The POZ 100: D-G

November 13, 2017

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Karina Danvers

HIV Positive

New Haven, Connecticut

Karina Danvers

For more than 20 years, Karina has been the face of the New England AIDS Education Training Center, where she helps teach HIV providers, consumers and nonclinical personnel the ins and outs of modern HIV treatment and prevention. As an immigrant from Chile, a survivor of the epidemic and the widow of a man who died of AIDS-related complications, she uses her own story to make the learning experience more real to her students. She also shares her experiences with HIV while training track residents at Yale University and is well known for both her humor and originality in her accounts of living with the virus. In addition to her HIV advocacy, Karina speaks out and volunteers for people struggling with cardiovascular disease, of which she is also a survivor.

Sharon DeCuir

HIV Positive

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Sharon DeCuirJonathan Timmes

Sharon is the vice chair of PWN-USA, the national advocacy group that aims to get HIV-positive women more involved in public policy and decision-making. For the past 12 years, she has worked with Baton Rouge's HIV/AIDS Alliance Region Two (HAART). She became involved with HAART as a volunteer and now serves as a national leadership and advocacy coordinator. Both her professional and advocacy work center around helping fellow HIV-positive women shed the stigma she once felt and to find their inner strength to speak out about living with the virus. Her activism résumé also includes work with the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network, the Black Treatment Advocates Network and the Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative.

Pamela Denzer

HIV Negative

New York, New York

Pamela Denzer

Pamela puts her legal expertise to work by overseeing various aspects of Immigration Equality's client programs, including managing its direct legal services program. She represents LGBTQ and HIV-positive asylum seekers and helps binational couples and transgender clients navigate U.S. immigration laws that discriminate against LGBTQ and HIV-positive immigrants and their families. She previously worked as a law clerk for Housing Works (challenging the denial of public assistance, Medicaid and housing), the HIV Law Project (representing HIV-positive asylum seekers) and Amnesty International (monitoring the treatment of immigrants at detention centers). Through

Safe Horizons, she has helped domestic violence survivors and crime victims. And via the Immigration Equality Action Fund, she has lobbied elected officials, including members of Congress, on behalf of LGBTQ and HIV-positive immigrants. Her love, intelligence and support know no borders.

Alicia Diggs

HIV Positive

Greensboro, North Carolina

Alicia Diggs

Proud to be a voice for the voiceless, Alicia tells her story and raises awareness via local radio,

newspapers and magazines, online videos and even as part of BET's "Rap It Up" campaign. As a medical case manager at Positive Wellness Alliance in Lexington, she knows the needs of the local HIV community. She's a public speaker, a doctoral candidate and a member of SisterLove's 2020 Leading Women's Society, the Lambda Tau Upsilon Christian Sorority, PWN-USA and the North Carolina AIDS Action Network (NCAAN)—oh, and she's a single mother of two. This hardworking Pennsylvania native even penned a memoir: Standing on My Healing: From Tainted to Chosen.

Sharen Duke

HIV Negative

New York, New York

Sharen Duke

Sharen is the founding executive director and CEO of The Alliance for Positive Change (formerly the AIDS Service Center NYC). For 27 years, she's been at the forefront of the HIV epidemic, working to ensure that New Yorkers living with and at risk for HIV have access to testing, treatment and care. She's also responsible for implementing pioneering HIV peer education programs and forging partnerships with the city's most respected hospitals to secure the highest level of care for her clients. A visionary trailblazer and dedicated advocate, Sharen has served on many different HIV groups including New York Governor Cuomo's Ending the Epidemic Task Force.

Michele Durham

HIV Negative

San Antonio, Texas

Michele Durham

Michele first got involved in the national HIV/AIDS fight 24 years ago, when her brother was diagnosed with the virus. After he died, the Texas-based ally became driven to help end the epidemic any way she could, a mission that eventually led her to her current post as the executive director of BEAT AIDS—the largest provider of HIV prevention services in San Antonio. Michele's work centers on breaking down the many barriers HIV-positive people face in receiving testing, treatment and health care. In addition to helping the ASO provide testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI), counseling services and more, the Southern advocate is planning to open up a new HIV clinic in order to help further alleviate disparities in her community.

