Baring It All

Advocates shed their clothes and some light on HIV in the Southwest.

April 1, 2009 By Kat Noel

Inspired by *POZ*'s May 2004 10th anniversary cover (created by Spencer Tunick) depicting 80 unclothed HIV-positive readers, the Men's Sexual Health and Personal Empowerment (MSHAPE) created The Naked Truth campaign. The Arizona ads feature nude men and women who are either living with or are affected by HIV.

Now in its third year, the campaign spotlights 21 people and their personal experiences about contracting the disease and fighting to halt the epidemic. "Being nude shows the bare truth about the virus," says Dave Martinez, MSHAPE's program manager. "There's nothing for us to hide under."

The attention-grabbing images plastered on posters and postcard-like fliers are distributed to numerous gay bars and community centers to inspire people to rethink drug use and unsafe sex. But Martinez stresses that not everyone's narrative has a happy ending. "These are real stories about people who have made mistakes and are now trying to make changes." Hats and pants off to that!

Log on to gmhp.org/nakedtruth to read their stories.

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