The 2022 POZ 100 G-L

This year’s list celebrates Latino advocates.

November 14, 2022

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Daniel G. Garza

Laguna Beach, California

Daniel G. Garza

Daniel G. Garza is an HIV and cancer survivor, health advocate, language justice activist, stand-up comic, actor and spiritual coach. Within months of his HIV diagnosis in 2000, he was volunteering at the Valley AIDS Council in McAllen, Texas. Following this humble start, he lobbied for HIV information to be made available in Spanish and spoke at local schools and community groups before moving to Houston, where he worked with the Thomas Street Clinic and Family Services of Greater Houston as an educator and community organizer. Since his move to California, his advocacy has grown to include membership on Janssen Pharmaceuticals' Positively Fearless team and on the board of Radiant Health Centers. He also works with NMAC on language justice issues. Together with his partner, Christian, he owns Lilmesican Productions, which produces shows that support the health of the Latino community.

Cecilia Gentili

New York, New York

Cecilia Gentili

Born in Argentina, Cecilia Gentili came to the United States in search of a safer life. She began earning a living through sex work, which led to drug use and made her a target of the police and immigration officers. In time, she was able to access recovery services and gain asylum. Her work in the community began at The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center in New York City. She went on to develop a transgender health program at the Apicha Community Health

Center. In 2016, she started working on policy issues for GMHC, where she focused on the decriminalization, decarceration and destigmatization of sex work. In 2019, she founded Trans Equity Consulting, a nonprofit that works to establish equity in the workplace. Cecilia also founded DecrimNY, which seeks to improve the lives of people engaged in sex work, and recently released her memoir, Faltas: Letters to Everyone in My Hometown Who Isn't My Rapist.

Lillibeth Gonzalez

New York, New York

Native New Yorker Lillibeth Gonzalez is a warrior in the fight against HIV and its stigma. She has

survived domestic abuse, addiction and the HIV-related deaths of three siblings as well as her own 1992 HIV diagnosis. Today, she's a community health organizer for the nonprofit GMHC and a vocal advocate for people aging with HIV and living with lipodystrophy and other medication side effects. She's a U=U global ambassador, a member of NMAC's 50+ Strong and Healthy program, the New York City chapter of PWN–USA and SisterLove's 20/20 Leading Women's Society. Plus, she leads the support group Thriving at 50 and Beyond. Lillibeth has received several awards for her work and activism and continues to inspire and encourage women to get educated and take charge of their sexual health.

Grissel Granados

Whittier, California

Grissel Granados

Grissel Granados, MSW, who has been living with HIV since birth, has dedicated her life to fighting HIV, especially among youth. (She had a good teacher—her mother, Silvia Valerio, is also on this year's list.) An HIV advocate since age 12, Grissel was appointed to PACHA in 2014. She codirected and coproduced the documentary We're Still Here, which shares the stories of the first-generation of people born with HIV. She was recently hired as deputy director of The Well Project, an HIV advocate group that focuses on women and girls. She feels that "a gender and racial justice approach is the only way to make an impact on the HIV epidemic."

Rick Guasco

Chicago, Illinois

Rick Guasco

After his HIV diagnosis in 1992, Rick Guasco received three publications from the Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN), which is when he realized that information was the key to his survival. Today, he's educating others as the creative director of Positively Aware, published by TPAN. He was recently named the magazine's acting editor-in-chief. Rick also created A Day with HIV, the magazine's annual anti-stigma campaign, which uses selfies to portray 24 hours in the lives of people affected by HIV. He posts a photo of his HIV meds to social media every day as a way to normalize life with HIV and reduce stigma. (It also helps him remember to take his pill!) Rick has also been a vocal advocate for cancer prevention since his own experience with anal cancer. An avid Star Trek fan, he likes to quote the Vulcan saying "We are here to serve."

Mondo Guerra

Brooklyn, New York

Mondo Guerra

In 2010, fashion designer Mondo Guerra revealed that he was living with HIV during season 8 of the reality series Project Runway. The fashion maven, who is known for his bold designs, went on to win the debut season of Project Runway All Stars and served as a mentor on Under the Gunn, another spinoff of the original series. Mondo uses his voice—and fashion—to advocate for others living with the virus. He has served as a spokesperson for Merck’s iDesign educational initiative

and is a national spokesperson for Dining Out For Life, which raises money for community-based organizations. He continues to design clothing, including custom couture for drag stars such as Crystal Methyd and Heidi N. Closet.

Vincent Guilamo-Ramos

Raleigh, North Carolina

Vincent Guilamo Ramos

Vincent Guilamo-Ramos, PhD, MPH, LCSW, RN, ANP-BC, PMHNP-BC is the dean of the Duke University School of Nursing, the vice chancellor for nursing affairs and the Bessie Baker

Distinguished Professor. He’s also the director and founder of the Center for Latino Adolescent and Family Health, where his research focuses on family-based disease prevention, particularly among Latinos and other underserved populations. He currently serves on several boards, including those of PACHA, the Department of Health and Human Services Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents, the CDC/Health Resources and Services Advisory Committee on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and STD Prevention and Treatmen, the Latino Commission on AIDS and the Power to Decide. His research has been published in leading scientific journals.

Jesús Heberto Guillén Solis

San Francisco, California

Jesús Heberto GuillénAngela DeCenzo

Jesús Heberto Guillén Solis was diagnosed with HIV in 1985, not long after moving from Mexico to the United States without any family or community to turn to for support. In 2015, he founded the Facebook group HIV Long Term Survivors International Network to provide support to folks like him. The group now has more than 5,000 members and offers resources, tips and inspiration. A cancer survivor, Jesús is also a fierce advocate for those living with chronic pain, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder. In 2016, he was featured in the documentary Last Men Standing, which chronicled the stories of eight HIV long-term survivors in San Francisco. The global speaker, advocate and activist is a member of the San Francisco LGBTQ Aging Research Partnership and wrote the song “Surviving Still” to bring attention to long-term survivors struggling with isolation and depression.

