



“Today I will...” pledges to make a difference on World Parkinson’s Disease Day

“Today I will...” invites people with Parkinson’s disease to inspire each other by sharing personal commitments online at Parkinson’s Voices.eu

Brussels (Belgium), 11 April 2011, 0001 CET – “Today I will...”, an initiative to unite the Parkinson’s disease community, was launched today to coincide with World Parkinson’s Disease Day 2011. Sponsored by UCB, “Today I will...” invites people affected by Parkinson’s disease to inspire each other by sharing their day-to-day motivations and personal commitments, or ‘pledges’.

Parkinson’s disease affects over 6 million people worldwide and is predominantly characterised by difficulties in movements, also known as ‘motor symptoms’, including tremor, stiffness and slowness of movement.^{1,2} People with Parkinson’s also experience debilitating non-motor symptoms, such as sleep, mood and pain problems, which are under-recognised and under-treated, despite contributing to disability, impaired quality of life and shortened life expectancy.³

“World Parkinson’s Disease Day not only reminds us of the day-to-day challenges faced by people living with Parkinson’s disease, but also celebrates their successes. “Today I will...” is a way for people with Parkinson’s, their friends and families, to share these successes and set goals and targets, which no matter how big or small can be a great source of support and inspiration to people with Parkinson’s around the world,” said Knut-Johan Onarheim, President of the European Parkinson’s Disease Association (EPDA).

People who live with Parkinson’s disease and their family and friends are invited to submit short pledges of 25 words or less, with the option of adding artwork or photographs. The pledges can describe any goal the person considers to be motivational; from the everyday, such as going for a walk, writing a letter or spending time with family, to fulfilling a lifetime ambition. The pledges, which can be made online or by mail, are featured on the “Today I will...” section of the Parkinson’s Voices website (www.parkinsons-voices.eu).



Wolfgang from Germany was diagnosed with Parkinson's 17 years ago, before he was 40 years of age. Following his diagnosis, Wolfgang has developed his hobby of cycling and has since crossed over 15 Alpine passes by bicycle, including the highest in Switzerland, Austria and Italy.

"To me, biking in the Alps stands not only for joy, but also for suffering and for never giving up - *pedaling, pedaling, pedaling*. I don't recommend that everyone has to cross the Alps by bicycle, but I'd like to encourage everybody to define their own targets and challenges and discover their own Alps."

"We all have so many potential resources in ourselves, but they are hidden and we have to search for them. It's true that having a life-changing illness can help people find the potential in themselves they'd never known was there. This was certainly true for me."

To further support people with Parkinson's disease and their families, UCB has also launched the Parkinson's Voices YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/ParkinsonsVoices), which features videos of people with the condition, sharing personal stories of how they are responding to everyday challenges and managing symptoms.

"We developed "Today I will..." to provide a dedicated place for the Parkinson's community so they can encourage and inspire each other through sharing their personal goals and achievements," said Dr Lode Dewulf, Chief Medical Affairs Officer, UCB. "This initiative is part of our commitment to providing innovative programmes for people who live with Parkinson's disease and we look forward to watching the "Today I will..." conversation take shape."

NOTES TO EDITORS

About World Parkinson's Disease Day⁴

World Parkinson's Disease Day is marked on April 11 in commemoration of Dr. James Parkinson's birthday (1755 - 1824) who established the disease as a clinical entity. Activities on this day aim to raise public awareness for one of the most common progressive neurological disorders and to show support for people living with the condition.

About 'Today I will...' and making a pledge

"Today I will..." pledges can describe a daily commitment, large or small, anything from going for a walk, writing a letter, to spending time with family members. Pledges can be made once a day, once a week, once a month, or whatever feels right by visiting Parkinson's Voices www.parkinsons-voices.eu, e-mailing todayiwill@parkinsons-voices.eu or by post to: Today I Will, PO Box 4911, London, W1A 1PR. "Today I will..." is open to people with Parkinson's disease, their family members, friends and carers.



References

1. European Parkinson's Disease Association website
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2. European Parkinson's Disease Association website
<http://www.rewritetomorrow.eu.com/pdsymptoms/> [Accessed 27th February 2011]
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4. European Parkinson's Disease Association website
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About UCB

UCB, Brussels, Belgium (www.ucb.com) is a global biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery and development of innovative medicines and solutions to transform the lives of people living with severe diseases of the immune system or of the central nervous system. With more than 8 500 people in about 40 countries, the company generated revenue of EUR 3.2 billion in 2010. UCB is listed on Euronext Brussels (symbol: UCB).

Forward looking statement

This press release contains forward-looking statements based on current plans, estimates and beliefs of management. Such statements are subject to risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results to be materially different from those that may be implied by such forward-looking statements contained in this press release. Important factors that could result in such differences include: changes in general economic, business and competitive conditions, effects of future judicial decisions, changes in regulation, exchange rate fluctuations and hiring and retention of its employees.