Hey Ladies: Rock Your Red Pumps for AIDS Awareness!

March 6, 2015 By Trent Straube

Tuesday, March 10, marks the 10th annual National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. Across the country, organizations use the observance day -- and often the entire month of March -- as an opportunity to address the epidemic as it pertains to women and girls.

The Red Pump Project has taken this opportunity and really run with it (if you'll forgive the pun).

Karyn Watkins Lee and Luvvie Ajayi launched the Chicago-based nonprofit in 2009 with a focus on the African-American community. It started as a social media campaign -- #RockTheRedPump -- in which they asked bloggers to write about the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls. Since then, more than 2,500 writers have indeed rocked it. They've also placed a Rock the Red Pump badge on their websites and other digital platforms.

To further kick-start the conversation, the campaign asks women to don a pair of red shoes on March 10--any kind will do, whether ruby slippers, Nike Air Max or Manolo slingbacks (and for the fellas out there: you can "don a dope red tie").

The project has grown over the years to include a variety of events, including an annual Rock the RED Fashion Show and a series called Cupcakes & Condoms, in which the women discuss safer sex issues while enjoying some sweets.

This year also includes a RED Power Convo on March 10 in New York City. In partnership with Essence magazine, the evening offers cocktails and a panel discussion with AIDS activist Hydeia Broadbent, amfAR vice president of research Rowena Johnston, and Deborah Levine, who is with Love Heals and the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network. Charreah Jackson, an editor at Essence magazine, will moderate.

Until there's a cure, these red pumps will always be in fashion.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/red-pump-project-2015