Marci Egel

HIV Positive

Middle Island, New York

Marci Engel

Marci is an outreach specialist at Thursday's Child, a Long Island–based nonprofit devoted to developing, coordinating and providing services for people living with HIV. She is well known for her on-the-ground advocacy at the organization—testing people for HIV and STIs on the job, linking patients who test positive to HIV care and counseling and helping those who test negative stay that way through PrEP and other prevention strategies. She also does outreach around sexual health and HIV education at local schools, senior centers, block parties and substance-abuse treatment groups. In addition to her grassroots work, Marci sits on her county's HIV planning council and is a member of her local Women and AIDS Coalition.

Nikki Ferraro

HIV Negative

Las Vegas, Nevada

Nikki Ferraro

Nikki’s awareness of HIV/AIDS started early. Her grandmother, who raised her, was diagnosed with HIV in 1994, when Nikki was just 9. At 18, Nikki started volunteering with Aid for AIDS of Nevada (AFAN), which assists HIV-positive clients with nutritional needs, transportation, health insurance and employment resources and also provides mental health services. She has remained active with the ASO ever since, including serving as the president and vice president of the AFAN board. A few years ago, she helped start the women’s support group Mothers, Sisters, Daughters, which provides women living with HIV and facing other issues a time and place to be free of children and attend wellness seminars or simply watch movies and bond in a supportive judgment-free space. We’re sure her grandmother is proud.

Carrie Foote

HIV Positive

Indianapolis, Indiana

Carrie Foote

Carrie is a long-term survivor who turned her HIV diagnosis into her life’s work. The former homeless injection drug user has been a sociology professor at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis for 15 years, where she’s taught courses and conducted social science research on HIV/AIDS. One of her major concerns remains reducing stigma. She carries out this mission as chair of the HIV Modernization Movement-Indiana, a coalition that seeks to modernize HIV criminalization laws based on current science. She’s also actively involved with the

“Undetectable = Untransmittable” (U=U) campaign, which is dismantling stigma globally. Carrie is a member of the Sero Project, the Sociologists AIDS Network and PWN-USA.

Anna Forbes

HIV Negative

Kensington, Maryland

Anna Forbes

“What’s a nice, straight white lady like you doing here?” That’s a question Anna has been hearing since 1984, when a dear friend was diagnosed with AIDS. She soon became a world-class warrior against HIV, going to conferences, ACT UP meetings, gay bars, syringe exchanges and funerals of

every stripe—she even went to jail for civil disobedience. Along the way, she's amassed invaluable experience in women's health issues (including sex work and domestic violence) and HIV prevention (notably microbicides and PrEP for women) and has worked with too many groups to mention here. This "long-term, full-time survivor of the HIV/AIDS response" shares her knowledge through writing (see page 15), training and organizing and as an independent consultant with a global client base. So how does she answer that pesky recurring question? "I am with my people, of course!"

Geneva Galloway-Pitts

HIV Positive

Charlotte, North Carolina

Geneva Galloway-Pitts

As a Christian woman who has lived with HIV for 32 years, Geneva knows firsthand what's needed to bridge the gap between communities of faith and people living with HIV. Tackling this challenge is one of her life's passions. Eradicating HIV stigma is another. She accomplishes both as founder and CEO of Trinity House CLT, which supports spiritual wellness among people with HIV and promotes HIV education and prevention in places of faith throughout North Carolina. She's also an advocate, a public speaker, a mentor and a volunteer whose work has earned numerous accolades, including the North Carolina Governor's AIDS Advocate Award and a Red Pump Project Community Service Award.

Kathy Garner

HIV Negative

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Kathy Garner

Kathy is a leading voice against homelessness and HIV in the Deep South, where she reaches out to rural and disenfranchised communities on an almost-daily basis as the head of her local AIDS Services Coalition. Her passions include overseeing the organization's housing and HIV outreach programs, building long-term housing for people living with the virus and breaking down barriers to testing and care in her community. She and her wife, Susan Hrostowski, PhD, are also fierce and renowned LGBT advocates who helped overturn Mississippi's gay adoption ban in 2016 and HB 1523, the state's discriminatory "religious freedom" legislation. The San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus recently honored Kathy and Susan as 2017 National Human Rights Champions for their efforts.

