



Together Again

A sense of getting back to basics is what inspires this year's POZ 100 list.

November 13, 2023 By [Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.](#)

I had the privilege of attending the 2023 United States Conference on HIV/AIDS (USCHA), which was held in Washington, DC, this past September. I shared staffing duties at the POZ booth.

I was also pleased to have been able to attend the 2022 USCHA in San Juan, Puerto Rico. That was my first conference after COVID-19 forced a break in large gatherings. It felt like a family reunion. This year's USCHA felt similar, as the event always brings together people who haven't seen each other in a while. That said, I felt something else: a sense of normalcy.

One could argue that was true last year, but I would describe what I felt back then as, at best, the start of a return to normalcy. This year felt plainly normal. Of course, it was definitely the new normal.

Some folks were still choosing to wear masks and avoid handshakes. Others (me included) lamented not being able to get the latest COVID booster in time for the conference. Given those caveats, it just felt good to be able to get on with what we were all there for—the fight against HIV.

To see social media posts commemorating this year's USCHA, [go here](#).

That sense of getting back to basics is what inspires this year's POZ 100 list. The past several years had rightfully shifted the focus of many advocates to other urgent matters. This moment feels like a much-needed opening to return to the essentials of eradicating the virus.

"Working Together to End HIV" is this year's theme. The list spotlights 100 entities, including organizations, agencies, networks and initiatives, that are making an impact nationwide and around the world in the fight against HIV. We thank all the honorees for their unwavering commitment to the cause. [Go here](#) to learn about them.

As with each POZ 100, this year's list is not meant to be comprehensive. It is, however, intended to be representative of the community at large. We believe the list provides excellent examples of HIV advocacy.

In each issue of POZ, we also strive to spotlight inspiring stories of HIV advocacy by individuals. Artist Jack Walls and activist Malcolm Gregory Scott are two such people.

Walls was Robert Mapplethorpe's boyfriend in the 1980s until his death in 1989. Currently, Walls is a thriving artist. [Go here](#) to read more about his life now.

Scott is a long-term survivor. Not only has he fought against HIV, but he is also a longtime cannabis activist. Today, he is working on a documentary about the Lazarus Generation of AIDS, those who rose up from their death beds after effective treatment and are still alive. [Go here](#) for more on Scott.

Our sister publication Real Health, which focuses on African-American wellness, has published another special issue on HIV. Find it [here](#).

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