Unlimited Carnival 2006 organized by Unison HK. The event, showcasing different cultural programmes, brings together students of different races and religions.



Overseas experience sharing - In April, Ms Chris Ronalds SC of the Australian Bar spoke at the EOC on an update of the Australian scene in the area of discrimination law. Her presentation attracted a good turnout of policymakers, legal practitioners, educators and representatives of community organizations.



Independent living - New rehab technology enables a member of the Spastics Association of Hong Kong to participate in producing a cartoon book about disability rights.



Well deserved recognition - Hong Kong Federation of the Blind presented awards to 10 individuals and representatives of organizations highlighting



Entrance intercepted - A Check Walk by the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Power highlights the structural barriers faced by wheelchair users in everyday life.

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International Links

International Links

The EOC connects with human rights experts and practitioners around the world to exchange knowledge and information in promoting equal opportunities for all.



Minister Gary Mar (centre right), Government of Alberta, Canada and EOC Chairperson Mr. Raymond Tang (centre left)



Project Coordinator of Access for All Campaign in Sri Lanka Ms. Thanjua Nawaratne (centre left), who was born with multiple congenital anomalies, met with EOC's Community Participation and Publicity Committee Convener Dr. Lo Wing Lok (centre right).



Representatives of national human rights commissions from Thailand, Fiji, Mongolia, Philippines and Nepal visited the EOC to understand how Hong Kong eliminate discrimination.

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New EOC Website - Working Better for You

New EOC Website - Working Better for You



The new EOC website - a useful resource for everyone

The improved EOC website has updated its site structure, enhanced its content, and has been designed to become a useful resource for everyone.

The EO Club

A highlight of the revamp is the introduction of "EO Club" -- close to 80% of the complaints received by the EOC are employment related. Clearly, guidance is needed for businesses and organizations to improve their understanding of the ordinances and assist employers in implementing good management practices. For a nominal fee, employers and employees will be able to access the latest information on how the anti-discrimination ordinances can work for them in the employment sector. EO Club provides a forum for members to meet their peers through exclusive gatherings to exchange information. Members can also attend workshops and obtain first hand knowledge of EO related issues and real case scenarios via regular email alerts. Specially designed on-line training programmes will enable members to learn at their own pace, and certificates will be awarded upon completion of the modules.

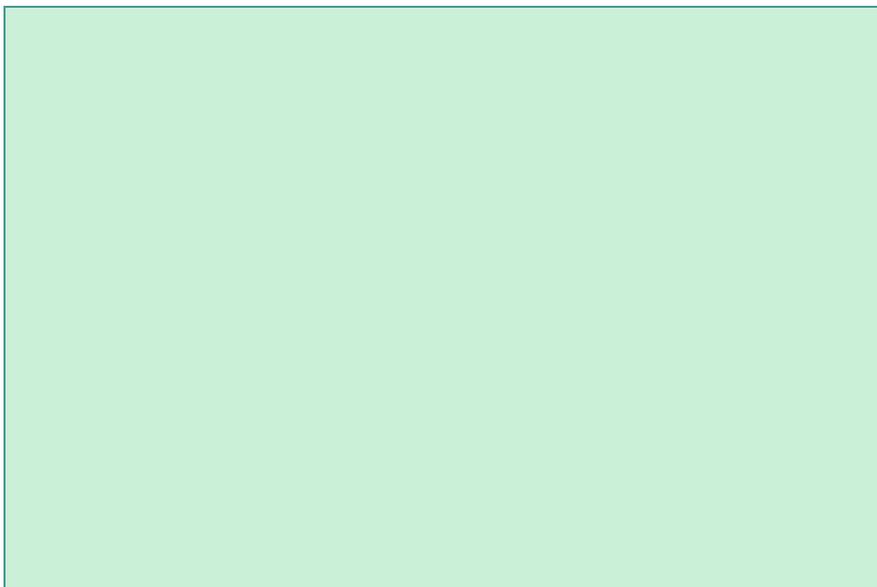
Youth Corner & Education

The Youth Corner aims to assist our new generation to develop as informed, active citizens in order to encourage values of respect and understanding. Youth programmes, EO cartoon stories, multimedia zone, new games and prizes are in store.