Tuyishime Claire Gasamagera

HIV Positive

Allen Park, Michigan

Tuyishime Claire Gasamagera

Tuyishime is the cofounder and CEO of ARISE—the Association of Refugees, Immigrants and Survivors of Human Trafficking Engage in the AIDS Response—a Michigan-based nonprofit that aims to identify and break down barriers obstructing immigrants' access to HIV/AIDS services. The longtime advocate was born with HIV in Rwanda in 1983 and uses her story of survival to inspire others to fight against HIV stigma, discrimination and criminalization as well as any other form of oppression or injustice. In addition to her nonprofit work, Tuyishime is a member of the board of International Community of Women—North America and a councilmember at the Southeastern Michigan AIDS Council and is currently working on a documentary film showcasing the lives of HIV-

positive immigrants in the United States. She recently participated in NMAC's BLOC (Building Leaders of Color) program and was trained to advocate for women of color living with HIV in her community. And in October, Tuyishime gave birth to a healthy baby boy!

Kathleen Gerus Darbison

HIV Positive

Warren, Michigan

Kathleen Gerus Darbison

This sociology professor at Macomb County Community College has a background in sexuality, HIV and hemophilia education. They are topics she knows well: Kathleen contracted the virus in 1984

from her husband, who has hemophilia. A few years afterward, they disclosed their status on public television to raise awareness around HIV and hemophilia. To further that goal, in 1992, she and her daughter penned a children's book, My Parents Have HIV/AIDS: Some Advice From an 8-Year-Old, that caught the attention of President Clinton. She served on the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA) from 1995 to 2000. Kathleen also founded the Stitches Women's Initiatives and the Stitches Doll Project, which offer doll-making workshops for girls with HIV—the dolls represent the powerful and confident women the girls aspire to become. With Kathleen's help, they're sure to succeed!

Kelly Gluckman

HIV Positive

Los Angeles, California

Kelly Gluckman

In 2010, at age 23, Kelly tested positive for HIV. Today, she’s in her final year at the University of California, Los Angeles and serves as an official ambassador for The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation, where she’s devoted to educating youth about the epidemic. Whether talking with at-risk youth at the Union Rescue Mission in downtown Los Angeles or speaking to members of Congress in our nation’s capital during AIDSWatch, Kelly has the confidence and skill to get her important message out. Plus, she’s game for almost anything to share that message—from performing sex-ed theater for high schoolers as part of UCLA’s Sex Squad to making an appearance on Keeping Up With the Kardashians to discuss being diagnosed at Planned Parenthood. How’s that for reality TV?

Lillibeth Gonzalez

HIV Positive

New York, New York

Lillibeth Gonzalez

If anyone knows about overcoming adversity, it’s Lillibeth. The dynamic GMHC community health specialist is a longtime survivor who endured the AIDS-related deaths of her three older siblings and also survived substance and domestic abuse. At one point, her own CD4 count was zero and her viral load in the millions. Today, she is undetectable and serves HIV-positive and at-risk women, particularly Latinas, by delivering support and facilitating forums on safer sex, condom negotiation, PrEP, PEP, adherence, domestic violence and AIDS-related cancers. Lillibeth shares her story not only to help fight stigma but also to help build more bridges to care in the Latina community. She’s a proud supporter of the “U=U” campaign and is an NMAC team member as

well as a member of PWN-USA’s New York chapter.

Grissel Granados

HIV Positive

Los Angeles, California

Grissel GrandadosJonathan Timmes

Grissel has a lifetime of experience as an AIDS advocate—that’s because she was born with the virus 31 years ago. Diagnosed in Mexico City in 1986, she began her activism by age 12. She has a master’s in social work and is the HIV prevention program manager at Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles. She’s an outspoken sex-positive advocate whose HIV work intersects women’s issues

(she’s active in PWN-USA), immigrants’ rights, long-term survivors, people of color, youth and LGBT communities. She also directed the 2015 documentary We’re Still Here, telling the stories of children born with HIV in the ’80s and ’90s. Grissel made headlines this summer when she and five others resigned from PACHA because, according to a Newsweek op-ed, Trump “simply does not care.” No wonder she was tapped to speak about the Power of Women at the 2017 United States Conference on AIDS (USCA)!

Gloria Guzman

HIV Positive

Brooklyn, New York

Gloria Guzman

For over 22 years, Gloria has worked as a peer advocate in Brooklyn, where she helps other people living with HIV learn how to take care of themselves through every stage of their diagnosis and treatment. The Puerto Rico native is currently a health educator and HIV advisory board member at the State University of New York Downstate's STAR Health Center, an outpatient HIV clinic that helps provide HIV treatment, conducts clinical trials and serves as a statewide prevention and substance use center. The role is a perfect fit, considering Gloria's background. In addition to being HIV-positive, Gloria is also coinfected with hepatitis B and was recently cured of hepatitis C—making her a hugely versatile advocate for treatment and recovery.

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