Letters—July/August 2012

June 19, 2012

Family Affair

"Meet the Parents" (April/May 2012) followed a group of New York mothers, fathers and friends who lost loved ones to AIDS and established Concerned Parents for AIDS Research, an all-volunteer group that continues to raise millions of dollars in seed money for scientists to advance HIV research.

Concerned Parents is proud to have been interviewed by POZ. As concerned parents, we will continue our mission to raise the necessary funds to grant research money to scientists around the country as they uncover new clues to find new treatments and ultimately a cure for HIV/AIDS. Together we will make a difference.

Ivy Duneier
New York City

Acting Up

In "Battling Back" (April/May 2012), David France discussed his documentary How to Survive a Plague *and the history of AIDS treatment activism.*

I admire the courage [of these activists, and] I wish I was able to be as courageous. There is still such stigma around HIV/AIDS, and I wish I could be more outspoken—but unfortunately, I cannot.

Katarina
Florida

Kosher Comforts

In "Chicken Soup for the Soul" (April/May 2012), Mollie Pier, age 91, discussed her son Nathaniel's death from AIDS in 1989 and how it moved her to found Project Chicken Soup. The nonprofit delivers free, nutritious, kosher meals to Los Angeles residents living with HIV/AIDS, cancer and other serious illnesses.

Thank you for including me, and Project Chicken Soup, in this issue of POZ. [Please] continue the work of the magazine until a cure is found and is no longer needed. I was also delighted to read

[“Meet the Parents,” an article that tells] the stories of other mothers and family members who stood by their sons and daughters with HIV/AIDS.

Mollie Pier
Los Angeles

Singing in Tune
In our POZ Exclusive “The Voice of a Generation” (April 23, 2012), we interviewed Jamar Rogers, the 30-year-old contestant on NBC’s singing competition The Voice*. He reflected on the low points of his HIV diagnosis and struggle with addiction, as well as his rise to become a popular AIDS activist.*

Kudos to Jamar! I also had a drug problem, which led to me getting HIV in ’94. I’m 52 now and living my life drug-free. There needs to be a “voice” for this disease. There have been so many cuts [to HIV-related programs] in the budget in my town.

Mamapiinkx0
Fort Pierce, FL

Jamar, I cheered every moment you were on The Voice because your voice became the [voice of an] angel that so many souls need to lift themselves from despair and confusion to spiritual bliss.

Runningwild
Las Vegas

You are an inspiration to me, Jamar. I moved to Arkansas from California, and I found out that there was no support group in my town. So I started one, and it’s going strong now. For a year and half, we’ve been dealing with the same issues that HIV-positive people deal with [everywhere].

Steven
Van Buren, AR

Leftover Parts
In our POZ Exclusive “A Piece of Me” (April 12, 2012), AIDSmeds editor-in-chief Tim Horn profiled the National Disease Research Interchange (NDRI), one of the few nationwide programs that collect tissues and organs from HIV-positive people, both live and deceased, to help advance AIDS treatment and cure research.

Thanks for the info. Several years ago I contacted the local medical schools to inquire about donating my body and was informed none accepted HIV-positive donors. No one knew of any

programs like NDRI's. It's good to know that this body will eventually be of use to someone. I'm calling NDRI as soon as I write this.

Robert Cameron
New Orleans

The article came at just the right time for me. I just got off the phone with NDRI, and I am making arrangements to donate the leftovers from my scheduled knee replacements.

Steven Dwyer
Baltimore

Quilting Behind Bars
In the POZ Staff Blog "The Quilt in Prison" (May 21, 2012), senior editor Laura Whitehorn wrote about her experience in a women's prison in 1993, when she and her fellow inmates stitched together an AIDS Memorial Quilt panel for her incarcerated sisters who had died of AIDS.

As the author of Resistance Behind Bars, a book about incarcerated women, I was extremely moved by Laura Whitehorn's blog post. Even two decades later there continues to be an overwhelming silence around HIV/AIDS in women's prisons, even though a 2001 report found that women in prison are three times as likely as men in prison to be living with HIV or AIDS. Whitehorn reminds us that the women themselves have taken action, forming AIDS education and support groups in prisons as well as channeling their grief, anger and frustration to publicly remember and recognize women whom society might otherwise have forgotten.

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