More Than a Feeling

November 13, 2012 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I tested HIV positive in 1992. My commanding officer in the Marine Corps read my diagnosis to me from a script. It was the day after my 22nd birthday. The shame and guilt I carried for more than a decade later were only equaled by the rejection, stigma and discrimination that I (and many of you) experienced too often.

I feared that I wouldn't live to see my 30th birthday. I'm grateful that the universe had other plans for me. As an openly HIV-positive gay Latino, I know how difficult it can be to come out and to live your life with dignity and hope. After 20 years of living with HIV, I'm proud to say, as our cover guy Sir Elton John so famously sang, "I'm still standing!"

We excerpt a chapter from John's latest book, Love Is the Cure. The memoir details his life in the fight against HIV. The founder of the Elton John AIDS Foundation explains why we need allies, not enemies.

As we mark another World AIDS Day, it will undoubtedly take teamwork to end the pandemic. Above all else, however, it will take a cure and effective prevention, as well as the resources to implement them.

We spent a lot of time this year at POZ telling you about the cure, explaining why now more than ever we're closer to it than you might think. It felt fitting that we close out the year by showing you how close. We believe the cure is—to borrow a phrase from the rock group Boston—"more than a feeling" (a new take on that tune, for sure).

The 2012 POZ 100 list honors people helping to speed up the end of the pandemic. No list is ever complete, but these researchers, clinicians, advocates, politicians and celebrities—including Sir Elton—represent the countless people worldwide working on a cure and biomedical prevention, as well as the advocacy to make them accessible and to overcome HIV stigma and discrimination.

Also in the POZ 100 this year is Steven G. Deeks, MD, cochair of the International AIDS Society Working Group on HIV Cure. Read his overview of cure research here.

Last but not least, I want to acknowledge that Regan Hofmann, our former editor-in-chief, has started an exciting new chapter in her life as a global health consultant. Go to

blogs.poz.com/regan to read more about her next steps. All of us at POZ wish her the best.

As you flip through this issue, I encourage you to notice the additional changes to our lineup and look. Let us know what you think.

I’m looking forward to the challenge and privilege of being at the helm of POZ at such a hopeful time in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I’m especially excited about the opportunity to tell your stories. Happy holidays!

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Cure-HIV-Oriol-23121-4268