

= Telethon (Parks and Recreation) =

" Telethon " is the 22nd episode of the second season of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation , and the 28th overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on May 6 , 2010 . In the episode , Leslie volunteers to host a charity telethon and is given the unappealing 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. shift .

The episode was directed by Troy Miller and written by Amy Poehler , who stars as the protagonist Leslie Knope , her first script for the series . " Telethon " featured a guest appearance by retired basketball player Detlef Schrempf , as well as several actors who had previously appeared in Parks and Recreation , including Mo Collins and Jay Jackson .

The episode received generally positive reviews and , according to Nielsen Media Research , was seen by 4 @. @ 03 million household viewers , roughly the same as the previous week 's episode , " 94 Meetings " .

= = Plot = =

Leslie (Amy Poehler) has volunteered to work on the 24 @-@ hour " Pawnee Cares " diabetes telethon and orders everyone in the office to work the phones for multiple shifts . Tom (Aziz Ansari) is assigned to pick up retired basketball player Detlef Schrempf from the airport , the special guest for the telethon . Leslie is excited because she has been allowed to program her own four @-@ hour block , but her co @-@ workers are upset to learn it runs from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. Additionally , she has already been up for 24 hours creating T @-@ shirts for her staff to wear for the telethon .

During lunch , Mark (Paul Schneider) tells Leslie that he is going to propose to Ann (Rashida Jones) . Ann suggests that Leslie get some sleep , but she plans on consuming Sweetums bars to stay awake for another 24 hours . As the telethon begins , Leslie is already exhausted and is falling asleep . With time to kill , Tom brings Detlef to the Snakehole Lounge , but the owner , Freddy (Andy Milder) , refuses to let him go because Detlef is bringing a lot of business , delaying Leslie 's big headliner . Andy 's (Chris Pratt) band , Mouse Rat , is asked to replace Detlef , but when they complete all of their songs , Leslie has nothing else to put on the air . Ron (Nick Offerman) volunteers to demonstrate how to cane a chair , but his presentation is so boring that the telethon actually starts to lose money .

Desperate for something to put on , Leslie tells Mark that he should propose to Ann in front of the camera and he agrees . Not long after , however , Ann confides in Leslie that she wants to break up with Mark , citing that he is simply not the one . Meanwhile , April (Aubrey Plaza) tries to make Andy jealous by flirting with someone over the phone , but it backfires when it turns out to be Joe (Kirk Fox) from the Pawnee sewer department . Andy is forced to kick Joe out of the studio when he actually arrives to bring April to his van .

The telethon 's talent pool becomes so low that Leslie is forced to flip a coin in front of the camera and talk about her favorite episodes of Friends . Jerry (Jim O 'Heir) is allowed to play the piano , but everyone dismisses his skilled playing as a racket . Mark finally returns to propose and walks on the set with the ring , but Leslie stops him by mooning the camera . Detlef Schrempf and Tom finally arrive at the end of Leslie 's programming block . Detlef presents a check for \$ 5 @, @ 000 , allowing the telethon to bypass its \$ 20 @, @ 000 mark . Despite being awake for two days straight , Leslie goes to Ann 's house so they could talk about Mark . She then promptly falls asleep on Ann 's couch for 22 hours .

= = Production = =

" Telethon " was directed by Troy Miller and written by Amy Poehler , who stars as Parks and Recreation protagonist Leslie Knope . It was the first episode she had written for the show . Early in the series , Poehler had expressed to Parks co @-@ creator Michael Schur that she wanted to write an episode , but they agreed she would wait for a filming hiatus before doing so . Poehler said the scenes in which Leslie uses sugar rushes to re @-@ energize herself at night , only to crash later ,

was reminiscent of some of her own all @-@ night experiences working on the sketch comedy series Saturday Night Live .

