The POZ 100: H-K

November 13, 2017

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Janet Hall

HIV Positive

Virginia Beach, Virginia

Janet Hall

Janet was diagnosed with HIV in 2003. Like many women, she never thought she was at risk for the virus until the day her test came back positive. She was in her late 40s, straight, college-educated, financially stable and a homeowner. Today, she teaches others that HIV can happen to anyone and that African-American women are at particularly high risk for infection. She's a member of PWN-USA and SisterLove's 2020 Leading Women Society and previously served as the chair of the finance committee for the Greater Hampton Roads HIV Health Services Planning Council. Janet has also facilitated two women's support groups (Phenomenal Women and Diamonds in the Rough), where she taught self-love and self-care as steps to empowerment.

Mildred Harper

HIV Positive

Clinton, Mississippi

Mildred Harper

Mildred is a founding producer of the Mississippi Positive Network, a peer-driven group that helps connect and uplift HIV-positive people across the state through advocacy and community building. Her fellow advocates say the 22-year survivor of the virus is currently one of Mississippi's fiercest peer advocates dedicated to helping women thrive with HIV in the Deep South. This year, Mildred is helping to coordinate MIPA's Mississippi Summit, as well as the third annual Mississippi AIDSWatch, during which local advocates will storm the state capitol to talk about HIV/AIDS and the state of the U.S. health care system in March 2018. She has also served in several community adviser and patient service coordinator roles in her community.

Tami Haught

HIV Positive

Nashua, Iowa

Tami Haught

Imagine the mess we'd be in without leaders to coordinate and train all our advocates. Tami is a powerhouse when it comes to mobilizing our myriad networks and community members. After helping lead the charge against unjust HIV criminalization in Iowa, she's aiming to modernize HIV laws across the country through her work with the Sero Project. She's also co-secretary of the USPLHIV Caucus, president of Positive Iowans Taking Charge and a member of PWN-USA. She also works with the Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network. Open and

approachable—whether talking with her local pharmacist or a U.S. lawmaker—Tami leads by example.

Kathie Hiers

HIV Negative

Birmingham, Alabama

Kathie Hiers

There’s a good reason Kathie keeps being recognized on the POZ 100. Described as the “Mouth of the South,” she is a tireless advocate whose AIDS work spans three decades. She has dedicated 15 of those years to serving as CEO of AIDS Alabama, a statewide nonprofit that provides housing

and support services to individuals living with HIV. Among her long list of community commitments, Kathie is the elected cochair of the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership and serves on the board of the Southern AIDS Coalition and the National AIDS Housing Coalition. She once told POZ, “It ain’t over! We’re better than we used to be, but half the HIV/AIDS deaths are still in the South.”

Juanita Hubbard

HIV Positive

Columbus, Georgia

Juanita Hubbard

Ever since she publicly disclosed her HIV status at a Chattahoochee Valley Better Way Foundation (CVBWF) AIDS Memorial event in 1993, Juanita has been advocating for African-American women living with HIV in particular and working against the stigma that exacerbates the epidemic among members of the Black community in general. She has also supported efforts against HIV criminalization. As the current women's support group leader and vice president of CVBWF Rise Above HIV, Juanita leads HIV testing, support and education efforts for the organization, for which she has been recognized with awards from PWN-USA and the Columbus, Georgia, Mayor's Committee.

Barbara Hughes

HIV Negative

New York, New York

Barbara Hughes

A trained concert pianist, Barbara became an HIV/AIDS crusader when she began attending ACT UP meetings in 1988. Soon she became a member of ACT UP’s affinity group The Marys, which helped organize a series of political funerals. In 1992, she joined the board of the Treatment Action Group (TAG). In 1993, she cofounded City AIDS Action, which fought to save the AIDS Drug Assistance Program and the Division of AIDS Services in New York with protests and awareness events at City Hall and the New York State Capitol. In 1993, she became TAG’s board president, a position she holds to this day. In addition to fighting HIV/AIDS, Barbara helps formerly homeless individuals find work in the food industry as the director of food services at Project Renewal, which includes a full-service catering company called City Beet Kitchens.

