



## PRESS RELEASE

### END ALS x P.H.A.S.E. 2: “BE A HERO” T-SHIRT JAPAN LAUNCH

A launch event with an art performance and music will be held in collaboration with SpeakeasyTYO on July 5 at CÉ LA VI Tokyo



Short T White sizes S~XXL 3,900 yen. Long T Black, sizes S~XL 4,900 yen. (for overseas shipping +2,000 yen) To be sold @ <https://end-als.com/store/store.html> and at the launch event.

**Tokyo, Japan, 19 June 2020** – The END ALS Association (Representative: Motoi Itoh, Tokyo, Japan) is excited to present the latest design for the END ALS charity T-shirt line in collaboration with P.H.A.S.E.2, aerosol art innovator and one of the real originators of the hip hop movement from the 1970s. The charity T-shirt launch will be celebrated in conjunction with Tokyo’s popular monthly event, SpeakeasyTYO at CÉ LA VI Tokyo in Shibuya on Sunday, 5 July from 3:00pm.

This special “Be a Hero” charity T-shirt launch event will include musical performances by internationally acclaimed turntablist, DJ SARASA and other SpeakeasyTYO DJs, along with art performance by 4 artists Tadaomi Shibuya (<http://tadaomishibuya.jp/>), Adrian Hogan (<http://www.adrianhogan.com/>), Alexandre a.k.a. OSMOZE (<http://www.pinkrabbithcorp.com>), and MAHARO (<http://groundriddim.com/>) to create paintings inspired by Hiro and to promote the understanding of ALS.

**DATE: Sunday, 5 July, 2020**

**TIME: 15:00 OPEN Hiro’s live message via ZOOM 21:00 CLOSE**

**VENUE: Ce La Vi Tokyo** 17f of Tokyu Plaza Shibuya <https://www.celavi.com/en/tokyo/>  
- SpeakeasyTYO x END ALS - ALS Awareness Event

**PRICE: Must RSVP SpeakeasyTYO.jp 3,000 yen per person incl. 1 drink**

※COVID-19 safety measures including temperature screening at registration, placing hand gel, mandating wearing of face masks and promoting social distancing at all times will be reinforced.



The END ALS Association was founded by amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) survivor and McCann Japan Planning Director, Hiro Fujita, in 2012, two years after his diagnosis. ALS, which is more commonly referred to as “Lou Gehrig’s Disease,” is an incurable disease in which motor neurons degenerate, leading to the decline of muscle strength. As the motor neurons are only affected, consciousness is maintained along with all of the five senses and intellectual thought processes. The average survival rate is from 2-5 years. At present day, there are over 400,000 who suffer from this disease with 10,000 patients here in Japan. As the disease progresses, patients experience paralysis and it becomes necessary for artificial respiration to prolong their life.

Bronx native, P.H.A.S.E.2 first heard about Hiro Fujita in 2013. He was so moved by Hiro’s bravery in his way of taking action to fight ALS that he immediately reached out to support his cause. Since the 1970s, P.H.A.S.E.2 had also experienced a number of losses around him to ALS and felt passionate about raising awareness for the disease. According to him, it did not gain any real attention until the legendary baseball player, Lou Gehrig was diagnosed since up until then, it was considered to be a disease that mainly affected the black community. He designed the “Be A Hero” art piece for him as a play of Hiro’s name into the word “Hero”, and in hopes to collaborate on a project with him in the future. Unfortunately, P.H.A.S.E.2 tragically passed away to ALS in December 12, 2019. This T-shirt collaboration is a project paying homage to the beloved pioneer of Hip Hop and to further promote the END ALS movement in Japan.

#### **About Hiro Fujita**



Hiro, currently age 40, was born in Tokyo in 1979. He is a planning director at the international advertising agency, McCann Erickson Japan. 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. Since then he had been working as a member of the ad agency and activities for END ALS using the Tobii eye-tracking system, which enabled him to operate a computer with blinks and eye movement. His book written with his eyes, “99% Thank You: Things Even ALS Can’t Take Away,” was published in November 2013. He has won numerous awards at the

Cannes Lion, ACC Japan with his STILL LIFE project. <https://end-als.com/#still> For the past few years, Hiro has been battling the fear of losing his eyes and being totally locked in his body(TLS), where he can hear, understand but has no way to express himself.



**About P.H.A.S.E.2** From 1971, primarily in the Bronx, he began writing graffiti, a term he despised and referred to as the “g-word”. He preferred the terms “style writing” or “aerosol art” and was adamant that the “g-word” was not to be used as he felt that it degraded the art. He was best known as the pioneer of “softies”— bubble-style letters that helped evolve simple tags to full-fledged artworks. Many innovations that became commonplace, like loops and arrows, are credited to him. His art varied from designing flyers for the first hip hop events, large canvas pieces to sculptures and was the first to create a large-scale, 6 foot high, three-dimensional aerosol brass sculpture which stood for many years in the Jacob Javitz Center. P.H.A.S.E.2 was also known for his collage artwork and collaborated with Supreme and designed the album covers for the record labels Rawkus and Definitive Jux as well as the logo for Tuff City. He was also a singer, rapper, DJ, dancer and founded the New York City Breakers crew. In

1982, he brought a group of rappers, dancers and artists to England and France, which was the first real exporting of New York hip-hop culture overseas. He was Art Director and a writer for the first graffiti magazine, International Graffiti Times (IGTimes) and in 1996, with the founder, released a graffiti history book, “Style: Writing From the Underground”.

Up until his passing, he continued to make art, selling privately and in galleries, including works on paper and robot-style sculptures influenced by his love of Japanese animation.

At his death he had been in the early stages of a documentary project with Mr. Grey and a book about his fliers with the hip-hop historian Pete Nice.

#### **About SpeakeasyTYO**

Founded 6 years ago by BROOKLYN TERRY and SARASA, the event has been featured in Japan-Times, NHK world and many more media outlets. While no-one knows where the next venue is held at, locals and overseas guests look forward to discovering something fresh each time SpeakeasyTYO occurs every 1st Sunday of the month. Music selected by the the best DJs in Tokyo and occasionally from around the world makes you feel welcome and safe in this stereophonic sanctuary. Please join our next party by following us on instagram @speakeasyTYO.official

**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.



**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 END ALS Association

Representative: Motoi Itoh

Founder: Masahiro Fujita (Hiro)

Founding: September 3, 2012

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

<https://www.facebook.com/endalswithhiro/>

<https://www.instagram.com/end.als/>

To inquire about this release, please contact:

Miyoko Ohki

Tel: 81-3-3746-8550 email: [miyoko.ohki@mccannwg.com](mailto:miyoko.ohki@mccannwg.com)