Why Is Life Ball, the Dazzling HIV Fundraiser, Ending After 26 Years?

Especially when charities still rely on the star-studded Vienna event.

May 16, 2019 By Trent Straube

Life Ball, the spectacular HIV/AIDS fundraiser held annually in Vienna, will end after this year's event in June, BBC reports. The reason, organizers say, is that progress in the fight against AIDS has been so successful that it is "increasingly difficult to find sponsors."

This year's event will mark the conclusion of a 26-year run for the popular Life Ball, which has raised more than $34 million for HIV/AIDS charities in Austria and across the globe. Life Ball 2019 will take place June 8; the theme is "United in Diversity."

"We achieved more than we ever dared hope," said Life Ball founder Gery Keszler in a statement on BBC.com. "I am so eternally grateful. It is now time to bring this project to a fitting conclusion."

He continued: "We have achieved a lot in the fight against AIDS. AIDS has changed from a death sentence to being a chronic disease. The paradox of this success is that the number of allies for AIDS charity projects is decreasing both at home and abroad."

But groups such as Diversity Care Vienna rely on support from Life Ball and could face financial difficulties without that funding.

Life Ball drew over 45,000 revelers each year and was a magnet for big-name celebrities and politicos alike, including Elton John and Bill Clinton.

Last year, POZ covered Life Ball's 25th anniversary; to read the article and peruse the fabulous slideshow, click here.

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