

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM9.47	ACTION			Ward:18
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"Free Yourself" Global Domestic Violence Campaign - by Councillor Ana Bailão, seconded by Councillor Frances Nunziata

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Ana Bailão, seconded by Councillor Frances Nunziata, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to report to the Community Development and Recreation Committee on the potential for the City's involvement in the international domestic violence awareness campaign "Free Yourself".

Summary

"Free Yourself" is a media and celebrity driven international campaign aimed at raising awareness and empowering survivors of domestic violence globally. The campaign is designed to raise the discussion about what needs to happen for individuals to stop returning to violent relationships.

These efforts were spurred after the World Health Organization (WHO) recently compiled the first global systematic review on domestic violence. Some of the findings illustrated that 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. Around the world, the rates of return of people to violent relationships who have previously left violent relationships, ranges anywhere from 33 percent in Europe to 85 percent in the United States.

The campaign involves three core elements:

1. A celebrity driven social media and press campaign called "Free Yourself" exploring how to end multi-generational cycles of abuse. The intention is to explore the deeply personal journey required of people necessary to free themselves from familiar cycles of pain and abuse, and from the psychological condition as "the abused" to which they have been enculturated.
2. The production of a short film called "Faithless", which is about one woman's journey of personal transformation of identity and sexuality as she flees a violent marriage in Louisiana.

Through her journey to Cuba and connection to Cuban music, she finds a way to free herself from the victim she once was, such that, she is safe from the threat of violence. The movie is entirely set to music (no dialogue) so that it transcends cultural and language barriers.

3. An International music benefit, similar to Band Aid/Live Aid – featuring notable music artists. This concert will open with a live screening of "Faithless" with music performed live similar to a V-Jay experience. Funds raised will be given to worldwide domestic violence support groups.

A meeting was held at City Hall in September to discuss the campaign. There was interest from meeting attendees in determining what, if any, involvement the City could take as part of the campaign.

This Motion is urgent as the "Free Yourself" campaign is scheduled to begin filming during the month of October. As a result it is important for the City to gauge its interest in participating in the campaign.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM9.47