Mailbox

May 1, 2008

We Are Family

I've just finished reading Suzan Stirling's article "A Stirling Example" [Jan/Feb 2008], about her and her three children all disclosing their HIV-positive status together. Stirling writes that she "truly [believes] that something good will come" from telling her story. Believe me, many good things have come from
it already.

She has single-handedly renewed my commitment to and faith in people living with HIV. I'm an HIV-positive person who works with HIV treatment specialists and caregivers. I made a promise, a long time ago, that I would dedicate the rest of my career to improving the lives of people living with HIV and AIDS. Thanks for sharing and strengthening my resolve to keep my promise.

J.R.F.
Memphis

Thanks for "A Stirling Example." I have faced some extreme and danger-ridden paths across this planet, but this family—now, that is one brave bunch! Hats off to them.

Name Withheld

Being gay, black and HIV positive are real challenges I face since being diagnosed in 2007. Thank God for two good friends and my negative partner. But [the Stirlings'] story gives me hope that one day I can tell my family [about] the pain I am going through.

S.C.
Toronto

I struggle daily with maintaining optimism. [The Stirlings'] story touched me deeply—it has given me an added dose of hope. In a world where even doctors buy into [AIDS] stigma, [we] need to hear more stories like [theirs] and maybe, just maybe, change will come. God bless.

N.W.
Miami

Kudos to Ms. Stirling and her three children for coming out about their HIV status. I have been HIV positive since December of 1987 and [since] then, I have been running from myself and my

responsibilities by going in and out of jail for the past 20 years.

This story has [given] me a gigantic boost. It is through reading about this young lady and her children that I can see a life for myself. Continue to run stories that inspire those of us who live in silence.

Phillip Duke Gray
Stiles Unit, Beaumont, TX

Teen Angel
I found your story "Fifteen Candles," by Noah Murphy [Jan/Feb 2008, about a 15-year-old dealing with HIV in high school], very inspiring, and I am amazed at the insight of someone "only 15." I'm 55, and while I am fortunate to be HIV negative, someone I love is not as fortunate. He was diagnosed with HIV in January 2005, and I know his outlook regarding his future weighs heavy on his thoughts. Perhaps your story and attitude will give him inspirational hope as well.

Karen Michael
Davenport, IA

Power To The People
Regarding Jessie Torrisi's "Growing Pains," Jan/Feb 2008, about young HIV-positive AIDS activists: It's amazing to see the courage youth are expressing in an increasingly passive society. We need leaders like these to make the stories heard, and most important, demonstrate the power of the human voice!
Name Withheld

I [am] thankful for these young people who have [such] great courage. I, too, am HIV positive, and I love life. The infection has become a blessing to me [because it made me] foster [self-love] since I had so much self-hatred.

Kirk Johnson
Dallas

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