

Press release

Berlin-Zehlendorf, September 11, 2013

### Grand opening of the “Desert Flower Center” Waldfriede

“Desert Flower Center” Waldfriede becomes cooperating clinic of the Desert Flower Foundation, Vienna (founded by Waris Dirie) and is officially launched on September 11, 2013 in Berlin-Zehlendorf.

Special guests at the event are – next to patroness Waris Dirie – Barbara Loth, state secretary of senate administration for occupation, integration and women, Norbert Kopp, borough mayor of Steglitz-Zehlendorf, Thomas Heilmann, senator for justice and consumer protection, and Karl-Georg Wellmann, member of the German parliament and vice-spokesman for foreign affairs.

Waris Dirie, Vienna / Somalia, Evelyn Brenda, Darmstadt / Kenya, and Dr. Pierre Foldès, Paris, will personally explain the impact of “female genital mutilation” (FGM) as well as the social consequences of undergoing reconstructive surgery. Among the participants of the subsequent panel discussion are Walter Lutschinger (Desert Flower Foundation, Vienna), Dr. Roland Scherer (head of department of the “Center of Colorectal and Pelvic Floor Surgery” at Krankenhaus Waldfriede), Dr. Gabriele Halder (“Stopp FGM” Berlin-Brandenburg), Karl-Georg Wellmann, Sherry Hormann (director of the 2009 movie “Desert Flower”), as well as a victim of FGM from Vienna / Sudan. Armin Lehmann of the Tagesspiegel newspaper will act as discussion leader.

Medical superintendent of the “Desert Flower Center” Waldfriede will be the internationally acclaimed coloproctologist Dr. Roland Scherer. Work will officially start the next day on September 12, 2013. From then on, women and girls suffering from FGM can count on competent care and support at the center.

The holistic treatment concept at the “Desert Flower Center” Waldfriede is without precedent: next to the medical treatment of complications resulting from FGM such as scarring, recto- and vesicovaginal fistulas, injuries of the urethral sphincter and urinary or fecal incontinence, the center will offer plastic surgery to reconstruct the clitoris and external female genitalia, as well as psychosocial therapy and counseling.

On top of that, training programs will be provided for medical personnel on a regular basis. The Desert Flower Foundation regularly organizes and supervises workshops for African communities in Germany to promote the medical and psychosocial services offered at Krankenhaus Waldfriede. The workshops also serve as a prevention and education tool to inform them about the physical and psychological consequences of FGM.

In order to guarantee optimal coordination of the cooperation, the German representation of the Desert Flower Foundation will move its offices from Hamburg to Berlin-Zehlendorf, where Dr. Roland Scherer has been recently appointed board member.

The opening ceremony will be further supported by:

Berliner Philharmoniker (personally through Sir Simon Rattle), Desert Flower Foundation, Vienna (personally through Waris Dirie), Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin (German newspaper), ADRA Deutschland e.V. Darmstadt (Adventist Development and Relief Agency), INTEGRA (network against female genital mutilation) and BALANCE Berlin (family planning center).

For further information and press inquiries please call +49 (0)30 81 810-213. Dr. Roland Scherer and hospital manager Bernd Quoß will be glad to answer your questions.



Bernd Quoß  
Hospital manager



Dr. Roland Scherer  
Department Head “Center of Colorectal  
and Pelvic Floor Surgery”



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