EGPAF at 30: A Celebration of Impact

The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation continues its mission to end AIDS in children.

June 15, 2018 By Cameron Gorman

The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), a nonprofit launched in 1988 to raise money and advocate for pediatric HIV research, commemorated its 30th anniversary with an event in Washington, DC, on Capitol Hill, on June 12.

The event was held to celebrate "the leaders, friends and partnerships of the past 30 years that have been indispensable to the progress toward ending AIDS in children," according to the invitation.

Featured speakers included EGPAF president and CEO Chip Lyons, EGPAF ambassador Jake Glaser, EGPAF champion Maurine Murenga and congressional leaders, including senator Bob Casey (D–Penn.) and representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R–Fla.)

Other longtime supporters who were unable to attend were senator Orrin Hatch (R–Utah) and representative Barbara Lee (D–Calif.).



Jake Glaser speaking at the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation's 30th anniversary event on Capitol Hill.Courtesy of Eric Bond, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

“Our purpose for gathering here today is to celebrate EGPAF turning 30 and to recognize and applaud the tireless efforts of those who have helped us continue Elizabeth’s legacy,” said Lyons.

Elizabeth Glaser, the wife of Paul Michael Glaser of Starsky & Hutch, contracted HIV via a blood transfusion she received during childbirth in 1981. She unknowingly transmitted the virus to her children, Ariel and Jake.

Ariel died of AIDS-related illness in 1988. The same year, according to the EGPAF website, Glaser and fellow mothers Susie Zeegen and Susan DeLaurentis launched the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, later re-named to honor Glaser’s memory.

“Congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle were inspired by the story of a mother fighting for the life of her child and took on her fight as their own. We’ve made remarkable strides over the past three decades, but our work is not over,” said Lyons. “We are at a critical moment, and, as Elizabeth did, we must commit ourselves every day to our mission to end AIDS in children once and for all.”

According to EGPAF’s website, the foundation has helped to achieve a 90 percent decline in new HIV infections in children in the United States as well as a 70 percent decline worldwide.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to be standing here in the halls of Congress, right where my mom

stood and made such a profound impact 30 years ago," said Jake Glaser. "It is because of her work, in collaboration with so many others, that [I can] stand before you as a healthy, strong 32-year-old man who is not defined by his HIV status. I am living, breathing proof that Congress can make a change for the better—policies enacted here have changed and saved lives."

Through programs in areas such as prevention of mother-to-child transmission, pediatric and adolescent care, treatment and diagnosis, and adult care for HIV, EGPAF has averted 301,969 HIV infections and has saved 86,940 lives with antiretroviral treatment.

"I first met Elizabeth Glaser when the foundation was just taking form," said Sen. Hatch. "Her vision and dedication helped to reshape the HIV/AIDS discussion here in Washington. Thirty years later, Elizabeth's legacy lives on. She would be so proud to see the many ways in which the foundation is now reaching millions of children and families across the world in the fight to ensure that no child has to suffer from AIDS."

According to EGPAF's data dashboard, the organization and its affiliates have reached over 27 million women with HIV transmission prevention services globally.

"I was honored to join in celebrating 30 years of important progress led by EGPAF, starting of course with the brave leadership of Elizabeth Glaser herself," said Sen. Casey. "Without the legacy of Elizabeth's work, exemplified in her foundation, we would be much farther behind in this fight to eradicate pediatric AIDS worldwide. As EGPAF's work continues, I have faith that we will see an AIDS-free generation in my lifetime."

According to its website, EGPAF's continuing mission is to "end global pediatric HIV/AIDS through prevention and treatment programs, research and advocacy."

To read a 2017 POZ feature story highlighting Jake Glaser and other advocates born with HIV, click here.

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