



The 2018 POZ 100: Celebrating People 50 and Over

This year's list included many advocates who are also long-term survivors.

November 16, 2020 By [Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.](#), Joe Mejía , Jennifer Morton and [Trent Straube](#)

About half of the 1.2 million people living with HIV in the United States are 50 or older. Within a decade, the proportion is expected to jump to 70%. That means this particular age group is the future of the epidemic, and it is increasingly important to understand the unique challenges related to growing older with HIV. These include, for example, dealing with isolation and comorbidities (other health issues that coexist with HIV, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and depression) and understanding how the virus and its treatment affect the aging process.

Many of the people living with HIV who are 50 or older are also long-term survivors, meaning they were HIV positive before 1996, when effective treatment first became available. Many long-term survivors never expected to live to see 50, and yet many honorees on the 2018 POZ 100 list were well beyond that age; the oldest was 78. It is also true that many people contracted HIV while in their 50s or older—one man was actually diagnosed with AIDS on his 50th birthday—a reminder that it's important to discuss HIV prevention strategies with people of every age.

The 2018 POZ 100 presented more than an opportunity to celebrate a diverse roster of HIV-positive advocates. It was also a chance to show the world that it's possible to survive, thrive and age well with the virus.

Catching Up With...

Rosa Rivera Avilés

Rosa Rivera Avilés Jensen Larson

Why do you advocate for people living with HIV?

When I received my HIV diagnosis nearly 24 years ago, I had two paths before me: to let myself die or to advocate for my rights and for others living with HIV who dare not speak publicly. I decided that the best legacy I can leave is to create a more dignified life for those with HIV. My dream is that people with HIV can be treated with respect.

Bryan Jones

Bryan Jones Jensen Larson

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

Read The Denver Principles because they are important to understand. As an advocate, you may have to voice an unpopular opinion, and it may make people in the room uncomfortable. But why stay silent? My rule is, if I'm uncomfortable, everyone in the whole damn room is going to be uncomfortable because I'm going to speak my voice loud and clear.

Anselmo Fonseca

Anselmo FonsecaAngel Valentín

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

If this is not your passion, stay away. If it is, remember this is about survival; get ready for very hard work. You must pace yourself. You are in it for the long haul. Along the way, some will not stay or be with you. Don't get discouraged; many others will, and those who do will be enough.

2018 Medical Milestone

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
the national annual HIV infection rate dropped 15%.

The 2018 POZ 100

Waldon Adams

Stephen Addona
Moisés Agosto-Rosario
Tez Anderson
Lillian Anglada
Stephen Aube
Proscovia Ayoo
Karla Barnett
Robbie Bergman
Randy Boyd
Wanda Brendle-Moss
Chris Bridges
William Brochinsky
Reginald T. Brown
Marilyn Burnett
Giulio Maria Carbelli
Brian Carmichael
Marco Castro-Bojorquez
Joel Caudle
Orbit Clanton
Neil Coffman-Grey
Robert Cornelius
Shelia Crockett
William Scott Daly
Mark A. Davis
Larry Day
Yolanda Diaz
Reggie Dunbar II
Jace Dyckman
Bryan Fleury
Anselmo Fonseca
Larry Frampton

Randall Furrow
Lillibeth Gonzalez
Mark Grantham
Aundaray Guess
Jesús Guillén
Carlos Gutierrez-Solana
Bill Hall
Mitchell Handrich
Graham Harriman
Danny Harris
Michelle Harris
Deborah Helm
Patrice Henry
Ángel Luis Hernández
Matthew Hodson
Franceina Hopkins
Mark Hughes
Olga Irwin
Edward Jackson
Eric Jannke
Ronald Johnson
Bryan Jones
Mary Frances Jones
Perry Junjulas
Pat Kelly
Mark S. King
Kevin Koerner
Kenneth Lamb
Bob Leahy
Kevin Lish
Abad Lopez

Michelle Lopez
Randal Lucero
Carlos Maldonado
Steven Manning
Eunice Marshall
Kalvin Marshall
Joyce McDonald
Enrique Menendez
Susan Mull
Aaron Myatt
Eric Novak
Charlie Palmer
Jesse Peel
Osvaldo Perdomo
Robert Pompa
Rob Quinn
Melanie Reese
Lepena Reid
Robert Riester
Rosa Rivera Avilés
Raul Robles
Michael Rouppe
Thomas Sampson
Charles Sanchez
Steve Schalchlin
Scott Schlaffman
Harold R. "Scottie" Scott
Chanelle Sessooms
Robert (Bob) Skinner
Winthrop Smith
William Snow

Steve Stagon

Tom Straley

John Tenorio

Larry Watson

Hector Xtravaganza

Michael "Zee" Zalnasky

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