The 2017 POZ 100: Celebrating Women

This list spotlighted the work of women advocates—many of which are members of Positive Women's Network–USA.

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

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When our staff first brainstormed ideas for the 2017 POZ 100, we figured it would be an opportune time to highlight women, not only because women account for 25% of people living with HIV in the United States but also because, like many people, we expected our nation to swear in its first female president that year.

Although that didn't happen, the election of Donald Trump as president instead coincided with the rise of the #MeToo movement and attacks on Planned Parenthood and women's health care, all of which underscored the need to celebrate women fighting the HIV epidemic.

Honorees in the 2017 POZ 100 consisted of cis- and transgender women, both living with HIV and not, ranging from clinical researchers and boardroom executives to on-the-ground advocates, HIV testers and community organizers. Many of the women on the POZ 100 list did advocacy work around domestic violence, immigration rights, sex work, homelessness and harm reduction, illustrating how HIV intersects with these issues and relates to the overall well-being and health of women.

"The idea that HIV affects only gay and bisexual men is a myth," said Oriol Gutierrez, our editor-in-chief, when promoting the POZ 100. "Because of this long-standing myth, women are often ignored or dismissed as an afterthought in the larger discussions surrounding HIV/AIDS."

We were thrilled to spotlight 100 of these women in 2017, including those who graced the cover, several of whom were members of Positive Women's Network–USA, the national advocacy group that aims to get HIV-positive women more involved in public policy and decision-making.

Catching Up With...

Tori Cooper

Tori CooperJonathan Timmes

Why do you advocate for people living with HIV?

I advocate for people living with HIV because I understand that with greater visibility comes greater responsibility. Each of us must use our privilege to create more opportunities and access to those with less privilege and access and fewer opportunities. None of us achieves viral suppression without help. Finding a doctor and accessing supportive services often come through folks' networks. HIV advocacy is about creating villages of support.

Glenna McCarthy

Glenna McCarthyBill Wadman

Why do you advocate for people living with HIV?

I remember when some people (including me) were ostracized and even disowned by our families. Misinformation still exists, and everyone needs to have a safe space to build their foundation and self-awareness.

Jennifer Vaughan

Jennifer VaughanCourtesy of Jennifer Vaughan

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

Know that you are making a difference. It never matters how small or big it is, it just matters.

2017 Medical Milestone

The Food and Drug Administration approved an HIV treatment regimen that contains only two antiretrovirals, instead of the standard three or more drugs.

The 2017 POZ 100

Mary Arbuckle

Ivy Arce

Tranisha Arzah

Gwenn Barringer

Asia Betancourt

Lisa Binkley

Dale Brewer

Cynthia Brinson

Lisa Britt

Vanessa Campus

Barb Cardell

Juanita Chestnut

Ezerae Coates

Tori Cooper

Simone Counts

Karina Danvers

Sharon DeCuir

Pamela Denzer

Alicia Diggs

Sharen Duke

Michele Durham

Marci Egel

Nikki Ferraro

Carrie Foote

Anna Forbes

Geneva Galloway-Pitts

Kathy Garner

Tuyishime Claire Gasamagera

Kathleen Gerus Darbison

Kelly Gluckman

Lillibeth Gonzalez

Grissel Granados

Gloria Guzman

Janet Hall

Mildred Harper

Tami Haught

Kathie Hiers

Juanita Hubbard

Barbara Hughes

Stacy Hyde

Olga Irwin

Tracey Jackson

Michelle Jackson-Rollins

LeSherri James

Stacy Jennings

Monica Johnson

Marsha Jones

Shyronn Jones

Esther Kim

Alleen King-Carter

Arianna Lint

Nichole Little

Barbara J. Lock

Sylvia Lopez

Theresa Mack

Julie Marston

Nina Martinez

Carolyn Massey

Glenna McCarthy

Rita McDaniel

Patricia “Pat” McNeill Shelton

Joyce Mitchell

Candace Y.A. Montague

Johanne Morne

Allison Nichol

Ijeoma Opara

Teresia Njoki Otieno

Julie Patterson

Laura Pinsky

Aracelis Quiñones

Shakyara Ralat

Paige Rawl

Venita Ray

Debra Richardson

Valerie L. Rochester

Connie Roebuck

Diana Rowan

Shirley Royster

Beverly Sha

Judith Shaw

Arianna Smith

Jennie Smith-Camejo

Meta Smith-Davis

Cindy Stine

Blake Strasser

Teresa Sullivan

Chuan Teng

Demetra Tennison-Grant

Desiree Thompson

Julene Tripp Weaver

Evany Turk

Jennifer Vaughan

Brandi Velasquez

Martha Warriner Jarrett

Cynthia Watson-Catha

Marguerite Wheeler-Lara

Lisa Diane White

Terri Wilder

Victoria “Tori” Williams

Valerie Wojciechowicz

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