

## CELEBRITIES BAND TOGETHER TO FIGHT PARKINSON'S DISEASE

***Founder of ESPN Bill Rasmussen, Legendary Sports Radio Host Dave "The Groz" Grosby, and Grammy® Winning Vocalist Michael "Wanz" Wansley all Pitch in to Support the American Parkinson Disease Association's Northwest Virtual Optimism Walk***

**SEATTLE, WA, MAY 22, 2020** – Life as we know it has taken a pause, but Parkinson's disease (PD) has not. Exciting voices from the media and arts community lend their support for the American Parkinson Disease Association's (APDA) signature fundraiser, the APDA [Northwest Virtual Optimism Walk](#), taking place **Sunday, May 31**. Founder of ESPN Bill Rasmussen, legendary Sports Radio host Dave "The Groz" Grosby, and Grammy award winning vocalist Michael "Wanz" Wansley each bring their unique talents and passion to support the Parkinson's community. The event is free and online registration is open.

Chair of the APDA Northwest Virtual Optimism Walk, and special guest for the event's inspiring online celebration (conducted via Zoom and also available via Facebook streaming) is ESPN founder **Bill Rasmussen**, who in 2019 announced he has been living with PD. Rasmussen lives in the Seattle area and since 2019 has been using his high profile to raise awareness of the disease. "I have always had the impression that Parkinson's is a quiet disease. People don't like to talk about it for some reason," Rasmussen said in a 2019 interview with APDA Chief Scientific Officer Dr. Rebecca Gilbert. "My first impression was that it's an embarrassment for people." Rasmussen is passionate about changing that mentality though. "So my mission at this point is to spread the message – why be embarrassed? Seek help." His attitude is a pitch-perfect companion to APDA's motto: Strength in Optimism, Hope in Progress. Check out the special video message he created for the Walk [here](#).



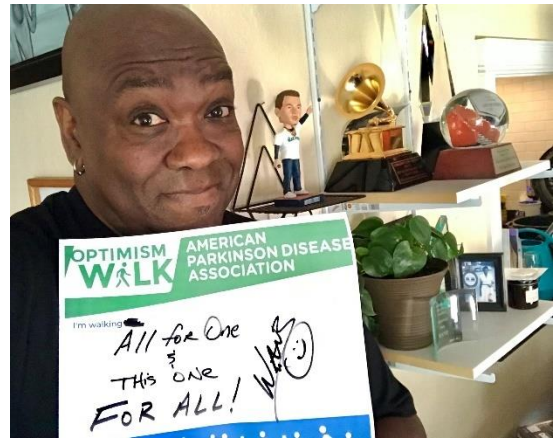
*Bill Rasmussen, founder of ESPN, showing his optimistic attitude in support of the APDA Optimism Walk*



*Seattle sports radio legend "The Groz" will emcee the APDA Northwest Virtual Optimism Walk's online celebration*

Emceeding the APDA Northwest Virtual Optimism Walk is **Dave "The Groz" Grosby**, a familiar voice to Seattle residents. One of the region's biggest sports broadcasters for the past 29 years, Grosby has lived with PD since 2018. At 9am PT on Sunday, May 31, Walk participants will join a special online program hosted by Grosby, who will lead a celebration of the resilience of the Parkinson's community and also announce winners for categories like largest Optimism Walk team and the biggest fundraisers for the event. Grosby also captains his own team for the Virtual Optimism Walk, [Team Groz](#), raising more than \$2,000 so far. APDA is excited for such an important member of the Seattle community to throw his weight behind the Virtual Optimism Walk.

**Michael “Wanz” Wansley** recorded a song promoting the APDA Virtual Optimism Walk, “[APDA Comin at 'Cha \(Strength In Optimism\)](#).” The song communicates an element of APDA’s ethos: that while Parkinson’s disease is a struggle for all living with it, there is an optimistic, rambunctious energy permeating in this community dedicated to supporting one another. Wanz became a household name in the summer of 2012, lending his booming voice to the refrain on Macklemore & Ryan Lewis’ hit song “Thrift Shop.” APDA volunteers Josh Pan and Megha Tummalacherla crafted lyrics and Wanz injected his indelible, flashy personality into the song. Seattle residents may also know him from singing the National Anthem before Seahawks, Sounders FC, or Mariners games.



*Grammy-winning vocalist Wanz lends his voice and song-writing talents to the Optimism Walk*

The virtual event is open to people no matter where they live, with a special invitation to residents in Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Alaska – the region served by the APDA Northwest Chapter. “We are so thankful to Bill Rasmussen, David Grosby and Michael Wansley for lending their support to the APDA Northwest Virtual Optimism Walk,” states Jean Allenbach, Executive Director, APDA Northwest Chapter. “Not only do they bring critical awareness to our fight against Parkinson’s disease, but they each bring their own personal passion for the cause which really helps people understand why this event and the funds raised are so important.”

APDA is the largest grassroots network serving people with PD and their families. The more funds raised, the more people who can be helped, which is why each Optimism Walk is a positive way to take the frustration and challenges of life with PD and turn that into motivation, determination and purpose. Participants share photos and stories using #OptimismWalk, bond over their shared experiences, and revel in the camaraderie that often lasts long after the Walk is over.

To learn more and register for the APDA Northwest Virtual Optimism Walk, visit [www.apdaparkinson.org/Northwest](http://www.apdaparkinson.org/Northwest) or call 206-695-2905.

#### **About the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA)**

The American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) is the largest grassroots network dedicated to fighting Parkinson’s disease (PD) and works tirelessly to help the more than 1 million people in the US with PD live life to the fullest in the face of this chronic, neurological disorder. Founded in 1961, APDA has raised and invested more than \$207 million to provide outstanding patient services and educational programs, elevate public awareness about the disease, and support research designed to unlock the mysteries of PD and ultimately put an end to this disease. To join us in the fight against Parkinson’s disease and to learn more about the support APDA provides nationally through our network of Chapters and Information & Referral (I&R) Centers, as well as our national Research Program and Centers for Advanced Research, please visit us at [www.apdaparkinson.org](http://www.apdaparkinson.org).

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