Don’t Stop Me Now

In the wake of COVID-19, we decided to hit the pause button on POZ 100 to take a look back, celebrating 10 years of advocacy.

November 16, 2020 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I joined the POZ staff in 2008, before the POZ 100 existed. The first list was launched in 2010. The intervening years between my stint as deputy editor and the debut of the POZ 100 are worth revisiting.

President Obama was elected. He staffed up the President’s Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, reopened the Office of National AIDS Policy and invited hundreds of people, many of them living with HIV, to the White House for an event to celebrate the launch of a National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

Also, the Affordable Care Act had been signed into law, although it wouldn’t take full effect until 2014. Further, the travel ban for people living with HIV entering the United States was lifted. The International AIDS Conference was scheduled to return to the United States in 2012 as a result. The event had not been held here since 1990.

There were plenty of reasons to feel as if AIDS activism was making progress again. The POZ 100 list was created to uplift those advocates at a crucial time. The POZ 100 was so well received that we did it again and again up to 2019.

In the wake of COVID-19, it became clear to us that business as usual with the POZ 100 wasn’t going to be possible in 2020. Instead, we decided to hit the pause button to take a look back, celebrating 10 years of advocacy. It’s been a heartwarming ride.

In fact, my time here at POZ will always be closely linked to the POZ 100. Can you guess which issue of the magazine was my first as editor-in-chief? That’s right, it was the December 2012 issue, which showcased the third annual POZ 100 list!

After that baptism by fire, I knew that we (mostly I) needed a fresh approach. Our managing editor, Jennifer Morton, suggested that we make the list into a nomination process. It has remained that way ever since. My thanks to her and all the POZ staff for making the POZ 100 list a reality, but most of all to the community for participating.

Each year had a theme: honoring AIDS advocates; 100 people, things and ideas we love; accelerating the end of AIDS; unsung heroes; youth power; long-term survivors; the South;

women; people 50 and over; and transgender, gender-nonconforming and nonbinary advocates. And we're far from done.

The POZ 100 will return in 2021. We usually don't announce the theme of the list this far in advance, but, as they say, every rule has an exception. In recognition of the renewed Black Lives Matter movement, the 2021 POZ 100 will celebrate Black advocates. Stay tuned.

Until then, please click here to read more about the POZ 100, including current words of wisdom from past honorees.

Speaking of current times, one of the challenges we confront today is the widespread lack of belief in science. Science doesn't even require belief. What it does require is an open mind. Anthony Fauci, MD, knows this all too well.

As the longtime head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, he has been fighting this battle for decades. The COVID-19 pandemic has made his job that much more urgent. Click here for more.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/stop-now-poz-100-celebration