



Paris Jackson and Philipp Hochmair current ambassadors of the Life Ball campaign

Vienna, Austria. With the European HIV Testing Week from 23 to 30 November 2018 and the International World AIDS Day on 1 December, LIFE+, the sponsoring association behind the Life Ball, will present its latest endorsements together with Paris Jackson and Philipp Hochmair. With a poster campaign - photographed by Austrian celebrity photographer Andreas H. Bitesnich - and supported by TV and radio commercials, the Know Your Status campaign aims to raise awareness among the general public about the dangers of HIV infection, raise awareness and break taboos in connection with HIV/AIDS. "With our campaign, we aim to continue raising awareness of how important it is to know one's own immune status and what an HIV-positive diagnosis means for those affected in personal, social and medical terms," says Gery Keszler, Chairman of LIFE+.

In Austria alone, it is estimated that more than 8,000 people live with the HIV virus, one to two people become infected every day and the estimated number of unreported cases of HIV-positive persons, who are unaware of their HIV-positive status, is alarmingly high (source: UNAIDS).

The new Know Your Status campaign with Paris Jackson and Philipp Hochmair will be shown throughout Austria during this year's European Testing Week. The two wrote the testimonials themselves, which were then painted on their bodies. These reflect their respective experiences and thoughts in dealing directly and honestly with HIV/AIDS.

Paris Jackson, ambassador of the Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation and a guest at this year's Life Ball, is fully committed to supporting LIFE+: "35 million people have died of AIDS-related illnesses since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, and people are still afraid to talk about it because of stigmatisation. People do not want to get near a person infected with HIV, not even when their treatment makes transmission impossible. I am passionate about ending the stigmatisation and misinformation surrounding HIV/AIDS."

With the help of strong partners, the Know Your Status initiative has become a public reality. ORF, for example, provides "social TV spots". The powerful photographs were produced by Andreas H. Bitesnich and subsequently transformed into a poster and advertising campaign by the Merlicek & Grossebner agency, and continue to be implemented on a large scale in cooperation with KULTURFORMAT, a 100% subsidiary of Gewista.

Philipp Hochmair, who supports LIFE+ with "Jedermann im Dom" on the eve of the international World AIDS Day on 30 November 2018, advocates, both on and off the stage, for more openness with regard to HIV/AIDS and for testing oneself: "It is important to be honest with oneself, only then can one be honest with others. Especially in the case of HIV and AIDS this could be decisive when it comes to life and death - one's own life and the lives of others. That's why it's so important to know your immune status."

In addition to the classic laboratory tests, HIV self-diagnosis tests for self-testing have been available in pharmacies in Austria as of this year. An HIV self-diagnosis test enables discreet self-testing and is intended to reduce the reluctance threshold to carry out an HIV test. In the event of a positive test result, however, the HIV test must be verified with a laboratory test.

Next year LIFE+ is planning a new informational campaign as an extension of the Know Your Status campaign, which will focus on the third and final objective of UNAIDS 90-90-90 and on HIV prevention. Under the title U = U (Undetectable = Untransmittable), it is intended to shed light on how an HIV-positive person receiving appropriate treatment can achieve viral suppression and thus no longer pass the HIV virus on to others.

Further info:

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