

New Social Media Challenge That Imitates ALS Realities

The “Hour of Silence” challenge is giving voice to the voiceless

Edmond, OK, 8/31/17: A new social media challenge is raising awareness for ALS and other diseases that cause you to lose the ability to communicate. The challenge encourages participants to go silent for one hour and is designed to help participants better understand the life of those who can't communicate using their mouth or hands. Created by VisuALS, a company offering an affordable AAC solution for people with ALS and similar diseases, the “Hour of Silence” challenge is being launched out of Oklahoma Christian University and is giving voice to the voiceless.

According to the ALS Association, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects people's ability to speak, eat, move and breathe. While losing any of these basic bodily functions would be absolutely terrifying, losing the ability to communicate with those that you love would be especially heartbreaking. Because their minds remain completely unaffected, people with ALS who lose the ability to communicate, become trapped inside of their own body. The “Hour of Silence” challenge is designed to give participants a glimpse into the nightmare that these patients live with on a daily basis.

Sarah Haupt, a care service manager for the ALS Association, described the challenge as being authentic, powerful and moving, saying, “This challenge is different than any other challenge that I have ever seen, as it not only brings awareness to ALS in general, but it also brings awareness to the scary reality that a lot of people with ALS have to face every single day. For participants, the challenge may be fun and games, but once they realize that this is real for people with ALS, it will make them appreciate their ability to communicate.”

Participants are challenged to not communicate using their voice or hands for one whole hour. This means no talking, no texting, and no social messaging. Similar to the Ice Bucket Challenge, the “Hour of Silence” challenge is designed to have social media sharing and interaction. Before going silent, participants post the challenge on social media announcing that they are going silent for one hour and challenging three of their friends to do the same. The challenge is illustrated by placing tape across the mouth (medical tape, with “Voiceless” written across it) and on the thumbs (see image), as physical reminders to not speak or use hands during the hour of silence.

Those unable or unwilling to take the challenge (and those that do take the challenge) are encouraged to make a donation to one of five organizations: The ALS Association, The Muscular Dystrophy Association, John Paul II Medical Research Institute, The Gleason Initiative Foundation or the VisuALS Fund (which helps pay for VisuALS systems for those that can't afford them). To learn more about the "Hour of Silence" challenge, visit <http://visuals.tech/hourofsilence>.

About VisuALS Technology Solutions, LLC

Based in Edmond, Oklahoma, VisuALS' mission is to love our neighbors by restoring independence, dignity, and hope through affordable assistive technology solutions. Birthed out of an award winning student project, VisuALS continues to benefit from its relationship with the innovative Oklahoma Christian University community. Learn more at <http://visuals.tech>

Contact:

Austin McRay
Chief Marketing Officer
VisuALS Technology Solutions
866-767-4997
austin@visuals.tech