" Telethon " featured a guest appearance by Detlef Schrempf , a retired basketball player who played for the Indiana Pacers ; Parks and Recreation is set in Indiana . Prior to filming the episode , Schrempf 's acting skills had been limited to appearances on the American comedy series Married ... with Children and the German soap opera Gute Zeiten , schlechte Zeiten . Schur said of his performance , " For a guy who literally never acted before in his life , he was really funny . " Aziz Ansari joked about the performance , " We 're going to write a spin @-@ off for him called That 's So Detlef , so look forward to that . " " Telethon " also featured guest appearances by several actors who had appeared in previous episodes , including Mo Collins as Pawnee Today television host Joan Callamezzo and Jay Jackson as Pawnee television news reporter Perd Hapley . John Balma also made a guest appearance as Barney , a local teacher who gave the audience an extremely boring accounting presentation , just as he did in " Leslie 's House " .

In addition to the performances , " Telethon " included several references to previous episodes . During the telethon , Andy and his band perform a song called " Sex Hair " . This is a reference to " Galentine 's Day " , in which he claims to have written a song about how one can tell whether someone had sex because their hair is matted . A music video for the song was made available on the official NBC.com Parks and Recreation website shortly after the episode was broadcast . Also in " Telethon , " the television event is sponsored by the candy manufacturer Sweetums , and Leslie constantly eats their Nutri @-@ Yum bars in order to stay awake . Both the company and candy bars were prominently featured by " Sweetums " , where Leslie and Ann fought to prevent the unhealthy snacks from being sold in Pawnee parks . In other scenes , Tom takes Detlef Schrempf to the Snakehole Lounge , a nightclub where Tom previously purchased shares in the episode " Woman of the Year " .

On July 8 , 2010 , Amy Poehler was nominated for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series for her overall work in the second season , and her performance in " Telethon " was the episode submitted for consideration . The award ultimately went to Edie Falco for her performance in the Showtime comedy series Nurse Jackie .

= = Cultural references = =

Tom describes his clothing as " Brooks Brothers Boys " , the children @-@ size line from the men 's clothier chain Brooks Brothers . While intoxicated , Tom starts to sing music by rapper Soulja Boy Tell ' Em . In order to stall for time during the telethon , Leslie starts talking about her favorite episodes of Friends , a sitcom that previously aired on NBC . She specifically refers to the fourth season episode " The One with Chandler in a Box " , in which Monica Geller prepares a Thanksgiving dinner , and Chandler Bing agrees to spend the holiday in a box as punishment for kissing Joey Tribbiani 's girlfriend . Donna mentions that her brother is in Liberia ; in real life , Retta 's aunt is the president of Liberia .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Telethon " was seen by an estimated 4 @.@ 03 million household viewers , according to Nielsen Media Research . It received a 2 @.@ 8 rating / 5 share among overall viewers , and a 2 @.@ 0 rating / 7 share among viewers between ages 18 and 49 . This rating was about even from the previous episode , " 94 Meetings " . " Telethon " was outperformed in the 8 : 30 p.m. timeslot by the CBS reality series Survivor : Heroes vs. Villains and the Fox crime drama Bones , but Parks and Recreation outperformed the CW Network supernatural fantasy series The Vampire Diaries and the ABC science @-@ fiction drama FlashForward .

" Telethon " received generally positive reviews . Matt Fowler of IGN praised the many inside jokes and character quirks featured in the episode . He said although The Office (another comedy series by Parks and Recreation co @-@ creator Greg Daniels) is limited mainly to one setting , " Telethon " demonstrates how the Parks characters can be placed into a myriad of settings and situations .

Entertainment Weekly writer Margaret Lyons said , " If that wasn't the best episode of Parks and Recreation yet , it's at least top five . " Lyons said every character and subplot was in strong form except for Ann and Mark , which she said has consistently been the show's " Achilles ' heel " , and that this episode demonstrated how poorly it fit with the other elements of the series . Steve Heisler of The A.V. Club called the episode " one of the greats " , claiming it served as a spotlight of the strong characters and subplot developed throughout the second season . Heisler also said the episode contained some of the season's strongest one -liners . New York magazine writer Steve Kandell said although " Telethon " advanced the eventual break up of Mark and Ann , the episode basically served as an excuse " to showcase Amy Poehler in varying stages of exhaustion related delirium " .

= = DVD release = =

" Telethon " , along with the other 23 second season episodes of Parks and Recreation , was released on a four disc DVD set in the United States on November 30 , 2010 . The DVD included deleted scenes for each episode .