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Hugs are not for rent in Cuba

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We rent cars, apartments, clothes...And for some time now, parents, wives, grandchildren, daughters and sons, and even friends are being rented too.

It really seems pretty surreal but this is actually happening in Japan. “Family Romance” company —founded by Yuichi Ishii and dedicated to the renting of relatives and friends— is operating there.

This business profits from nearly 2,200 workers trained to impersonate any relative, boyfriend, lover, or friend. This is an increasingly popular service, which corresponds to the growth of a painful lack of affection striking today’s Japanese society.

Luckily, there is no need to rent the love of friends and relatives in Cuba. Regardless of good or bad times in the Island’s economy, family has been still one of the top priorities for Cubans in the last decades.

And we cannot talk about one type of family given the heterogeneity of this fundamental unit of society, but even though these types of families coexist in all of their diversity, everyone coincides that the family is the perfect space to achieve the welfare of all Cuban citizens and the shelter everyone needs to safeguard

against all odds.

Successive psychological and sociological inquiries carried out in Cuba in different decades have confirmed it. And the will of individuals, institutions, and government is to continue with this line of action.

It was once again ratified in the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Family Law held in Havana this month.

There, Dr. Patricia Arés, associate professor at the Psychology School, University of Havana, had stated that “we want to provide the new generation with a world where families can be free from oppression and subjugation; the environment where dignity is guaranteed as well as the comprehensive development and welfare of family members.”

In any case, not everything is sunshine and flowers in Cuban homes. In the word of Dr. Arés, families “are experiencing complex, multiple, and mixed transitions.”

But things get tougher especially if we take into account that 64% of families are made up of adults and senior citizens. In most cases, different generations live together under the same roof triggering conflicts and contradictory viewpoints.

Hence, dialogue and communication are both essential. The recently adopted and implemented Constitution of the Republic makes room for this subject by addressing nonviolence and affections.

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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