Stacy Hyde

HIV Negative

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Stacy Hyde

Since 2012, Stacy has been president and CEO of Broward House, which seeks to improve the quality of life for people living with HIV in South Florida through prevention, education and services. She began at the organization as a case manager supervisor 15 years ago and during her tenure has served as the head of almost every department. She was previously a therapist and case manager at Center One. These days, Stacy can be found participating in the Florida AIDS Walk and SMART Ride, an annual bicycle ride that raises awareness of and money for HIV. Her love and support for those living with HIV is evident in her involvement with Broward's annual World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil and Remembrance Walk as well as with the local HIV planning council.

She is a shining star who is dedicated to serving those in her community.

Olga Irwin

HIV Positive

Youngstown, Ohio

Olga Irwin

Olga is currently the cochair of PWN-USA's Ohio regional chapter, a steering committee member of the Prevention Access Campaign, a graduate of the AIDS Alliance training corps and a primary planner of the Sero Project's HIV Is Not a Crime Academy. The licensed social worker is also a highly political advocate, who often travels across her home state of Ohio speaking to legislators

about HIV funding and the needs of her community. Along with several other women on this year's POZ 100, she was recently arrested in Washington, DC, this summer while protesting one of the proposed GOP health care bills that threatened the health care of thousands of HIV-positive Americans.

Tracey Jackson

HIV Negative

Spartanburg, South Carolina

Tracey Jackson

In her first year as executive director at Piedmont Care in South Carolina, nearly 20 years ago,

Tracey wasn’t exactly welcomed with open arms by the community. People cursed her out and threw things at her—she even needed security escorts to take her to her car. But this strengthened Tracey’s resolve to educate the public about HIV, fight stigma and banish fear, which not only improves the lives of those living with the virus but also helps others remain HIV negative. Whether running a staff of case managers and prevention coordinators, teaching college courses, raising funds through Twisted Trivia events or showing off her collection of condoms from around the globe—a conversation starter for sure—Tracey remains dedicated to improving the lives of residents in Spartanburg, Cherokee and Union counties. As this real-life Wonder Woman says: “Public health should never be controversial.”

Michelle Jackson-Rollins

HIV Negative

Cleveland, Ohio

Michelle Jackson-Rollins

You've heard of grassroots advocacy? Well, Michelle is—according to her colleagues—like the dirt that helps the grass grow strong. After earning her master's degree in social work last year, she began volunteering at Garden Valley Neighborhood House, a community center and food bank serving a group of Cleveland public housing complexes where both poverty and HIV rates are high. Sensing the need to help women, single mothers, sex workers and drug users to become better educated about prevention and treatment, she devised HIV- and PrEP-related programs, summits and speaking engagements for the community. She also recently traveled to St. Lucia, South Africa, to battle the global epidemic and is now putting some of her newfound know-how to work in her own backyard.

LeSherri James

HIV Positive

Chicago, Illinois

LeSherri James

LeSherri was diagnosed with HIV after her senior year in high school. As an undergrad in college, she discovered that she was pregnant and didn’t know where to turn. Luckily, she was referred to the Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative, which connected her to the care she needed. Her baby was born HIV negative, as was her second child—and a tireless advocate was born in the process! After interning at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, LeSherri gained experience as an HIV outreach worker, a volunteer, a public speaker, a blogger and an op-ed author. Currently, she’s a board member of the Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative, but whatever council or conference she’s active in, her focus remains on women’s rights and the needs of pregnant and

parenting women.

