Your Feedback

October 1, 2008

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8 Mile

Lucile Scott's cover story "Tale of Two Cities" (June 2008) about how two neighboring cities—San Francisco and Oakland—respond to HIV sparked some intense reactions from readers.

In the history of HIV [in the United States], blacks and Latinos refused to support [the gay community] in the early days of the 1980s—ACT UP, activism, marches and protests against [the] CDC. We got no support from the minorities because they claimed that HIV did not affect their communities at that time. Also, their churches preached hate against our lifestyle, and they do not support gay civil rights. [It seems like] the public is tired of the epidemic.

Dougie G.
Laguna Beach, CA

I believed that Ed Byrom's (the director of programs at San Fran's Black Coalition on AIDS) comment in the article that "most positive people in San Francisco are educated and wealthy white men, and they have the power and privilege and sense of entitlement of white men" was not only ignorantly racist, but also just plain untrue! Why print such a racially inflammatory remark that creates nothing but division and hatred?

D.J.
Sacramento

Major Salute

"Sergeant Ozzy Ramos Comes Home" (June 2008) by James Wortman—a profile of a retired Marine officer who lost his wife and two children to AIDS and, as a result, plans to open a home for families affected by HIV—inspired many of you.

I found Major Charles Valrie (Ramos's superior who was supportive of the Ramos family) and wrote him. I told him that if more people were as motivated as he was back then to learn about HIV, the world would be much further along in terms of addressing stigma, prevention and treatment.

While a sad story, it is a motivating story, and I wish Sergeant Ramos success in creating Home of Miracles and Embraces (H.O.M.E.). As an HIV-positive person who recently adopted an HIV-positive child, it would be interesting to socialize with others who share similar concerns and hopes.

Moved to Write

There’s a reason the motto of the Marine Corps is Semper Fidelis [and] means “Always Faithful.” Mr. Ramos is the best example of it. Best of luck in his mission and getting H.O.M.E. up and running. Semper Fi, sarge, from a former Navy corpsman—now teaching HIV education.

Elaine Farrell
Monticello, NY

“Sergeant Ozzy Ramos Comes Home” was very touching. I take care of my brother-in-law who is positive, so I can understand where you are coming from. I would never leave him either—he’s my husband’s brother—but I love him as if he were my own! Keep your head up!

Vicki Daniel
Jamaica

Rap Up

June’s “Hipper Hop” by Kellee Terrell posed the following question: Is hip-hop music HIV prevention’s friend or foe?

I’m an HIV-positive hip-hop artist who just read “Hipper Hop.” Sadly, in focusing on only “major players in the hip-hop game,” the article loses sight of not just hip-hop artists who are openly [positive], but others producing affirming music relevant to those infected with and affected by AIDS.

The rap industry, much like it institutionally locks out the voices of LGBT artists, also finds that positive messaging in rap is not “marketable.” *POZ* should not replicate this notion. Highlighting only industry-supported “major players” further alienates and silences artists like myself who rap about personal survival and the survival of our most affected communities. Here’s to more “poz” hip-hop in *POZ*.

Tim’m West
Houston

I believe that a number of people feel that rap music’s influence on young people’s behavior is significant, especially since a lot of teens think that HIV is not their concern. When rap’s message is more prevalent than prevention’s message, we will continue to have this war against HIV/AIDS.

Ernest Donelson
Memphis

Correction: The Harlem United client pictured in the bottom left corner of “The Insiders” (June 2008) is Linda Hamptlon.

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