Positively Beautiful

Guy Anthony offers affirmations, advocacy and advice to Black queer men.

January 7, 2019 By Alicia Green

Guy Anthony had for some time suspected that he might have HIV, but it wasn't until 2007, while living in Los Angeles, that the activist and author tested positive.

"I was exploring this new city, and I was hit with this diagnosis," says Anthony, who currently resides in New York City. "I didn't have the language or the tools to deal with that at age 21."

With his life spiraling out of control because of drug use, Anthony returned to his native Detroit for three months to recover.

In 2009, he moved to Atlanta and began volunteering with AID Atlanta's now-defunct Evolution Project, a program designed to fight HIV among young Black gay men.

"The Evolution Project was the first time I was ever able to articulate my gayness in a space and have it be OK," he explains. "To really be immersed in a community-based AIDS service organization where young Black gay men were essentially running the space was an eye-opener."

Anthony's nearly three years of service to the project inspired his 2012 book, Pos(+)itively Beautiful: A Book of Affirmations, Advocacy & Advice.

"I gathered a group of Black gay men that I knew were living with HIV and I interviewed them," Anthony recalls. "I had them write letters to their pre-diagnosis selves and gave them the voice to tell their own story."

When he moved to Washington, DC, in 2013, Anthony volunteered with the Black AIDS organization Us Helping Us, where he was eventually hired as program manager and coordinator for its treatment adherence program.

"I was responsible for working with newly diagnosed and treatment patients who really didn't understand how the medication was affecting their bodies," says Anthony.

In addition, he spent four years as a member of the Metropolitan Washington Regional Ryan White Planning Council.

Anthony is now the president of Black, Gifted & Whole, a nonprofit he founded in 2015 to

empower, educate and mobilize Black queer men through sexual health awareness, higher education and access to resources.

“It started from us honoring Black gay men and giving out one scholarship to us helping 11 Black gay men with scholarships to attend and continue college,” he explains.

He also serves as an ambassador for Janssen Pharmaceuticals and the AIDS Healthcare Foundation. For his advocacy, Anthony has been named to the 2014 POZ 100 and received the 2016 DC Black Pride Leadership Award, among other notable honors.

He intends to continue working with the media to demonstrate that people can achieve their goals while living with HIV.

“There is a light in each one of us,” Anthony says. “You cannot allow this diagnosis to dictate the rest of your life.”

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