Our Services

Existing information will be realigned to better facilitate the browsers, to ensure that all our services will be presented; complaints handling and conciliation, legal assistance, training and consultancy services, the community participation funding scheme, free talks, publications and EOC activities.

Watch out for the new EOC website at <http://www.eoc.org.hk>.



Join the EO Club

Who should join

The EO Club offers information, training and advice to a wide network of employers, human resources practitioners, workplace trainers and equal opportunities officers. The Club connects you to this useful network, through our annual programme of exchanges, where members can share constructive views and practical experience in the implementation of equality models.

Memberships (Period: 1.7.2006 - 30.6.2007)

1. Individual Member

Joining fee HK\$350 per year. If you register before 30 June 2006, you can enjoy the early bird discount rate of HK\$300.

2. Corporate Member

a. Joining fee at HK\$600 for every 2 employees

b. Special One-off Free Offer:

If you are an EO Officer or you are responsible for EO matters in your organization, you can apply for a one-time free membership for the first year.

Membership Privileges

- Welcome gift: One free course during membership year from the EOC in-house calendar workshops worth up to HK\$900
- Networking opportunities with other members through members' gatherings or EO workshops exclusively for members
- Complimentary copies of selected EOC publications
- Priority and preferential rates in attending EOC conferences and seminars

Phone: 2511 8211

Email: eoclub@eoc.org.hk

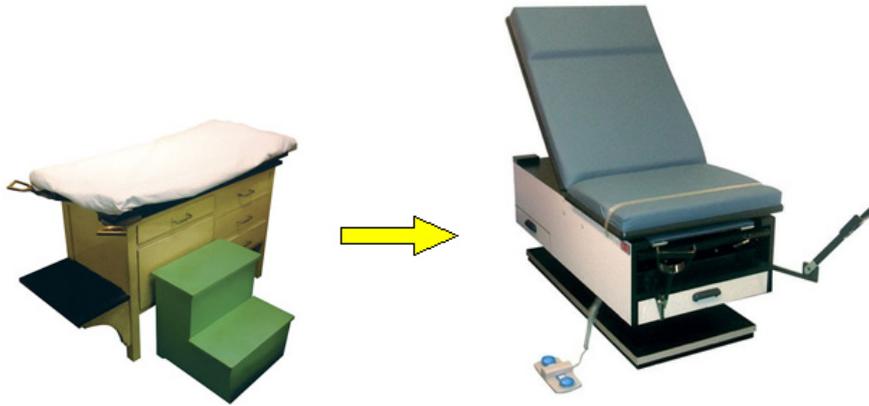
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Improved Access To Health Care Benefits Women with Disabilities

Improved Access To Health Care Benefits Women with Disabilities

Mary, a wheelchair user, has been reluctant to receive physical checkups because she thought health clinics were not user-friendly for patients like her, until recently...

"I received a reminder from the Department of Health mentioning that regular screenings could help prevent cervical cancer. I called the hotline and I was glad to find information locating facilities for persons with disabilities, available at certain Maternal & Child Health Centres (MCHCs)," said Mary.



Before and after : new examination seat featuring adjustable height, all angle back support and leg rests, much more user-friendly than the traditional style.



Gentle slope at the front entrance

When Mary arrived at the Maurine Grantham MCHC in Tsuen Wan, she wheeled through the entrance ramp, and approached the registration counter without difficulty. After a short while, she was directed to a brand new examination seat. "The height of the seat was adjusted to my wheelchair level and I transferred myself easily and sat on the examination seat. The nurse pressed a button to raise the examination seat and my back support was also adjusted so that I could sit comfortably." Mary recounted her new experience, which took only 15 minutes.

Having gone through the procedures herself, Mary reassured others that there was no need to wait for help to get her wheelchair to the examination floor, no more climbing up and down from the examination coach and it was no longer painful for her to undergo the gynaecological examination. With this new and improved service, Mary urged women with walking difficulties to check with the MCHCs for the facilities available to them and to receive the cervical screening test service, "Like all other women, we should be health conscious."

Cervical Screening Service

24-hr Hotline: 3166-6631

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Case - From Sick to Sacked

Disability Discrimination Case

From Sick to Sacked

The complaint

Steve, a property management assistant, had been off sick for two months last year due to colon cancer. After a series of medical treatment, he was fully recovered and returned to work.



