The POZ 100 J-K

November 14, 2016

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Art Jackson

HIV Positive

Fayetteville, North Carolina

Art JacksonJillian Clark

Art is such a powerful voice for folks living with HIV that there's an award named after him: The Art Jackson Client Voice: Advocacy Award. A community programmer and educator at Community Health Interventions and Sickle Cell Agency Inc. (CHISCA), Art developed a Prevention for Positives program, works with numerous advocacy groups—including those for gay men and tobacco users—and is an HIV tester and counselor. Art also hosts a spoken-word night and has been known to dress as a giant "Mister Safety" condom to promote awareness. And that's just the tip of all that he does in the community to combat HIV/AIDS.

Stacy Jennings

HIV Positive

Columbia, South Carolina

Stacy JenningsCourtesy of Stacy Jennings

Stacy strives to make a difference wherever she goes. She’s an advocate with the Positive Advocacy Committee, which works to reduce stigma and advocates for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. She’s also part of a reproductive workgroup focusing on the elimination of mother-to-child transmission and works to help those who want to have children in spite of their HIV status. She’s a member of P.O.S.I.T.I.V.E. Voices and the South Carolina chapter of the Positive Women’s Network–USA. Stacy was included in the 2015 POZ 100 honoring long-term survivors and is proud to celebrate the work being done in the South to fight HIV/AIDS.

Darrin Johnson

HIV Negative

Charlotte, North Carolina

Darrin JohnsonCourtesy of Darrin Johnson

Currently finishing his doctorate in health services research, Darrin does more than study HIV prevention—he puts that know-how to real-life use. He works as a prevention coordinator at PowerHouse Project, a drop-in safe space that primarily serves black men and women of various ages and all sexual orientations, and he's the project director of the Online Safe Space Initiative, a CDC-funded study under the Minority AIDS Research Initiative at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte. In addition to serving on several HIV planning groups throughout the state, Darrin is active in the house and ball community—where he's known as Carolina Father Hypnotic Blahnik, of the House of Blahnik. With book smarts and street smarts, this advocate knows how to work it!

Kecia Johnson

HIV Positive

Houston, Texas

Kecia JohnsonCourtesy of Kecia Johnson

Billed as an “author, international speaker, AIDS educator and truth coach,” Kecia has been an unstoppable advocate since she was diagnosed with AIDS in 2006—at the time, she was hospitalized with severe pneumonia, unaware that she had HIV. A seasoned talent agent in the entertainment industry, Kecia turned her skills toward a new cause. She also penned a memoir, Dying to Be a D.I.V.A. (as in “Doing It Victoriously Alone”). Since learning that HIV rates in Atlanta rival those in third world countries, she’s now poised to open the Keisha Kares Resource Center

and Mobile Unit in that city; it’ll be a safe space for those dealing with HIV, domestic violence and sex trafficking.

Monica Johnson

HIV Positive

Columbia, Louisiana

Monica JohnsonCourtesy of Monica Johnson

Monica has been fighting HIV stigma since her own diagnosis more than 30 years ago. As the founder and CEO of HEROES (Helping Everyone Receive Ongoing Effective Support), she is a pioneer of HIV education and prevention in her corner of the state of Louisiana. She serves on the board of NMAC and was formerly a member of Louisiana’s Commission on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis.

But one of her greatest accomplishments is the annual DREAM weekend retreat she organizes every year on a shoestring budget. It brings together people living with HIV from all over the South—often from places where services may be miles and hours away—for an exchange of skills and emotional and spiritual support.

Marxavian Jones

HIV Positive

Atlanta, Georgia

Marxavian JonesCourtesy of Marxavian Jones

Marxavian is a research interviewer for Emory School of Public Health, where he leads a study that

aims to assess the impact of social capital on HIV care engagement. He was previously the engagement coordinator at the National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities (NAESM), which addresses the health and wellness issues faced by gay black men. Last year, Marxavian was an African-American HIV University Fellow at the Black AIDS Institute in Los Angeles; now, he's working with other black gay men living with HIV to create the intervention "For Us and By Us." He uses his social media platform to raise public consciousness about stigma, homophobia and other social injustice issues that impact HIV incidence in the black community. With his approachable demeanor and knowledge of science and research, he's able to make complicated or taboo topics accessible to everyone.

Shyronn Jones

HIV Positive

Atlanta, Georgia

Shyronn JonesCourtesy of Shyronn Jones

Lots of folks feel uncomfortable talking about HIV—even more so in the Bible Belt—but Shyronn is finding ways to break through and tackle stigma. She's a spokesperson for the Positive Women's Network–USA and a representative for the Strategic Communications Team and several other advisory boards and committees. A believer in intersectionality, she's also involved in Black Lives Matter and Fight for $15 (to raise the minimum wage) because she knows racism, poverty and HIV are intertwined. Shyronn is the founder of iKnowAwareness and facilitates several HIV advocacy groups on Facebook. She also participates in street outreach by distributing safer-sex kits at rallies, community walks and events.