Ángel Luis Hernández

Arecibo, Puerto Rico

Ángel Luis Hernández

Ángel Luis Hernández was born in a small rural town in Puerto Rico. Diagnosed with AIDS in 2003 at age 40, he didn’t disclose his HIV status for six years. Since 2010, He has represented the Latino community as a member of various boards and coalitions, including NMAC’s HIV 50+ Strong & Healthy program, the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition’s PxROAR program, the community scientific subcommittee of the AIDS Clinical Trials Group and the AIDS Malignancy Consortium’s

global community advisory board. He also volunteers with local community organizations and Puerto Rico's AARP state office. Ángel is an advocate for people living with HIV from rural communities. He also promotes Latino representation in clinical research and recommends strategies for enhancing the participation of Latinos at all levels, including leadership roles.

Jean Hernandez

Birmingham, Alabama

Jean Hernandez

Jean Hernandez is all too familiar with the obstacles that Latinos in the South face when it comes

to HIV. Since 2011, she’s been the Latino outreach coordinator at AIDS Alabama and the director of the Alabama Latino AIDS Coalition, which has become a trusted resource for connecting people to care and other supportive services. Jean recently became a community advisory board member for the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement at the O’Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama. She wants to further address health disparities among Alabama’s Latino population, specifically regarding prostate cancer, breast cancer and HIV.

Cristina Herrera

New York, New York

Cristina Herrera

Cristina Herrera moved from California to Bronx, New York, when she was 15 years old. The El Salvador native was soon embraced by the trans Latina community, which gave her the support she needed to come out as transgender herself. Seeing firsthand how vulnerable members of the trans community were to HIV and drug addiction, she was determined to keep herself safe. She put herself through college and started working at an LGBTQ nonprofit. In 2007, she founded the Translatinx Network, serving trans Latinos in New York City and beyond. The nonprofit, of which she is also the CEO, assists trans Latinos with immigration and legal issues and HIV prevention and support.

Maria Christina Herrera

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Maria Christina Herrera

Maria Christina Herrera, MD, MSPH, a board-certified pediatrician and an instructor of adolescent medicine at the Children’s Hospital of Pennsylvania (CHOP), recently graduated from CHOP’s Adolescent Medicine Fellowship training program and was named a scholar in Yale’s Drug Use, Addiction and HIV Prevention Research fellowship program. Her work focuses on the intersection of HIV and substance use in teenagers and young adults. Originally from rural upstate New York, she has worked in New York City, San Francisco, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Mexico and on the White Mountain Apache Reservation in Arizona. She promotes access to treatment and prevention for marginalized groups, such as Black and Latino youth, and is committed to health equity and the alleviation of poverty.

Jason Jones

Phoenix, Arizona

Jason Jones found out he was HIV positive not long after he started dating his partner, Jeremy Bright. The mixed-status couple had difficulty finding community resources that served them both, so in 2018, they founded RipplePHX, which engages the Phoenix LGBTQ community in HIV awareness, prevention, treatment and testing. The group works to reach people—especially those in the Latino community—who don’t typically seek services at traditional brick-and-mortar agencies. In 2019, RipplePHX won the American Academy of HIV Medicine/Institute for Technology in Health Care HIV Practice Award for its mobile HIV prevention kiosk. The group hosts popular Lotería Game Nights each week and semiannual Día de los Muertos events, allowing it to reach

more than 25,000 primarily Latino people annually.

Arianna Lint

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Arianna Lint

Arianna Lint, a transgender Latina refugee who left Peru for the United States to escape persecution as a political and civil rights activist, tested positive for HIV in 2006 and has been a passionate advocate for those living with the virus ever since. She worked for the Florida Department of Health and the social services nonprofit SunServe before becoming the CEO and

cofounder of Arianna’s Center, which empowers and uplifts the trans community by providing education, training, case management and linkage to care in Fort Lauderdale and Puerto Rico. She’s a consultant for the White House National HIV/AIDS Strategy and for the CDC and serves on the community advisory board for Positively Trans and the board of The Reunion Project. Arianna is also the head of the South Florida Chapter of the TransLatin@ Coalition and a U=U ambassador.

Michelle Lopez

Brownsville, New York

Michelle Lopez

Michelle Lopez is known throughout the United States and abroad as a tireless advocate for others like her living with HIV. After Lopez learned that she was HIV positive in 1990, she started attending ACT UP meetings and became involved in the Community Constituency Group of the AIDS Clinical Trials Group. She has been profiled in publications such as POZ, Spin and The New York Times. She previously worked as the healthy aging specialist at GMHC. She was also a private consultant for eight years, during which she helped implement HIV care and services at a private primary care facility under the auspices of Brooklyn Family Medical Center.

Oscar Raul López

Rio Grande Valley, Texas

Oscar Raul LópezRodrigo Davila

Oscar Raul López is the founder, CEO and national director of policy for Poderosos (Spanish for “the powerful”), which aims to improve the health of immigrants, queer youth, men who have sex with men, cisgender and transgender Latinas and other minority groups within the Latinx community via programming, health advocacy and policy development. Poderosos focuses its work primarily in South Texas and the borderlands. Oscar has worked in the HIV field—as an activist, volunteer and a consultant—since 1988. He’s worked for NMAC, the Office of Minority Health, New York City’s Department of Health and Human Services and other organizations providing direct care, cultural competency training and capacity building training nationwide.

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