"I had been in my job for five years. My performance had never been a concern until I returned to work from sick leave," said Steve, who found himself being treated unfairly by his employer. "I found out my supervisor had rated me "satisfactory" in my performance review, but higher up, the senior manager downgraded the rating without notifying me. As a consequence, I was not given a year-end bonus, and shortly afterwards, they even made me redundant."

He continued, "They had no fair reason for treating me like this. What was more shocking was when I found out later that the only reason they lowered my rating was because of my long absence from work. Redundancy was only excuse they could think of to get rid of me."

What the EOC did

Steve lodged a complaint with the Commission against his employer for disability discrimination. The EOC investigator looked into the complaint and sought information from Steve and his employer, the respondent of the case.



The respondent admitted that Steve's appraisal score was downwardly adjusted because of his lengthy sick leave, but they insisted that the dismissal was solely on the realignment of work duties. But the EOC's investigation showed that the respondent had hired someone else to replace Steve soon after he left.

The two parties agreed to proceed to conciliation in order to resolve the dispute. The matter was finally settled with the respondent agreeing to pay a monetary compensation, and to provide a good reference letter to Steve.

What the law says

Under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against another person with a disability or sickness by dismissing that person, unless he cannot perform the inherent requirements of the job. Redundancy exercises should be carried out in a fair and consistent manner, as consistent and non-discriminatory criteria with accompanying reasons for selecting whom to be made redundant are important.

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Case - Not Just a Compliment

Sex Discrimination Case

Not Just a Compliment

The complaint

"After working at the school for 3 years, I left feeling bitter and resentful," Kitty sighed.

"Our principal, the most awful boss I have ever met, took delight in paying unwarranted attention to my appearance. Every time I appeared in a new outfit or hairstyle, he would make some sly comments. Even though what he said sounded like a compliment, it felt like he was only interested in how I looked. I was so embarrassed to the point that I couldn't bear looking at him."

"One time, he sat so uncomfortably close to me in a taxi on our way to a business meeting that I had to ask him to back off. I guess he got offended, and so afterwards, he took revenge. Ever since that time, he kept picking on me and blaming me for the students' poor performance. He even indicated several times that I should resign!" Kitty felt intimidated by her boss's unwelcome sexual attention, and could no longer stand the increasing pressure of working for him. Eventually, she handed in her resignation.

What the EOC did

At first, Kitty complained to the school's board about her boss's acts of sexual harassment, but no immediate action was taken. She then took the complaint to the EOC against her boss and the school. In response to Kitty's allegations, her boss said, "Excuse me? She's offended because I said she looked nice? I am really bewildered by this charge."

The EOC investigator explained to the two respondents the definition of sexual harassment under Sex Discrimination Ordinance and the liability issues concerned. The respondents opted for early conciliation during the process of investigation.

The school's board agreed to issue an advisory letter to the principal requesting him to improve his communication skills and management style. A good reference letter was provided to Kitty by the school. It was also included in the conciliation agreement that the principal would opt for early retirement in the following year.



What the law says

Under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, sexual harassment is what a reasonable person would regard as unwelcome sexual advance or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Conduct of a sexual nature includes verbal remarks irrespective of whether they are blatantly uttered or subtly implied.

Employees of an organization are personally liable for their own acts of sexual harassment under the law. An employer is vicariously liable for the unlawful acts of sexual harassment committed by employees in the course of their employment, whether with or without knowledge or approval of such behaviour.

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Around the World

Around the World

See the World Running

Henry Wanyokie, voted Kenya's Safaricon Sportsman of the Year 2005, has become a role model for sport persons with a disability. He lost his eyesight in 1995 after a mild stroke. Before he went blind, Henry was groomed to become a top athlete. Feeling depressed and lost, his doctor convinced him to take up running again. Guided by his shadow-runner, Henry quickly established himself as a world-class non-sighted athlete. Not only has he set records in major marathon events around the world, he has also earned gold medals in both the 2000 and 2004 Paralympics.



