HIV/AIDS on The Celebrity Apprentice

February 21, 2012 By POZ Staff

By Lauren Tuck (Editorial Assistant, POZ)

I've never been a big fan of *The Celebrity Apprentice.* Donald Trump's hair scares me. But this season I'll be tuning in because three celebrities are braving the Trump family wrath to raise money for HIV/AIDS charities: Actor and comedian Arsenio Hall will play on behalf of the Magic Johnson Foundation, Miss Universe 2008 Dayana Mendoza for the Latino Commission on AIDS, and stand-up comic Lisa Lampanelli for Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC). Although I'm fairly unfamiliar with the celebs I'll be rooting for (I was learning how to walk when *The Arsenio Hall Show* was taking over late-night television), I am fond of their foundations.

Hall has famously supported his NBA Hall of Fame friend Magic Johnson throughout the years by

costarring in a controversial sex-ed videotape titled *Time Out--The Truth About HIV, AIDS and You*, and serving on the Magic Johnson Foundation board of directors. Hall continues his charitable support with this stint on *Apprentice.* But Arsenio says he's not just there just to raise money. He admits: "My cousin died of AIDS, and her death reminded me we cannot stop." Arsenio's honesty and hilarity may be hard to beat.
According to her introduction, Lampanelli is "the funniest woman in America and the Queen of Mean." I only know the loud-mouthed laugh factory from her famous friendship with *Bethenny Ever After* star Bethenny Frankel and the disturbingly forthright conversation they had about Lisa's husband, Jimmy Big Balls, having, well, big balls. If her choice in hubby wasn't enough indication that she's a fighter, she also has fellow contestant Victoria Gotti in her corner. Gotti says Lampanelli is in this to win this and that she won't take any prisoners (I'll take her word for it--mostly because I'm scared to contradict any word the daughter of Mafia boss John Gotti has to say). GMHC is lucky to have Lisa championing the cause.

In 2008, Dayana Mendoza became the national spokesperson for the Latino Commission on AIDS when she was crowned Miss Universe. Although the Venezuelan native's English is a bit shaky, her gorgeous beauty more than makes up for any grammatical blunders she may make along the way. Also, she obviously has Trump on her good side. I'm still cringing thinking of the awkward conversation they had in the boardroom:

Trump: "Is your boyfriend rich?"
Miss Universe: "No, he's not rich. But he has a big heart."
Trump: "He's got no chance with you. I guarantee it. Does he have an airplane? No? He's finished.

"This week all three of our HIV/AIDS supporters made it through the so-called sandwich challenge. Trump split the competitors into Women (Team Forte) versus Men (Team Unanimous). Each team was given a Metro Restaurant to transform into its own. The competitors then had to lure in lunch-goers and convince them to spend exorbitant amounts of money on second-rate sandwiches made by B-list celebrities.

It looked like Team Forte had this one in the bag with costly contributions from friends such as Carol Alt, a longtime supporter of amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research; reggae rocker Wyclef Jean who gave an impromptu performance at the Metro Celebrity Club; Bravo TV top honcho Andy Cohen; and hip-hop mogul, AIDS advocate and vegan Russell Simmons.

The men won the first round by raising $367,120. All of the money raised throughout the day, including the women's $126,962, went to mustachioed Paul Teutul Sr.'s charity, the Make-a-Wish Foundation. Teutul, who owns the Orange County Choppers (a motorcycle manufacturer) and stars on Discovery Channel reality series *American Chopper*, may have taken this round, but Hall, Lampanelli and Mendoza are fierce competitors. I have no doubt their foundations will make some dough.

Tune in 9 PM Eastern time each Sunday to see Team HIV take on 15 other celebrities--make that 14, as former supermodel Cheryl Teigs was fired--in an ego-filled fight for the charities of their choice.

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