

EPISODE 191**[INTRODUCTION]**

[0:00:02.6] PF: Welcome to Episode 191 of Live Happy Now. This is your host, Paula Felps, thanking you for joining us. March is going to be here before we know it and that means it's time to start thinking about celebrating one of our favorite days. Now, we're not talking about St. Patrick's Day even though we have nothing against Leprechauns. But what we want to talk about today is the International Day of Happiness.

Since 2012, March 20th has been celebrated as the International Day of Happiness and Live Happy has been hosting events around the world for the past six years. Through our Happy Acts Campaign and our signature orange happiness walls, we've worked to spread the message about the International Day of Happiness and to encourage people to keep that happiness going 365 days a year.

This week, Live Happy Marketing Manager, Britney Chan, and Editor, Chris Libby, join us to talk about what's being planned for this year's celebration and how you can be a part of it.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:54.4] PF: Well, Chis and Britney, thank you for coming in to talk to us a little bit about Happy Acts. Welcome, I think this is, Britney, this is your debut in the studio.

[0:01:02.0] BC: It is. I'm a little nervous so bear with me but we'll see how I do.

[0:01:07.3] PF: Oh you're going to be great. First of all, this is a topic that you of all people should be here to talk about with us because you're going to tell us about the happy acts campaign and I know this is something we do every year but now you guys are really – we're getting it rolling earlier. Can you, first of all, explain what Happy Acts is all about?

[0:01:26.2] CL: Yeah, I could do that. I'm not Britney, I'm Chris. Yeah, but every year at live happy, we have this campaign to raise awareness for acts of kindness that's called #happyacts. On the International Day of Happiness, we like to host these, we call them happiness walls. It's

a destination where people can come by and fill out a little note card and explain how they share happiness. It's kind of grown in the last five or six years?

[0:01:54.7] BC: Five years.

[0:01:56.5] CL: It's gone from a few walls to over 700 walls all over the world. I mean, it's happening in Mexico, it's happening in Australia, it's happening in India and all over the country. We're really proud of it mainly because it gets people thinking about happiness and that's what we're trying to do, just raise awareness about global happiness.

[0:02:16.2] PF: You said that the purpose of it is to raise awareness about happiness, can you explain what a happiness wall is?

[0:02:21.7] CL: Yeah, well, Britney will be able to explain specifically but just in the past, we've had these walls, they're just kind of – they're big and they're orange and you come and see them. It's just like a pop up or whatever and made of canvas but it's supposed to look like a wall. So we have these note cards and they say, "I will share happiness by ____" and then the person fills it out and they go post it on the wall.

Then, after, as the day goes on, the wall fills up and people just gaze at it and look at it and they just walk away smiling. It's a pretty amazing thing.

[0:02:55.5] PF: It's also more than just the wall, it stands to build a lot of activity around it. People, I know we didn't want a Nashville last year and the goat yoga people came out and that was amazing but there was one baby goat that kept tearing the cards off the wall. Other than that, it was really cool and I know Chris, you guys have done some really cool things in Dallas where I think you had clowns and act like that. It becomes more than just this wall of standing there with great inspiring messages.

[0:03:24.5] CL: It does, it becomes a whole event. Britney has been great at putting the lineup together and working with the host who hosts the wall and getting great — last year we added some amazing musical acts from kids and they were just phenomenal and they made the whole day so much better and drew people in and then once they saw it, right Britney? Didn't it feel

like that event was one of our best? It becomes a whole day full of events and just people are feeling good about being happy.

[0:03:55.4] PF: Now Britney, I guess these walls don't appear on their own, so they need a little human help. How do you go about finding the people who are going to host them and getting the ball rolling for that?

[0:04:04.7] BC: Actually, we do reach out to our Live Happy audience but they're really good at activating with their own network and getting their friends and family members to join in and do this as well. Really, it's our audience that helps like spread the message so they've been really great in helping us get to our goal and definitely they'll be helping us to reach our new goal this year.

[0:04:28.1] PF: So who does it? I know you've done schools, who are the different people or organizations that can take this on?

[0:04:35.6] BC: I mean, it's anyone and everyone. I mean, you know, just moms that are at home, you know, moms who are doing it at their kid's schools, it's dads who just want to do it with the family. I mean, it's a whole family affair sometimes. Really, it's anyone can do it at any place.

