



Contact: Carrie Martin Munk  
The ALS Association  
[cmunk@alsa-national.org](mailto:cmunk@alsa-national.org)  
(571) 319-3047

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*[This will be a multi-media press release (see example) to include links to the following: ALS Awareness Month (AAM) graphic; link to campaign landing page; link to Tell Your Story page; link to Facebook and Twitter; link to individual story page.]*

### **The ALS Association Launches Online and Social Media Campaign during May, ALS Awareness Month**

**Washington, D.C. (April 24, 2013)**—The ALS Association sees interest in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) on the upswing, according to its most recent website traffic statistics, which finds that more and more people are visiting [www.alsa.org](http://www.alsa.org) looking for information about the disease, its symptoms, diagnoses and treatments. This May, The ALS Association will mark ALS Awareness month by working to turn that interest into action through a vibrant online and social media campaign around the shared vision to create a world without ALS.

ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. This fatal disease robs people of the ability to walk, to talk and even blink an eye and traps them inside a body they can no longer control until such essential involuntary muscle actions such as breathing can no longer be sustained. There is no known cause of the disease, although military veterans are approximately twice as likely to develop ALS as the general population.

Month over month during the last calendar year, The ALS Association saw a steady increase in its web traffic to [www.alsa.org](http://www.alsa.org), which continues to index well above the industry benchmark for unique site visitors to disease or health-specific charities. Month over month, the number of unique visits has steadily increased, due to direct web hits and through search engine queries about the disease.

“We typically see a spike in our web traffic when someone very visible is connected to ALS,” continued Gilbert. “But those spikes are now built upon a solid stream of daily visitors. During this year’s ALS Awareness Month, we want to funnel that interest into action to encourage people to get involved in the fight against this devastating disease.”

The Association’s online and social media campaign during this year’s ALS Awareness Month is seeking to engage this steady stream of web traffic by leveraging multiple online activities. The call to action for ALS Awareness Month will be to “*Create a world without ALS. Speak up now to give hope.*”

The Association is giving visitors to [www.alsa.org](http://www.alsa.org) the opportunity to take one of three immediate actions through a web overlay feature: to tell your story, to advocate or to sign up for more information. These engagement opportunities are also located on this campaign landing page, [www.alsa.org/awareness](http://www.alsa.org/awareness).

The main call to action online during ALS Awareness Month is the “Tell Your Story” feature. It will enable users to submit either a print or video story (via You Tube) to tell what they hope for as it relates to the fight against ALS, and to then share their story via social media.

“Input from people with the disease and others affected is essential for spreading awareness about the disease,” said Gilbert.

The story capture feature will enable The Association’s existing constituent base to take action, which will then provide content to further engage individuals who want to know more about the disease. Each story will have unique URL, and the number of social media shares will be visible on each story page and on an aggregate page, where multiple stories will populate the page.

The Association’s chapters nationwide will be actively promoting the stories within their service areas. Thanks to a partnership with Pride Mobility, the four stories with the most social media shares will each win for their local chapters one of four Quantum Q6 Edge chairs (\$10,000 each), donated by Pride Mobility. Chapters will add these chairs to their loan closets, which offer equipment and other devices to people with the disease at no cost.

Building the number online advocates is also an objective of this year’s campaign and complements the offline advocacy activities of The Association in May. From May 8-11, The Association will be hosting its annual National ALS Advocacy Day and Public Policy Conference in Washington, D.C., which brings together more than a thousand people with ALS, family members and other concerned individuals to advocate in person for policies specifically designed to accelerate the develop of treatments for the disease.

“We hope to recruit even more advocates during May this year,” said Gilbert, “because we know that many passionate individuals can create one collective voice when advocating lawmakers on important issues facing people with ALS.”

For more information on ALS Awareness Month, please visit [www.alsa.org/awareness](http://www.alsa.org/awareness).

### **About The ALS Association**

The ALS Association is the only national non-profit organization fighting Lou Gehrig’s Disease on every front. By leading the way in global research, providing assistance for people with ALS through a nationwide network of chapters, coordinating multidisciplinary care through certified clinical care centers, and fostering government partnerships, The Association builds hope and enhances quality of life while aggressively searching for new treatments and a cure. For more information about The ALS Association, visit our website at [www.alsa.org](http://www.alsa.org).