Letters—December 2012

November 13, 2012

Overcoming Trauma

The article "Healing the Hurt" (September 2012) examined the link between HIV and violence against women. The women profiled in the story are proof that helping HIV-positive women deal with and recover from trauma can improve their lives and their health.

Thanks so much for this important article about an issue that has been silently festering for so many years. How can a woman improve her health, when her life is so filled with emotional pain? This was a major theme at the 2012 International AIDS Conference.

This is the year for American women to take a strong united stand for action and services during the 16 Days campaign to end violence against women [November 25 to December 10].

Loren Jones, Berkeley

Because HIV/AIDS is an ever-evolving disease, spanning across all cultures in the United States, I wish to extend a loud round of applause to the women in this article who have the courage to [tell their story]. Clearly their voices are not those of victims; they are the foundation of a socio-political, socioeconomic and a newly framed gender schema. The message and self-determination of these abused women must rise to the ears of hegemony who haven't lived their experience.

Luis Marcus Morales III, San Antonio

All of our stories show that these are things that can be overcome, but we need to start early. Fighting abuse is one way to ensure an AIDS-free generation of women and girls.

Kat G

The Power of Film

Peter Staley's blog entry, "How to Survive a Plague Opens Friday!" (September 19, 2012), promoted the theatrical release of the documentary about the history of AIDS treatment activism. Longtime AIDS journalist and first-time filmmaker David France used archival footage to show the impact of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and the Treatment Action Group (TAG).

Readers responded to Staley:

I saw the film with my mother and friends. We all found the film incredibly powerful. I worked at GMHC and an HIV research/doctor's office in the '90s. I knew some of the story of ACT UP and TAG, but not all of it. I am glad it has been documented so lovingly. What you did was amazing and saved so many lives. Thank you.

Jill Cadman

The perseverance [of the activists] left me speechless. I cried and cried, but I was so proud to be gay as I watched this documentary. I also felt guilty that I didn't do more when I came out in the early '90s and was terrified of getting HIV. I volunteered for prevention and behavioral studies and ultimately became positive in 2005. Peter and all those in ACT UP and TAG, you are my heroes.

Scott, New York

I saw this brilliant movie last Friday. I was diagnosed [more than] 23 years ago and can't imagine making the decision to get tested and surviving without ACT UP. Peter, you are a freakin' movie star, and I can't possibly thank you enough for your courage and inspiration. Everyone—see this film!

Lee Raines

I saw the film as part of the Dayton, Ohio, lesbian and gay film festival. I was truly moved by it. It brought back some powerful memories of the outrageous tactics of the brave ACT UP people and how necessary those tactics were—and often still are! This should be required viewing for all who think we can't change the system. It can be done. ACT UP proved it!

Richard

Taxicab Confessions
The article "Paris Hilton Says Most Gay Guys 'Probably Have AIDS'" (September 20, 2012) covered the controversy on the hotel heiress's private remarks to a friend that were recorded by a taxi driver. She later apologized. (Click here for more details.)

Based on Paris Hilton's past behavior, I would have to say that her apology is disingenuous. If she were truly sorry, she would not have made these comments to begin with.

Daniel

It’s obvious Paris needs an education. I believe she meant what she said because she thought no one was listening. [Since] it was taped, she had to apologize to get the egg off her face.

Linda, Berkeley

Why is anyone shocked or angered by yet another display of Paris Hilton’s ignorance? It was a private conversation. We all say things that are cruel or not PC when we are with those we assume are “friends.” And with all the Internet hookup sites, the message sadly is that some gay men are sex obsessed.

Dale Smith

People still care what Paris has to say? Really?

Yvonne2012

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