[0:04:50.7] CL: If you go to happyacts.org, you can find all kinds of information and how to get started with that, how to get your wall. But yeah, last year, because we had so many and we had so many different, it's anybody who is interested in spreading happiness, that's generally who and if you're following us then we're like minded. So, you know, those are the type of people who are going to be going out there and doing that.

[0:05:14.3] PF: You also have different kinds of walls, you have kits so people don't have to be in the garage building this thing from scratch. Can you talk about the different kinds of walls and what they might look like?

[0:05:23.3] BC: Yeah, so actually, I think what's really important to know about creating a happiness wall is how easy it is to do. You honestly can use whatever is readily accessible, whether it's, you know, a chalk board that you might have in your kid's play room or a bulletin

board that is at a school. You know, if you wanted to, you could go to a local craft store or really get creative with it.

Actually, you know, over the years, a lot of families have said that they have created these walls with their families. They actually do it in their garage and they sometimes they go all out but sometimes they keep it simple. I think it's really great that you can do it as a family and it's a fun activity and the kids love it. You know, I think that's great.

We do also offer three different wall kits that are available on our Live Happy store and it's super easy, you just go to store.livehappy.com and they range anywhere from a basic kit to a premium kit but they are all very similar in which they come with very simple and easy to follow instructions. They have, like Chris mentioned, they have wall cards where you can write how you're going to share happiness.

They also come with these fun purple and orange balloons, which make for a really pretty event. It really kind of spruces up your wall. Also, there's these really nice bracelets where it kind of has our tag line on there, where it says "Make the world a happier place". Anyone that comes to your wall that writes how they share happiness, you can kind of – you can just give that to them and they can go and learn more about Live Happy.

[0:06:59.5] PF: Cool, and we've been doing this for a while so we've changed some things through the years. What are some of the things that are different this year that our hosts might need to know about?

[0:07:08.6] BC: Yeah, actually, the main thing that we have is actually new to our stores. This year, we created just a standard sized, happiness wall poster that you can literally put up anywhere. You can put it up at your home office, you can have it you know, in your kid's play room, you can take it to your children's school, you can even bring it to your own office. It's something that you can write directly on so it just makes it that much easier to do a wall this year. I think that's great where it's more accessible to people.

[0:07:39.1] PF: It also means that you don't have to say you're busy but you want to participate, you don't have to go through a whole ordeal. You know, not that it's an ordeal.

[0:07:49.6] BC: It's actually really fun, but yeah.

[0:07:52.1] PF: It is a lot of fun. We've all been involved in helping them host them and putting them up and it is a blast. But if you're pressed for time or if you just don't have the bandwidth to take it on, this means that you can do it anywhere and you can kind of spread joy in your break room or wherever it is that you need to do it.

[0:08:06.9] BC: Yup, that's exactly why we created it.

[0:08:10.0] PF: So where all can people host a wall? Where are some of the places that are most common that they're going to do this and have an event around it?

[0:08:17.2] BC: Really, you know, like I mentioned before, it can be anywhere. It can be at your children's school. We do it actually here at the office in various different ways. We have big walls, we have small walls, we even have small printable ones that we do right at our desks. You can do it at a local business. We've seen people in the past do it at coffee shops or ice cream parlors. Or you know, people that really want to go big, they can do it as really big public spaces like a local mall or you can do it at a park, we've seen an airport.

We've actually had one that was done, I believe it was at the Atlanta airport and so it's really just any place where you'll have some foot traffic, some people that can walk by and write how they're going to share happiness. You know, I think it's just like a really engaging way to spread happiness and it can be super fun because a lot of the times, these wall hosts, they have like Chris was saying, they have musical acts and they have face painting and they have balloon animals so they really just try to make a whole event out of it. It's just really fun and engaging to spread happiness that way.

[0:09:19.1] PF: One thing that I've seen is business, it's kind of easy to get businesses involved in it and you know, if you just say, "Hey, I'm doing this happiness wall," and the first thing is, "What's a happiness wall?" And then once you explain it, they're like here, we could do this. I've seen that they're pretty willing to get involved and maybe give some things away or support it in other ways. I think that's really telling.

[0:09:42.6] BC: Yeah, actually, a lot of the time, when I reach out to wall hosts, you know, helping them set up walls, I do recommend that they go to, let's say, a local pizza shop or any type of vendor that you think could donate, you know, supplies for — or water or things like that for your volunteers. Whether you go to craft store and they're willing to donate some crayons or markers so that kids can be there and draw and have fun.

So it's really great to see the community come together, you know, specifically for this day. But I mean, just in general, I think, actually a lot of the wall host, they not only host on the International Day of Happiness but they go on to host on other days because these businesses, these offices, these malls and parks, they want to keep doing it, which is amazing.