Information source:

http://www.eastandard.net/archives/cl/hm_news/news.php?articleid=19393&date=2/05/2005

Harassment through Offensive Comments

In Canada, an aboriginal woman, who worked as a financial manager with the Canadian federal government, alleged that her supervisor made racially and sexually offensive remarks to her. She reported the case to a higher supervisor, but nothing happened. She then lodged a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission against her supervisor and the government department. In response to the complaint, the government department countered that it had educated its employees about its anti-harassment policy, and that it did respond to her grievance. The department claimed that they had ordered the supervisor to write a letter of apology, but he refused. In settling the complaint, the department agreed to provide the financial manager a monetary compensation of CAN\$40,200.



Information source:

http://www.ipd.gov.hk/eng/copyright/press_release_e.pdf
http://www.info.gov.hk/cib/html/pdf/copyright/FAQ_copyright_exemptions_Eng_final.pdf

Copyright Exemption for Persons with a Print Disability

To further improve Hong Kong's copyright protection and copyright exemption regimes, the Hong Kong SAR Government announced earlier a package of legislative amendments to the Copyright Ordinance, which included a new permitted act to meet the special reading needs of persons with a print disability. Under the Bill, persons with a print disability can make specially adapted copies (e.g. Braille, large-print, electronic version, or sound recording) for their own use without infringing copyright. A person with a print disability refers to anyone with blindness or visual impairment and those who are not able, through physical disability, to hold or manipulate a book, or to focus or move their eyes for reading.

Information source:

http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/publications/anti_discrimination_case-en.asp#employment

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Maternity Rights for Student Midwives



England's Court of Appeal had dismissed the National Health Service's (NHS) attempt to overturn the victory of three student midwives who had their bursary payments cut when

they took time off from training to have their babies. Their victory has far-reaching implications for trainees across the country — not just midwives — who are on similar bursary schemes and face similar sex discrimination. After an earlier victory for the trainees, an interim arrangement allowed all NHS trainees in England to have their bursaries continued for a period of up to 45 weeks when they need to take leave due to pregnancy or childbirth, an arrangement which the Court of Appeal considered to be sensible and fair.

Information source:

<http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=18528>

Equal Opportunities Diversity Project

平等機會多元共融行動
Equal Opportunities
Diversity Project

5/2006 - 4/2007
逢星期五
Every Friday
1-3 pm
香港電台第二台
RTHK Radio 2
(FM94.8-96.9)

Made in
Hong Kong
李志剛

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Events Calendar

社區活動 巡禮

EVENTS CALENDAR

3-9/2006

「《婦女公約》與香港婦女發展」巡迴展覽
"CEDAW and Hong Kong Women
Development" Roving Exhibition
衛生福利及食物局
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
2136 2738

20/5, 27/5 &
3/6/2006

「如何協助閱讀困難的學童」教師訓練證書課程
Workshops for Teachers on "How to Help
Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties"
協康會 Heep Hong Society
2784 7700 www.heephong.org

26/5 - 16/6/2006
(逢星期五 Every Friday)

男人俱樂部 Men's Society
社會福利署油蔴地綜合家庭服務中心
Yau Ma Tei Integrated Family Service Centre,
Social Welfare Department
2388 6460

17/6/2006



雙職婦女講座 Seminar on "Challenges Faced
by Working Mothers"
香港女青年商會
Hong Kong Jayceettes Junior Chamber
9570 0598 / 9205 9191

23/6/2006



心理健康教育講座 Mental Health Talk
「面對焦慮症」 "Facing Anxiety Disorders"
香港心理衛生會
Mental Health Association of Hong Kong
2528 4656 / 2340 6031 www.mhahk.org.hk

25/6/2006



第六屆聾人三人籃球比賽
The 6th 3-on-3 Basketball Competition for
the Hearing Impaired
香港聾人福利促進會
The Hong Kong Society for the Deaf
2854 2676 www.deaf.org.hk

15/7/2006



「共建和諧家庭」工作坊
Workshop on "Achieving Family Harmony"
香港女青年商會
Hong Kong Jayceettes Junior Chamber
9570 0598 / 9205 9191

19/8/2006

心理健康教育講座 Mental Health Talk
「突破學習困難帶來的抑鬱與焦慮」
"Getting over Specific Learning Difficulties"
香港心理衛生會
Mental Health Association of Hong Kong
2528 4656 / 2340 6031 www.mhahk.org.hk

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