Stacy Jennings

HIV Positive

Columbia, South Carolina

Stacy JenningsJonathan Timmes

Stacy has been an HIV advocate since 1995, the year she was diagnosed. She is a longtime member of groups such as P.O.S.I.T.I.V.E. Voices and PWN-USA. Back home, she’s a member of her local HIV planning council and the Positive Advocacy Committee. She also works with the South Carolina HIV Task Force. This year, Stacy was honored with a policy fellowship at PWN-USA and is currently undertaking a yearlong training on HIV policy analysis, research and coalition building

from the national organization. The writer and activist says she speaks out for those who are unable to speak for themselves and to defeat the stigma that still faces many HIV-positive women.

Monica Johnson

HIV Positive

Columbia, Louisiana

Monica Johnson

In 1984, Monica received a blood transfusion while in the hospital. Shortly afterward, she learned that the blood donor died of AIDS-related illness. In 1990, she gave birth to a son, who died of complications from HIV a few years later. Throughout these ordeals, she also experienced the

prevalence of stigma and the dire state of HIV services in rural Louisiana—but she decided to do something about it. Monica founded Helping Everyone Receive Ongoing Effective Support (HEROES), which offers several prevention and education programs, including one that targets women of all ages at high risk. Monica has served on numerous AIDS councils and committees over the years, earning many accolades along the way, and continues to persist in her efforts to fight AIDS as the executive director of HEROES.

Marsha Jones

HIV Negative

Dallas, Texas

Marsha Jones

Marsha cofounded The Afiya Center (TAC) as a response to the extraordinary prevalence of HIV among Black women and girls in Texas. As executive director, she works to transform the lives of this marginalized group by leading the fight against reproductive oppression. In addition, TAC hosts an annual fundraiser called “End with Red” in support of its HIV programming. Marsha is also an active member of several coalitions, including the US Women & PrEP Working Group and the Texas Black Women’s Initiative. She says, “I want to see Black people take ownership of HIV—yes, ownership.”

Shyronn Jones

HIV Positive

Atlanta, Georgia

Shyronn Jones

Shyronn is the founder of the popular Facebook group iKnowAwareness, which serves as a vital source of information for people living with and affected by HIV. She is also super active in HIV advocacy, serving as a spokeswoman and policy fellow at PWN-USA, a member of the Metropolitan Atlanta HIV Health Services Planning Council and an adviser for the Center for HIV Law and Policy, among many other advocacy roles. On a given day, you can find Shyronn meeting with her congressman’s staffers about health care, educating youth about HIV in the Atlanta school system, participating in a Black Lives Matter march or tabling at community-based health fairs.

Esther Kim

HIV Positive

Los Angeles, California

Esther Kim

When Esther was diagnosed with HIV in 2001, fear kept her from disclosing her status. She was afraid of being rejected by her Christian family (her father is a pastor), her Korean-American community, potential lovers and friends. She once even nearly refused critical medical care for fear of being outed as HIV positive. But when she started participating in the AIDS/LifeCycle fundraising bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 2010, she began her long ride to full disclosure. This year (her sixth ride), Esther became an AIDS/LifeCycle spokesperson and shared her status with the world, including her parents, for the first time. She raises money and awareness to fight stigma and inspire others like her to seek the help they need.

Alleen King-Carter

HIV Positive

Shreveport, Louisiana

Alleen King-Carter

Alleen knows firsthand the importance of promoting the “U=U” campaign, which states that folks with HIV who are undetectable have effectively no risk of passing along the virus via sex. Earlier this year, she and her husband divorced, in part because of his fear of contracting HIV. That just makes this advocate and educator work harder to fight ignorance and fear. She’s the founder of the Living in 3-D Project and previously worked for The Philadelphia Center in Shreveport. She’s now the state secretary of the Louisiana AIDS Action Network, a member of PWN-USA, an executive board member for Oasis Outreach and a member of the Louisiana Coalition on Criminalization and Health, among other roles. This mother of three has survived domestic violence and cancer; obviously, someone else’s fears of HIV are not about to slow her down.

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