



## International Sex Workers' Rights Day

For Immediate Release – February 24, 2010

**Calgary, AB** – On Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> AIDS Calgary and our *Shift* program marks International Sex Workers' Rights Day. The day commemorates the hate crimes, violence and discrimination that sex workers face, and urges the public to respect the basic human rights of sex workers.

Hazel Orpen, *Shift* Program Coordinator, “wants to use March 3<sup>rd</sup> to call attention to the fact that many women, men and trans-gendered people work in the sex trade and that while this is the work that they do, it is not all that they are”. Stigma and discrimination makes it very difficult for people working in the sex trade to access services and perpetuates the notion that they deserve to be treated with disrespect, and violence.

Sex work includes people working outdoors on the street as well as indoor workers (i.e. escorts, exotic dancers, adult film entertainers, or those offering services in massage parlors). Violence includes physical assaults (including murder, rape, robbery, assault, harassment, verbal, physical and sexual abuse) towards sex trade workers from their customers, and the general public.

The *Shift* program, as a member of the International Sex Workers' Rights Day Committee, will be marking March 3<sup>rd</sup> with “How Many Hats Do You Wear?” - a View of Our Stories of Work in the Sex Trade, at the Glenbow Museum ConocoPhillips Theatre, at 12:00pm

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AIDS Calgary is a local not-for-profit AIDS service organization that offers support services to individuals who are at-risk for, infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and provides prevention and education throughout the Calgary region. For more information, please contact AIDS Calgary at (403) 508-2500 or online at [www.aidscalgary.org](http://www.aidscalgary.org).

The *Shift* program provides support services for people in the sex trade. Utilizing a harm reduction and rights based approach, *Shift* works with adults involved in the sex trade to assist in improving quality of life and reaching individualized goals. For more information please visit [www.shiftcalgary.org](http://www.shiftcalgary.org).

**For more information, please contact:**

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