



The POZ 100: A-C

November 11, 2013

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Jaci Adams

Jaci Adams
Volunteer Coordinator
AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Positive since 1983

Jaci Adams is a 55-year-old transgender woman who transformed her experiences as an abused and neglected child into empowering lessons and advocacy for the neglected and vulnerable. She has been a long-term volunteer with the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania and helps coordinate volunteers and educate others on HIV and transgender awareness. Jaci served as a member of the Morris County Planning Committee and the Philadelphia Trans-Health Conference Planning Committee. She is a founding member of the Temple University Community Advisory Board and founded the People with Hope Trans Conference in 2004. Jaci is currently battling Stage IV cancer. But that isn't stopping her: She sold raffle tickets for an AIDS Law Project fundraiser to her chemotherapy treatment team.



Dorian-Gray
Alexander

Dorian-Gray Alexander
Intern
CHANGE Coalition
New Orleans, Louisiana
Positive since 2006

Dorian-Gray Alexander is very informed about Ryan White funding, health care reform and linkage to care and understands the importance of consumer involvement. He coordinates trainings for consumers and participates in a myriad of groups including the National Minority AIDS Council's Treatment, Education, Adherence and Mobilization (TEAM) Navigators, the Department of Health and Human Services Medicaid Consumer Input Group, the NOLA Interagency Council to End Homelessness and the Ryan White Work Group. He is an at-large member of Louisiana AIDS

Advocacy Network, chair of NO/AIDS Task Force community advisory board and a member of the National AIDS Housing Coalition and the LSU Health Sciences Center HIV Malignancy Consortium Advisory Board.



Brandon
Allen

Brandon Allen
Community Health Specialist/Peer Navigator
South Carolina HIV/AIDS Council
Columbia, South Carolina
Positive since 2010

Brandon Allen found out he was positive at the South Carolina HIV/AIDS Council in 2010. He has since blossomed into an example of hope and inspiration for young African-American men and others in the community. He began as a volunteer and initiated a vision for young MSM who seek support and encouragement. While completing his bachelor's degree in English, he enrolled in a series of HIV/AIDS prevention and behavioral risk-reduction courses hosted by the CDC and was hired as a peer navigator and community health specialist. Brandon is also a community advocate and public speaker. He was recently the keynote speaker of a PHARAOH intervention program for incarcerated HIV-positive and -negative men, and he was a panelist on the Gospel of Healing HIV Community Forum.



Jeff Allen

Jeff Allen
President
Positive Champions Speakers Bureau
Ormond Beach, Florida
Positive since 1985

For the past 27 years, paying it forward has been Jeff Allen's mission. He helps people overcome the depths of addiction and homelessness and take full control of their lives as he once did. Jeff began the Positive Champions Speakers Bureau to allow individuals to speak to the community on the fear and stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and the importance of staying in care after testing positive. Jeff is a co-chair of the Gay Men's Workgroup Bureau of HIV/AIDS, and he sits on the board of several other area organizations. He is also involved with the local Ryan White consortium. Jeff cherishes the opportunity to help in whatever way he can—and to share and learn new ways of improving HIV/AIDS outreach efforts.



Marco Benjamin

Marco Benjamin
Condom Nation Program Manager
AIDS Healthcare Foundation
Los Angeles, California
Positive since 2008

After being diagnosed with HIV in 2008, Marco Benjamin became involved in AIDS activism by attending protests and demonstrations against drug pricing. He eventually quit his job at an architectural firm and was hired as contractor to mobilize individuals for the Keep the Promise March at last year's International AIDS Conference in Washington, DC. Currently, Marco is the Condom Nation program manager at AIDS Healthcare Foundation and spends the better part of the year in an 18-wheeler truck going across the nation distributing condoms and educating others about safer sex. Last year the program visited 45 cities and gave away 5.5 million condoms.



Bryant Bergeron

Bryant Bergeron
Medical Case Manager
Nashville CARES
Nashville, Tennessee
Positive since 2001

Bryant Bergeron discovered he was HIV positive shortly after leaving the military in 2001. For the next few years, he struggled with his diagnosis and drug addiction. Bryant is now a medical case manager at Nashville CARES and uses his personal experiences in his work with other people living with HIV. He interacts with clients on a holistic level, looking at both internal and external struggles to determine the best course of action. Bryant has also facilitated a monthly support group for HIV-positive gay men, helped at HIV testing events and fundraising events and has been a member of a planning group for agency events and outings. He embodies the belief that blurring the line between "provider" and "consumer" improves the quality of services at Nashville CARES.



