

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Would You Read This Press Release if the Person Who Wrote it Was HIV Positive?

27 November (London, UK) – Pop sensations Liberty yesterday helped launch the NAT's "ARE **YOU** HIV PREJUDICED?" campaign in Covent Garden. At the launch Liberty said: "People with HIV and AIDS seem to be outcast from society for no reason. Those with terminal illness are treated with care, why should HIV or AIDS be any different?" Liberty strongly believe that being more aware of the facts around HIV and AIDS will reduce new infections and improve quality of life for those living with HIV.

Three real reasons to stop stigma and discrimination against people with HIV and AIDS:

- "Our family was forced to leave our home and village, move across the country and remove our 8-year-old foster child from school, all because he was HIV positive."
- "My father didn't even want to let me move back home. He was ashamed that I was HIV positive and felt like I had dragged our family name into disrepute."
- "I was so ashamed and afraid of making my HIV status public that I lied on my volunteer application form. When I was posted overseas to a remote village, I eventually had to leave my job because I was too frightened to tell anyone I was HIV positive and therefore couldn't access treatment. I was scared and isolated, and I eventually became too ill to work."

The National AIDS Trust (NAT) unveiled its new, provocative and challenging "ARE **YOU** HIV PREJUDICED?" campaign in the run up to World AIDS Day which aims to confront prejudices and question perceptions of people with HIV and AIDS. Because HIV and AIDS is life-threatening – with an estimated 40 million people living with HIV worldwide and more than 8,200 people dying from AIDS each day – many people

have irrational fears about how HIV is contracted, often leading to prejudiced behaviour towards those affected by HIV and AIDS.

“We hope that by asking people to think about the stigma and discrimination experienced by those living with HIV, as well as presenting facts about HIV and AIDS, we will encourage people to question their perceptions about those in the community affected,” said Keith Winestein, Campaigns Development Manager at the National AIDS Trust. “While we realise attitudes will not change overnight, we believe our efforts will promote a more tolerant and caring approach to family, friends, co-workers and community members with HIV and AIDS.”

The HIV Prejudice Campaign, produced by award winning agency Saatchi & Saatchi, features a series of print and broadcast advertisements questioning the reader/viewer’s own attitudes to people with HIV. In one newspaper advertisement, a man asks: “Is this the only way you’ll let someone with HIV get within arm’s length?” All the advertisements go on to stress/highlight the terrible isolation, loneliness and sometimes abuse that people with HIV may experience as a result of prejudicial attitudes. For more information on the campaign visit www.worldaidsday.org.

The National AIDS Trust, the UK’s lead organisation on HIV and AIDS policy and advocacy to ensure a voice for people with HIV and AIDS and the communities that support them. For more information on the National AIDS Trust and how you can show your support then visit www.nat.org.uk.

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