28 Profiles in Courage

September 1, 2007 By Kellee Terrell

Canadian journalist Stephanie Nolen's new book, *28: Stories of AIDS* in Africa (Walker & Company, 2007), follows 28 characters from a Ugandan microbiologist to a Lesotho boy whose first English words were the names of his AIDS meds.

POZ: If you focus on Africa, might Westerners feel HIV can't happen to them?
Stephanie Nolen: I rarely get the impression people think AIDS happens only in Africa. When I was in America talking about HIV, only twice did people ask "HIV is a problem here, why should we be worried about Africa?" I was thrilled, because there's still a big sense of complacency.

POZ: Is writing about AIDS depressing?
Nolen: I spend time with people who have mounted the response to the pandemic in Africa with almost no support or recognition from the outside world, so [my job is] often quite exhilarating.

POZ: Explain the book's title.
Nolen: A friend asked how I could make her care about the topic. "More than 28 million people live with the disease in sub-Saharan Africa," I said. "You have 28 million reasons to care. I can't tell you about all 28 million, but I can introduce you to 28."

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