Carmen Julious

HIV Negative

Columbia, South Carolina

Carmen JuliousCourtesy of Carmen Julious

Carmen has been working closely with South Carolinians living with HIV since 1987. She started out as a case manager at a local health clinic and then decided to further her skills by obtaining a degree in social work. In 1995, Carmen began working as a social worker for Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services and became the executive director a few years later. For two decades, she has led the statewide agency with great insight and competency, steering it through many medical and scientific changes in a politically conservative and fiscally challenging state. As a former social worker, Carmen keeps her focus on the participation and rights of all persons living with HIV. She is committed to ensuring that services and advocacy are equally available to everyone. Her perseverance and dedication have been described as “superhuman.”

Deborah Kahal

HIV Negative

Wilmington, Delaware

Deborah KahalCourtesy of Deborah Kahal

Deborah, a medical doctor with a master’s degree in public health, began her medical career in 2009 and focused her studies on internal medicine and infectious diseases. Last year, the Tulane University graduate was hired to work at the Christiana Health Care Health System in Wilmington, where she’s an HIV program physician who works directly with people living with the virus. She has also conducted HIV research and presented lectures about HIV at universities and organizations in the United States. But what makes Deborah special is the unparalleled way she

puts her patients' fears at ease. Coupled with her expertise in HIV pathogenesis, antiretroviral therapy and other issues related to HIV and hepatitis C, it's clear Deborah puts the "care" into HIV care and treatment.

Alleen King-Carter

HIV Positive

Shreveport, Louisiana

Alleen King CarterCourtesy of Alleen King Carter

Alleen is one tough lady. Diagnosed with HIV in 2008, she's a survivor of domestic violence and is in remission for cervical and uterine cancer. Instead of letting adversity get her down, this married

mother of three and grandmother of one looks at life’s obstacles as learning experiences and is committed to living life with HIV to the fullest. Alleen previously worked for The Philadelphia Center in Shreveport, providing HIV prevention, testing and counseling. After budget cuts resulted in layoffs, she and two other HIV-positive divas joined forces and created the Living in 3-D Project in order to share their stories and provide HIV education and awareness. Her mission is to serve and to end HIV stigma.

Tammy Kinney

HIV Positive

Winder, Georgia

Tammy KinneyCourtesy of Tammy Kinney

Tammy has been an HIV advocate for as long as she's been positive: nearly 30 years. She started volunteering at AIDS Survival Project and SisterLove, Inc. and is now the cochair of the Georgia chapter of Positive Women's Network–USA. In 2009, she was honored by SisterLove with a 2020 Leading Women's Society Award. A focus of her work is eliminating HIV/AIDS stigma in rural places like her hometown in order to make it easier for people to get and stay on treatment. Not one to shy away from sharing her truth to help others, she was featured in the short documentary Everyone Has a Story, in which she discussed her own struggles with adherence. She facilitates The Productive Living Group with AIDS Athens and has worked with her local church to do outreach. She also organizes the annual Information + Transformation = Empowerment conference with the group Rural Women in Action.

Daron Kirven

HIV Negative

Dallas, Texas

Daron KirvenCourtesy of Daron Kirven

Daron has been working at AIDS Arms, an HIV services provider in Dallas, since 1993. As the current director of the organization’s Free World Bound program, Daron specifically focuses on reaching out to HIV-positive people who are soon to be released from prison into the community. Through strategic partnerships with Texas’s criminal justice system, Daron helps connect former inmates to HIV services, treatment and programs that help reintegrate them into society. Daron also works in HIV prevention, reaching out to previously incarcerated people at risk of HIV and providing them with testing, condoms and safer-sex education. Daron’s work serving some of the most marginalized communities affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic—especially in the Deep South—may be tough, but he does it all with the grace, efficiency and passion to truly make a difference.

Janet Kitchen

HIV Positive

Davenport, Florida

Janet KitchenBryan Regan

When Janet was diagnosed with HIV in 2005 in a small, rural town in Florida, there were few local resources available. But she soon fixed that. In 2010, she founded Positively-U, a nonprofit dedicated to providing a broad range of prevention, education, support and outreach services to people affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2012, Janet helped organize more than 350 advocates and people living with HIV from the state of Florida to travel to Washington, DC, for the March on Washington during the International AIDS Conference. She’s a member of the Positive Women’s Network–USA

and Common Threads, a network of female activists and micro-entrepreneurs. Currently a consultant with the AIDS Healthcare Foundation and the University of South Florida Ryan White Part D program, Janet is doing her best to break down barriers to care.

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