Isadore Boni

Isadore Boni
Survivor/Educator/Advocate
San Carlos Apache Tribe HIV/AIDS Coalition
Phoenix, Arizona
Positive since 2002

Isadore Boni is a member of the San Carlos Apache Tribe. When he was diagnosed with HIV and

hepatitis C in 2002, he was forced to leave the reservation because of stigma and he subsequently became homeless. After dealing with the rejection of his tribe and family, he went public with his story in 2004 on World AIDS Day. He continued to share his story in schools nationwide and began reaching out to the tribal council in hopes of bringing AIDS education to his people. Isadore eventually succeeded and became the tribe's first HIV/AIDS consultant. He continues to educate people about HIV/AIDS and how we can eradicate stigma. Isadore serves on the National Native American AIDS Prevention Center's Community Advisory Council and runs a half marathon each January in memory of Native people who have died of AIDS-related complications.



Vera Bowlby

Vera Bowlby
Peer Counseling Coordinator
Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation
Tucson, Arizona
Positive since 1999

Vera Bowlby is responsible for overseeing the Peer Counseling Department at the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation. She provides superb guidance, direction and leadership for her team to ensure that all new clients receive the care and support they need. Vera uses her experiences as a person living with HIV to inspire those who are newly diagnosed. She is compassionate, empathetic and driven to help others. For people now facing the challenges of living with HIV, Vera sets an awe-inspiring example by demonstrating that the possibilities are endless.



Gina Brown

Gina Brown
Regional Organizer
AIDS United
Washington, DC
Positive since 1994

As a regional organizer covering Arkansas, Texas and her home state of Louisiana for AIDS United, Gina Brown works to help the HIV community understand what the Affordable Care Act means for HIV-positive people and advocates for expanded access to care. Through workshops, trainings and one-on-one conversations, Gina helps both individuals living with HIV and the agencies who serve them increase their knowledge of health care reform. Thanks to her efforts, advocacy coalitions are stronger and individuals are empowered to push for the policies that benefit them. The needs of women and girls are central to Gina's work. She is a board member of the Positive Women's Network and ensures that the issues important to HIV-positive women and women at risk of HIV—such as intimate partner violence, economic inequality, reproductive justice and HIV criminalization—remain front and center.



Marisol
Calderon

Marisol Calderon
Board Member and Client Advocate
Valley AIDS Council
Harlingen, Texas
Positive since 2011

After receiving a visit from the Texas Health Department notifying her that she had been exposed to HIV—she subsequently confirmed she was positive—Marisol Calderon began to tell her story and educate others. She joined the board of directors of Valley AIDS Council—an organization that had provided her with specialized care and shoulders to lean on. Marisol soon became the client advocate, ensuring that the agency’s clients always had a voice at the table. In 2012, Marisol went public with her status in English and Spanish language television interviews. Marisol advocates for safer-sex practices and routine HIV testing, and her voice empowers Latinas. She urges women to protect themselves, to challenge their cultural norms and to openly discuss sexuality, which is taboo within Latino culture.



Tony Carlew

Tony Carlew
Medical Case Manager
Nashville CARES
Nashville, Tennessee
Positive since 2005

Tony Carlew found out he was HIV positive shortly after joining Nashville CARES in 2005. As a medical case manager, he provides HIV education and support and infuses his work with a tremendous understanding of and empathy for the fears, concerns and challenges faced by his clients. As part of CARES’ system of deploying staff throughout the community to increase the visibility of services, Tony visits the HIV Wellness Center at Meharry Medical College weekly to connect with staff and clients. He is also a singer-songwriter and is donating a portion of sales from two newly released singles from his self-titled record, *Who Is Tony Carlew?*, to the Nashville CARES AIDS Walk and UNAIDS.



Craig Chapin

Craig Chapin
Prevention Services Manager
Colorado AIDS Project
Fort Collins, Colorado
Positive since 2002

Craig Chapin has been a volunteer and staff member for the Colorado AIDS Project (primarily as part of the Northern Colorado AIDS Project) for 17 years. He was instrumental in working on the negotiating team behind the successful merger of four AIDS service organizations in October 2011. He has been a strong advocate for the HIV-positive population and focuses on prevention efforts. Craig has made a significant impact on the organization's success over the years. He is a true inspiration and a humble advocate for the community.



José F. Colón
López

José F. Colón López
Founder
Pacientes de Sida Pro Política Sana
San Juan, Puerto Rico
Positive since 1995

José F. Colón López was an activist and advocate for HIV/AIDS rights and services in Puerto Rico. He and his partner Anselmo Fonseca were inspired to create Pacientes de Sida Pro Política Sana in 1999 after the San Juan AIDS Institute scandal. (Officials were eventually convicted of stealing more than \$2 million in federal AIDS funds for personal and political gain.) José continued to be a defender of HIV/AIDS funds, services and rights. He spoke before the U.S. Congress on behalf of the Ryan White CARE Act in 2000. He was a brave and passionate person on HIV-related issues. Sadly, José died May 15, 2013, and on that day, the Puerto Rican HIV community lost a hero.

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