



This press release is also for distribution to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare Press Club

To the Members of the Media

June 5, 2015

The END ALS Association

**An ALS Awareness Project Led by an ALS Patient  
“ONE TRY ONE LIFE”  
A Commercial Developed by and Featuring an ALS Patient  
The First in Japan!  
Special Appearance by the Music Artist AI**

\*According to research by the END ALS Association

The END ALS Association (Representative: Katsumasa Fujita, Headquarter: Setagaya Ward, Tokyo) will produce a commercial to educate the public on ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis also known as Lou Gehrig's disease), a disease designated as “intractable” by the Japanese government. It will be the first commercial in Japan\* to be developed by and featuring an ALS patient. The patient is Masahiro “Hiro” Fujita, an advertising planner and founder of the END ALS Association. The aim is to release the completed commercial on World ALS Day, June 21.

The commercial will also feature a special appearance by the music artist AI, Hiro’s friend and supporter of the cause.

This effort to create a commercial is a part of “ONE TRY ONE LIFE—ROAD TO END ALS—,” a project to spread awareness and understanding of ALS. The project’s goal is to make treatment available to all ALS patients that desire it and to rid the world of the disease. Hiro will play a leading and central role in the various communication activities the project intends to activate.



Photo Caption: From the shoot, Hiro, AI, Kakimoto

### <Key Features of the Commercial>

- The first disease awareness ad in Japan to be developed by and starring an ALS patient\* .

\*According to research by the END ALS Association

- Special appearance by the music artist AI.
- The completed commercial will be released on World ALS Day, June 21  
*We are now soliciting the media for free ad space to run the commercial on after the June 21 release. Please contact us if you can contribute.*
- The production cost was crowd-funded through the fund-raising site, JapanGiving.  
Fund-raising period: May 4 – June 4, 2015 (# of Contributors 301: total donation: 3,912,300Yen)  
JapanGiving website's ONE TRY ONE LIFE page  
<http://japangiving.jp/projects/2207>

\* The ONE TRY ONE LIFE project has also launched a website on May 3 to aggregate knowledge and know-how related to ALS from all over the world and to transmit information that will promote understanding of the disease. The project's various activities will be updated regularly on the site.  
(<https://end-als.com/onetryonelife/>)

PROJECT LOGO



### **Purpose for Launching the Project**

Last summer, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, intended to raise awareness of ALS, swept the world. However, despite the widespread attention this challenge received, we cannot say it has deepened understanding of the disease.

According to a survey by NHK, the Ice Bucket Challenge was known by 60 percent of the respondents, but only around 20 percent indicated a high understanding of the disease itself. (Source: NHK homepage, 900 samples)

In the past few years, there have been reports of dramatic improvements in ALS clinical trials being conducted overseas. This has been a small ray of hope for ALS patients, who are told there is little chance of recovery. Yet, there is still a lot that remains unclear for ALS patients in Japan, such as what kind of process do they need to go through to receive this treatment as soon as possible?

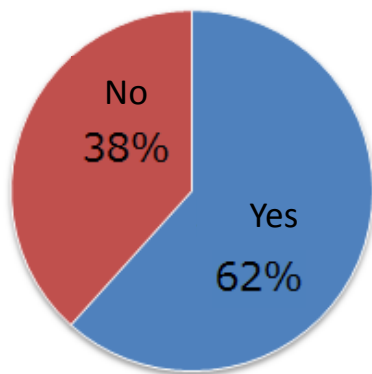
When will this treatment become available? How much will it cost? Whom do they need to talk to?

Masahiro “Hiro” Fujita, an ALS patient and founder of the END ALS Association, who still works as an active advertising planner, will utilize his skills to call out to people in Japan and the world and ask what should be done.

“In this Internet Age, if we can spread deeper understanding of ALS, then maybe we can gather knowledge and know-how from various people all over the world, such as scientists engaged in the latest research, medical professionals, and political leaders. Moreover, these activities may serve to provide hints to solve the challenges faced by not just ALS patients, but patients suffering from many other intractable diseases.”

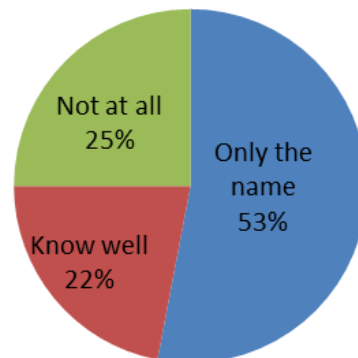
Hiro’s symptoms are advancing and there is a possibility that he will lose all of his ability to communicate. Despite this, he will pour what remains of his time and energy into this project so that not just current ALS patients, but future suffers of ALS can benefit.

