

Gangnam Style' singer Psy joins polio program

04 February 2013 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: Globally-recognized South Korean pop star Mr Psy has joined the growing roster of public figures and celebrities participating in Rotary's 'This Close' public awareness campaign for polio eradication.

Mr Psy, whose world renowned "Gangnam Style" video has become the first in the history of the internet to surpass one billion YouTube views, will help the Rotary achieve its goal of a polio-free world by raising his thumb and forefinger in the 'This Close' gesture in an advertisement. The ad will have the tagline: "We are this close to ending polio", and will enable participants to upload photos of themselves making the 'This Close' gesture with their fingers on Rotary's 'End Polio Now' website.

Mr Psy said, "I grew up in a Rotary family as my father and my late grandfather were Rotary members. My grandfather was very passionate and dedicated to Rotary, He had a big heart and always inspired me to help others." Mr Psy's late grandfather had made substantial donations to the Rotary Foundation, the charity arm of Rotary International.

The ad featuring Mr Psy's will be revealed during the February 3rd professional football championship game. The Rotary awareness campaign also features several other public figures and celebrities, including Mr Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop emeritus Mr Desmond Tutu; action movie star Mr Jackie Chan; golf legend Mr Jack Nicklaus; conservationist Ms Jane Goodall; premier violinist Mr Itzhak Perlman; Grammy award winners Mr A R Rahman, Angelique Kidjo and Ziggy Marley; golfing ace Mr Jack Nicklaus; and peace advocate Queen Noor of Jordan.

The television commercials will feature a mix of celebrities and non-celebrities around the world saying, "We are this close to making history. We are this close to changing the world. We are this close to ending polio-all we need is you." Along with helping Rotary set a new Guinness World Record, every person who joins the commercial can choose to add their name to a petition urging the world's governments to provide the \$5.5 billion needed to finish the job and end polio forever.

Polio eradication has been Rotary's top priority for more than two decades. The international humanitarian service organization is a spearheading partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, along with the World Health Organization, the

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and UNICEF. Rotary club members worldwide have contributed more than \$1.2 billion and countless volunteer hours to the polio eradication effort.

Great progress has been made, and the incidence of polio infection has plunged from about 350,000 cases in 1988 to 222 reported cases in 2012. More than two billion children have been immunized in 122 countries, preventing five million cases of paralysis and 250,000 pediatric deaths.