Positively Living: The HIV Story of Chiina

The only time you lose is when you don’t try.

September 26, 2022 By Devanta Tyler

My name is Devanta Tyler; however, my preferred name is Chiina. I was diagnosed with HIV at the sensitive age of 18, the start of my adulthood. I was in denial and created delusions in my head that I was negative.

I ended up in the hospital with HIV-related pneumonia and kidney failure. I was placed on a ventilator for months and barely weighed 90 pounds. Yet I stand here today strong—no more dialysis—and my HIV is undetectable. I decided to live a life that could help someone like me. I am now an ambassador for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “Let’s Stop HIV Together” campaign and a community health worker/project coordinator at Community Health Pier, an HIV-driven community-based organization located in Greenville, Mississippi.

What is your greatest achievement?

Overcoming negative thoughts of the virus and picking myself back up and getting back into care.

What is your greatest regret?

Feeling as if my life was no longer worth living because I was HIV positive and making the decision to get out of care, which almost cost me my life.

What is the best advice you ever received?

The only time you lose is when you don’t try.

What person in the HIV/AIDS community do you most admire?

My boss, Cedric Sturdevant. I was inspired by his confidence in speaking out. It made me comfortable to do so as well.

What keeps you up at night?

Lately, nothing. I have been at peace knowing I spend my days doing what God has purposed me to do.

What drives you to do what you do?

My dad passed away from AIDS-related complications when I was 13 years old. And my diagnosis at age 18 makes the fire burn much higher.

What is your motto?

“Positively living is the only way to live.”

If you could be any animal, what would you be? And why?

A lion, because it’s strong, resilient and fierce, like me!

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