**Do you know about the Ice Bucket Challenge?**



Awareness of the Ice Bucket Challenge

**Do you know about a disease called ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis)?**



Awareness/Understanding of ALS

Source: NHK homepage(900 samples)

### **About Masahiro “Hiro” Fujita**

Hiro, currently age 35, was born in Tokyo in 1979. He is a planning director at the international advertising agency, McCann Erickson Japan. He is also the leader of the “ONE TRY ONE LIFE” project and also the founder of the END ALS Association. He joined McCann Erickson in April of 2004 and was assigned to the Strategic Planning Division, where he planned and developed PR/influencer marketing and brand communication strategies. He was diagnosed with ALS in November of 2010. He became wheelchair-bound the following March and was placed on an artificial respirator in January 2012. In January 2013, he received a tracheostomy and lost his voice to speak again. Since then, he continues to carry on his work at the ad agency and activities for END ALS using the Tobii eye-tracking system, which allows him to operate a computer with blinks and eye movement. His book, “99% Thank You: Things Even ALS Can’t Take Away,” was published in November 2013.

### **About ALS**

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease) is an intractable disease characterized by the gradual weakening and atrophying of the muscles in the entire body, including that of the limbs, throat, tongue, and that required for breathing. Meanwhile, bodily sensation, such as cognitive function, vision, hearing, and functions of the internal organs, remain intact. With the advancement of symptoms, in most cases, eye movement eventually becomes the only means of communication. Some patients even lose this ability and enter a “total locked-in state” in which all muscle movement is completely lost. The cause is unknown and the average survival is 2 to 5 years. Despite the extreme rapidity of its progression, there is currently no effective cure for ALS. In Japan, there are more than 9,200 patients wait for a cure.

### **About the END ALS Association**

The END ALS Association is an advocacy organization founded by ALS patient and advertising planner Masahiro Fujita in September 2012. Its goals are to drive awareness and understanding of the current conditions surrounding ALS patients.

Mission:

- (1) To work to establish a treatment for ALS
- (2) To call out for change in the government’s medical care policy so that ALS patients can remain a member of society

**The activities of the “ONE TRY ONE LIFE” project will be a part of the overall activities of END ALS.**

# END ALS

Representative : Katsumasa Fujita

Founder : Masahiro Fujita

Location : 6-5-17 Soshigaya, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo

Date of foundation : September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

<https://end-als.com/>

## **AI Biography**

Born in Los Angeles. After spending her childhood in the city of Kagoshima in southwestern Japan, she returned as a teenager to the U.S. to study at the L.A. County High School for the Arts. Japanese R&B star AI moves freely between pop, hip hop and dance, combining American soul with the deep emotion of Japanese ballads. [www.who-is-ai.com/](http://www.who-is-ai.com/)

## **The Project's Members**

This project is being supported by volunteers that agree with Hiro's cause. Joining hands across the company divide, members have gathered from various companies, including web production houses and creators from competing ad agencies that would otherwise not have a chance to collaborate.

### ONE TRY ONE LIFE—ROAD TO END ALS—Main Project Members

Masahiro Fujita (Hiro), Project Leader, Planning Director

Listed in random order (Name/Company)

Yoshimitsu Uehara, the head of the ALS Communication Support Committee

Kensaku Kakimoto, Producer

Isamu Nakamura, McCann Erickson Japan Inc.

Chiharu Ozaki, //

Yutaka Tsuda, //

Ryosuke Yoshitomi, //

Akihiro Orimo, //

Yuki Saito, //

Hidekazu Koike, Momentum Japan Inc.

Miyoko Ohki, McCann Worldgroup Holdings Japan Inc.

Daigo Sato, JapanGiving Foundation

Satoru Miyamoto, //

Yusuke Fuchigami, JG Marketing Inc.

Motoi Ito, ADHOC Inc.

Erina Nomura, LECRE Inc.

Masami Abe, "

Hirofumi Hayashi, Dentsu Inc.

Eisuke Kishi, "

Yoshihiro Kawamura, "

Kotaro Abe, "

Junichi Murata, AOI Pro. Inc.

Taisuke Shirasawa, "

Madoka Igarashi, J. Public Relations, Inc.

Masatane Muto, Hakuhodo Inc.

Masahiko Futara, "

※Members as of May 15, 2015

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