The 2015 POZ 100: Celebrating Long-Term Survivors

These advocates persevered in their own personal fight against the virus to show others that it is possible to thrive long term with HIV.

November 16, 2020 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr., Joe Mejía , Jennifer Morton and Trent Straube

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For the sixth annual POZ 100, we honored long-term survivors, defined as people diagnosed with HIV before 1996, the year effective treatment for the virus became available. In fact, many honorees contracted the virus before 1985, the year the first HIV test became available. The 2015 POZ 100 included people who were adults when they were diagnosed as well as people born with the virus and those who were teenagers when they learned of their positive status.

As usual, the list included a diverse group of individuals—gay, heterosexual, male, female, trans, Black, Asian, Latino, white—from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. However, the response to POZ's call for nominees was so overwhelming that year—a sign that perhaps long-term survivors had not previously been sufficiently recognized—that the list was limited to residents of the United States and Puerto Rico.

To have survived an HIV diagnosis before effective treatment is to have survived a so-called death sentence. The activists, educators, researchers, religious leaders, artists, writers and more honored in 2015 all persevered in their own personal fight against the virus to show others that it is possible to thrive long term with HIV despite the many factors—age, comorbidities, treatment fatigue, depression, survivor's guilt—that might be working against them.

Catching Up With...

Nancy Duncan

Nancy DuncanBill Wadman

How do you empower others?

I try to make time to have open and honest conversations with people to help empower them. It’s also very important to be a good listener. I promote advocacy events and invite others to come and join me because if there are decisions being made that affect our lives, it shouldn’t be happening without us! Just being a positive role model can inspire others to get more involved.

Mark Milano

Mark MilanoCourtesy of Mark Milano

What advice do you have for people doing HIV advocacy work today?

Progress never comes without struggle. We need to put our bodies on the line if we are to change the system. But don’t forget self-care! I’ve had to take breaks in order to keep my sanity.

Fred Hersch

Fred HerschBill Wadman

Why do you advocate for people living with HIV?

Because AIDS is not over! We need to keep people’s attention on this ongoing global crisis.

2015 Medical Milestone

Istock

Research showed that women living with HIV who breast-feed can protect their infants from infection for up to a year after birth by giving them a liquid form of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

The 2015 POZ 100

Khafre Kujichagulia Abif

Raymond Alejo

Tez Anderson

Rhonda Barnes

Ed Barron

Gilbert Bazan

Donald Beard

Jeff Berry

Michael Bivens

Shirley Boughton

Stephanie Brooks-Wiggins

Ronald Chaney

Shana C.

Jim Chud

Orbit Clanton

Patricia Clark

Graig Cote

Daniel Craddock

Vince Crisostomo

Robert Darrow

Fernando De Hoyos

Jose de Marco

Ludovicus de Soncoeur

José Diaz Vasquez

Connie Dukes

Nancy Duncan

Felicia Flames Elizondo

Maurice Evans

Carrie Foote

Jolene Ford

Larry Frampton

Claire Gasamagera

Sanford E. Gaylord

Lolisa Gibson-Hunte

Joel Goldman

Grissel Granados

Ryan Grant

Mark Grantham

Todd Grove

Jesús Guillén

Perry N. Halkitis

Jeff Hammond

Margaret Harris-Guyette

Stephen Hartley

Fred Hersch

Mark Hunter

Andrena Ingram

Joseph Interrante

Arturo Jackson III

Edward Jackson

Stacy Jennings

Janet Johnson

Richard Koob

Scott A. Kramer

Jay Lassiter

Nancer LeMoins

Sherri Lewis

Wanda London

Alejandro Lopez

Luna Luis Ortiz

Vickie Lynn

Cornelius Mabin

Sean McKenna

Maria Mejia

Mark Milano

Joshua Moore

Joe Norton

Eddie Orozco

Jan Carl Park

Robert Penn

Andrew Pulsipher

Jim Raper

Jon Jay Read

Lepena Reid

Hunter Reynolds

Tatania Riley

Doug Rose

Mark Rosenbaum

Cecilia Ross

Julia Sanchez

Jonathan Scott

Erin Secker

Vanessa Sharp

Ron Simmons

Bob Skinner

Glenda Small

Bill Snow

Charles Straight

Jeff Taylor

Arthurine “Cookie” Thompson

Bruce Turner

Silvia Valerio

Steven Vargas

Bruce Ward

Sam Wickersham

Auntjuan Wiley

Jeffery Williams-Knight

Ernest Wilson

Acintia Wright

Mark Wyn

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