Letters—December 2014

November 10, 2014

Paying it Forward

The September 2014 cover story, "Health Care Is a Human Right," spotlighted longtime survivor Julie Lewis and the launch of the 30/30 Project, which aims to build 30 health centers around the world that will operate for at least 30 years for those who need it most.

Thank you for such a heart-warming story. It gives me hope. I became HIV positive five years ago. Thirteen years ago, the most precious person in my life, Milton Kroah, passed away. At the time, science was just on the verge of new medications. Milt was a trooper; he survived 20-plus years and almost made it, but then his number was called. My hope is that someday soon no one will have to lose a loved one to this awful plague.

Kenneth W. Thomas, Yucca Valley, CA

You sweet, sweet lady. What an inspiration.

Will, Charleston

I, too, am a 30-year survivor! It has been a long and tiring road, but I am there!

Phillip, Panama City

I just want to say that this article makes me proud to know that there are people living with HIV for 30 years or more and doing great things. I have been living with HIV for 32 years. I was featured in POZ back in November 2011. I am still going strong, too. POZ should do a cover story on all of our lives to show the world that there is hope and life after HIV.

Orbit Clanton, New York

Very encouraging to hear such news; it gives me the will to keep going on. HIV is not and should never be a death sentence. Here in Kenya, we also have a woman, Asunta Wagura, who has lived with HIV for more than 25 years and is still riding high. Let's keep our spirits high. Thank you.

Peter, Eldoret, Kenya

The Meaning of Life

In her blog entry "Depression, God and Staying Alive..." (August 26, 2014), Rae Lewis- Thornton wrote about Robin Williams's recent death and her current battle with depression.

Thank you for sharing your story. I also wonder and ponder what is the real meaning of staying alive. After losing a sibling to AIDS, I promised my mother that I would hang around. My transgender sister meant the world to my mother. They were like sisters. Trying to stay alive so she would not lose another child is tough and can lead to many dark roads, but somehow I manage to find the headlight switch before rolling off the road.

Al

I have been going through the same thing. Some days are better than others, but I don't know what to do. I have been living with HIV for 30 years. That's a long time to be going in and out of depression. I know it's going to get better; I just have to hang in there and not give up!

Kenneth Turner

I do not want you to feel depressed. You have achieved so much in your life. You have been so brave that I cannot believe that you are feeling this way after Robin Williams's death. Go back and read your own books. You are an inspiration—even an inspiration to those who are not sick. Do not give up. I know it is not easy, but your mind and spirit can push your body. I may not be anybody in this world, but I can say that I am by your side as many of us are. God bless you!

Katty

Thanks for your honesty. I'm sorry to hear that you are feeling such terrible despair. Depression of the kind you are suffering carries very real physical consequences; it really does change the way your brain works. You probably know this and find it very difficult to concentrate. Depression is a disease that tends to get better, though. I had a very severe bout of depression for two years after 20 years of dealing with HIV. I ended up hospitalized and endured electroconvulsive therapy, which helped the depression but took many memories. I got better and am now back in school and working, but it did take time.

Eric

Public Disservice?

The article "AHF Campaigns Against PrEP as a 'Public Health Intervention'" (August 25, 2014)

announced a new advertising campaign launched by the AIDS Health-care Foundation (AHF) against the HIV drug Truvada for use as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent transmission of the virus.

At first I wasn't a huge supporter of PrEP, but I now think of it as another tool we have to prevent HIV. By no means is it the end-all, be-all. I also think any publicity, good or bad, will help get the word out.

Raynald Joseph, Providence

AHF has a vested interest in people seroconverting. HIV-negative people who have the means to stay that way are the organization's worst nightmare. We should stop giving AHF free space to publicize its genocidal ideology.

Harleymc, Sydney

Let us break this down...AHF is claiming to be more informed than the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization? Wouldn't the money being wasted on this "smear campaign" be better spent on retention in care efforts and treatment adherence support? I doubt that patients being seen at AHF facilities are faring any better than those seen by other medical providers.

Thomas, Lafayette

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