[0:10:25.3] CL: If I can jump in real quick, it really is a community event. It's about bringing people together and at the end of the day, when you're done with the event, you can really tell that that's what you've been doing all day.

[0:10:36.2] PF: What's cool is everybody's smiling. I've been to ones that were rained out and people are still smiling. This is our sixth year of doing the happiness walls for the International Day of Happiness and we've seen it grown. What are you expecting for 2019?

[0:10:53.7] BC: You know, it's actually really crazy to think about it. You know, six years when we started, we first had, what, 30 walls? We've grown so much since then. You know, as Chris mentioned, this year we had a goal of hitting 500 walls and we well surpassed that. We did exactly 712 so that's, you know, amazing.

This year, we are really going out there and we're looking to do a record breaking goal of 1,500 happiness walls around the world. So we really need everyone's —

[0:11:24.3] PF: That's insane!

[0:11:26.7] BC: Yeah, we really need everyone's help to achieve this goal and do a happiness wall, big or small. We're really excited about this year and you know, really wanting to reach that goal.

[0:11:36.7] CL: It's very important that if you decide to do a wall, that you register the wall on happyacts.org so we can count it. It doesn't matter if you do your own wall or you buy – you get a kit from us, register your wall, let us know what you're doing, let us know on social media what you're doing and that way, you can help us reach our goal.

[0:11:55.3] PF: This is all built around the International Day of Happiness which is March 20th. I believe that's a Wednesday this year, correct?

[0:12:02.9] CL: I don't know.

[0:12:04.3] PF: Let's just say that. I believe that's a Wednesday and if people want to do it on a weekend, before or after, can they do that? Or are there any hard and fast rules about when they have to do it?

[0:12:18.2] BC: No, actually, we just recommend for wall hosts to do their walls whenever their schedule allows. We do prefer to do it the weekend before the International Day of Happiness so it kind of builds up and leads up to the day. But honestly, it can be everyday of that month, it can be before, it can be after. But for Live Happy personally, we're going to be doing it really celebrating the weekend before.

[0:12:41.2] PF: You do a lot of things with the buildup to International Day of Happiness as well in terms of having a whole calendar of happy acts and things that they can listen to, read, think about. So there's a lot of support around that time from your department, correct?

[0:12:57.0] CL: Yeah, like we said. If you go to happyacts.org, there's all kinds of information and instructions, stuff that you can talk about at your wall if you decide to host a wall. All kinds of information, of course, livehappy.com you always have wonderful information there too.

But yeah, what ends up happening is people enjoy this so much that they keep doing it throughout the year. That's our main goal for awareness is to keep it going all year long. One day a year is great, but 365 days a year of happiness is even better.

[0:13:27.8] BC: It is.

[0:13:28.7] PF: It's like having Christmas every day.

[0:13:31.5] BC: Exactly.

[0:13:33.0] PF: Only, it's a lot more affordable.

[0:13:36.3] CL: Yeah, no kidding.

[0:13:37.5] PF: Well this is wonderful. We want everyone to go to happyacts.org and they'll be able to sign up there and then we're also going to have a lot of stuff at livehappynow.com where they can go and click on some links, make it really easy to find what they're looking for.

[0:13:51.4] BC: Yup.

[0:13:52.0] PF: Well, Chris and Britney, thank you for coming in. I truly could not have done this without you. Great information, I really appreciate everything that you were able to share with us today.

[0:14:02.2] BC: Definitely, thank you for having us.

[0:14:03.7] CL: Thank you.

[0:14:04.8] PF: All right, we will probably talk about right before International Day of Happiness and remind everybody what's going on.

[0:14:11.0] CL: Perfect.

[0:14:11.4] BC: Yup, sounds good.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:14:16.8] PF: That was Live Happy's own Britney Chan and Chris Libby. Telling us more about this year's International Day of Happiness. If you'd like to participate in this year's event,

visit livehappynow.com and we'll give you links to help you learn more. Sign up and get whatever it is you need to help make your celebration a success.

In case you haven't heard, Live Happy Now has joined the Pandora Podcast Network so you can find us on the Pandora mobile app for Apple and Android phones. You can still find us on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your favorite podcast. Just search for Live Happy Now to subscribe. That is all we have time for today so please join us back here again next week for a brand new episode.

Until then, this is Paula Felps, reminding you to make everyday a happy one.

[END]