

Dear Hollywood, Jack Black Shows How Health Outreach Is More Than Environmental PSAs



By *Jamie Wells, M.D.* — April 28, 2017



Credit: Shutterstock [1]

Dear Hollywood:

Recently, [a video](#) [2] of actor and musician Jack Black visiting children admitted to Children's Hospital Los Angeles was viewed by over a million people, even though it was not even on YouTube. It went viral for a reason that gets lost on a lot of publicists, who instead want their clients (you) to be endorsing the right groups, the right political causes, the right things for your brands.

Black instead just showed he cares about sick kids and wanted to [Make March Matter](#) [3], the name of the CHLA outreach campaign. It was a local initiative, it shouldn't have been popular all over the world, but it was, because it didn't go by the publicity book.

That's what happens when an effort is authentic and genuine, it resonates.

You can do that too with issues that are meaningful to you. Much of the public is jaded by the same video spot endorsing various causes, they want to know that celebrity voices are fans of more than clichés about saving the world that actually do little but pay salaries for such groups. For no money at all, Black brought joy and inspiration to those with struggles most people cannot possibly imagine.



Don't underestimate the power of that message. It can effect change. It can inspire profound discovery, medical advancement, and in both the short and long term assuaging of suffering. (1)

Let me give you a few examples:

I recently appeared on [Al Jazeera TV with two extraordinary young women](#) [4] who have [Sickle Cell Anemia](#) [5] as part of [my #GetWells effort](#) [6] to get high-profile attention for diseases that are devastating but don't get a lot of press. People with sickle cell disease feel theirs is a silent disease without a visible champion. You can be a warrior for them. [Michael J. Fox](#) [7] has raised over \$700 million for Parkinson's Disease research. [Boomer Esiason](#) [8] has been a key advocate for Cystic Fibrosis. [Scott Baio](#) [9] and his wife created a foundation to get more standard newborn screens consistent in all states. President Donald Trump talking Pompe Disease at his address to the joint session of Congress introduced it for the first time to much of the public (see [Did Pompe Disease Get A New Champion In President Trump?](#) [10] or [Pompe Disease, Newborn Screening And Inborn Errors Of Metabolism](#) [11]).

Of course, the ALS Ice Bucket challenge set a new standard for success.

The squeaky wheel gets the grease in terms of funding for cures but what about those people whose type of battle is rare and therefore unknown? They need your spotlight. Life and death realities weigh in the balance.

So you can post a selfie for fans, they love to know what you are doing, but why not do it with someone suffering from a little-known disease? The public gets a little smarter about health, you share your world with the public, and kids and their families get a terrific morale boost. There are [numerous ways to impact medicine without going to medical school](#) [12]. Paying a visit, playing a song, giving a high-five, that is just one idea.

If you are at a loss for a disease or facility that is less mainstream and deserves attention, please contact me [on Twitter](#) [13] or via email below and I will help you change someone's life. You'll feel better too, I promise.

Respectfully,

Dr. Jamie Wells

Director of Medicine

American Council on Science and Health

NOTE:

(1) The famed Holocaust survivor, psychiatrist and neurologist Viktor E. Frankl tackled the lessons of spiritual survival in his treasured classic "[Man's Search for Meaning](#) ^[14]." Predicated by this Nietzsche quote "He who has a Why to live for, can bear almost any How," this concept is interwoven throughout his book, his message on the importance of purpose in our search for meaning and the tools essential to survive even the most harrowing of circumstances. And, still be free and with joy when all freedoms seem to be nonexistent. Surprisingly, it is quite hopeful given the content.

Basically, you will learn to cope. You will heal from your own misfortunes.

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/04/28/dear-hollywood-jack-black-shows-how-health-outreach-more-environmental-psas-11204>

Links

[1] <https://www.shutterstock.com>

[2] <https://www.facebook.com/ChildrensLA/videos/10154892160735673/>

[3] <http://www.chla.org/blog/celebrityathlete/jack-black-visits-chla-make-march-matter>

[4] <http://acsh.org/news/2017/03/16/dr-jamie-wells-al-jazeera-tv-discussing-sickle-cell-anemia-11007>

[5] <http://acsh.org/news/2017/03/07/did-gene-therapy-cure-sickle-cell-disease-10950>

[6] <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23getwells&src=typd>

[7] <https://www.michaeljfox.org/foundation/where-does-your-money-go.php>

[8] <https://www.esiason.org/>

[9] <http://www.baileybaioangelfoundation.com/>

[10] <http://acsh.org/news/2017/03/02/did-pompe-disease-get-new-champion-president-trump-10930>

[11] <http://acsh.org/news/2017/03/03/pompe-disease-newborn-screening-and-inborn-errors-metabolism-10947>

[12] <http://acsh.org/news/2017/04/19/5-fun-ways-impact-medicine-without-medical-school-11145>

[13] <https://www.twitter.com/jamiewellsmd>

[14] <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hide-and-peek/201205/mans-search-meaning>