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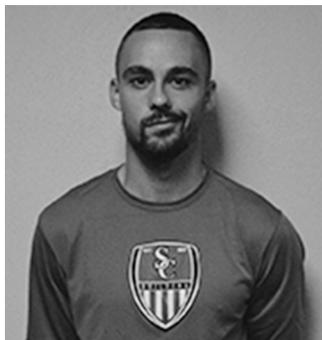
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OPINION

Heated debate thaws challenge Do bucket dumpers help with ALS cause? Social media frenzy: challenge accepted



Dalton Carver

It may be hard to focus on anything but the freezing feeling when an ice-cold bucket of water is poured over you, but social media users should be nominated to remove the attention from themselves and give it back to raising ALS awareness, where it belongs.

According to the ALS Association website, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is a disease that attacks motor neurons in the brain and the spinal cord. As these neurons die, commands from the brain fail to reach the muscles they're sent to control. As a result, the muscles become less-used, and begin to deteriorate. The disease eventually leads to the victim's death, as the individual can no longer send messages to move, swallow or breathe.

The disease is without a cure, but not without hope. The ALS organization has created an ongoing awareness campaign that has become popular through the power of social media.

The ice bucket challenge was created to raise awareness for ALS, leading to donations for the cause.

Everyone from high school students to celebrities is pouring ice-cold buckets of water on their heads to simulate the action of losing feeling in their muscles and limbs. It's not anything close to the actual disease, but any cause can be stimulated by the power of the hashtag.

However, many are missing the point of the campaign, using their challenges as like-fodder for social media platforms. Instead of placing the attention on ALS awareness, they claim it for themselves.

There isn't a requirement for anyone to make a donation. The real issue is that many of those who undertake the challenge use it as a tool to focus attention on themselves instead of ALS awareness.

Instead, ice bucket nominees should clearly state what the challenge is for and seek to learn about the disease and how best they can help to further the process towards a cure. Encouraging others to do the same is much more effective than a simple nomination to douse themselves in cold water for a disease they don't know much about.

Not that the campaign hasn't been successful. According to an article from the Time magazine website, the ice bucket challenge had raised more than \$31.5 million as of Aug. 20. Six days later, the ALS website reported that the total had jumped to \$88.5 million. As of September 2, the campaign was reported to have raised more than \$100 million in donations.

Despite this success, refrain from placing the focus of the challenge on yourself. It's not a video that's supposed to make you and your friends look hilarious. The intention is to raise awareness for a disease that requires society's help in order to progress towards a solution or cure.

Just because you get a minor brain freeze when taking the ice bucket challenge, don't forget the main intention of the campaign.

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Kylie Stamper

You've probably seen it at least 300 times on your Facebook news feed or you have heard people talking about having to do it.

The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge has been dominating social media for a little over a month.

In the time between July 29 and Aug. 29, those people pouring buckets of ice water on their heads helped raise over \$100 million in donations for the ALS Association. As of Sept. 4, the donations were up to \$108 million. This time last year, only \$2.8 million was donated during the month.

According to statistics from 2013 on alsa.org, approximately 79 percent of these donations to ALSA go towards research, education, and services for patients and the community.

I made it to the end of August before I was nominated by my younger sister. So of course, I had to dump freezing water on my head.

Most versions of the challenge required that nominees, if they chose to participate, pour a bucket of ice water over their head within 24 hours of being nominated and donate \$10 or \$100 if the participant opted out.

By now you've most likely memorized the lines that people say in their videos. "I was nominated by so-and-so to do the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge and I nominate this person, this person, and

this person." Then the video is posted to Facebook and the nominees are tagged.

The concept spread like wildfire and soon you see about 30 other ice bucket challenge videos before the end of the day.

Alsa.org, the website with the main purpose of ALS awareness, says "Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord.

Eventually, people with ALS lose the ability to initiate and control muscle movement, which often leads to total paralysis and death within two to five years of diagnosis.

There is no cure and only one drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that modestly extends survival."

Even after knowing that over \$100 million has been raised for research and education by doing something different, some still resent the ice bucket challenge.

Some say it is a cry for attention while others are dead-set specifically on raising awareness. Some love it, and others are just plain tired of seeing all the videos.

Before this challenge started, the only thing I knew about ALS was that it was a disease. I knew nothing about it or what it does to people. Now that I have participated in the challenge and had a reason to think about it, I understand what it is and I am glad I was able to be a part of the momentum behind the movement.

Now, I nominate anybody who has not yet had the opportunity to participate. Grab a bucket of ice-cold water, recruit a few friends, and have some fun.

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