Troy Smith

January 3, 2014

Capitol Heights, Maryland
Positive since 1989

In 1989, I went in to get tested for HIV and the results came back positive. I didn't follow up with a doctor.

In December 1996, I started getting really sick. My mom drove two and a half hours to the house I was buying at the time. Somehow she knew something was wrong. She took me home to Charlottesville, Virginia and took me to the hospital.

The hospital staff knew what it was even before they diagnosed me. I had a CD4 count of zero, which meant the virus had ravaged my body to the point in which I had no immune system left.

Twenty-eight years later, my CD4 count at my last doctor's visit was 800. I don't feel guilty for anything and I'm not ashamed. Anyone who has sex is at risk. By looking at me, you would never know I am HIV positive and almost 49 years old. I look 10 years younger than I am.

People need to realize we're just at the beginning of this pandemic and the worst is yet to come. Africa has the most cases of HIV in the world but they already predict China, India and Russia will have more cases in the next quarter of this century.

What is your greatest achievement?
Being alive

What is your greatest regret?
Not being with a close friend when he passed away with AIDS

What keeps you up at night?
Nothing

What person in the HIV/AIDS community do you most admire?
Friends who are surviving

What drives you to do what you do?
Happiness

What is your motto?
Live every moment like it’s your last and laugh a lot.

If you had to evacuate your house immediately, what is the one thing you would grab on the way out?
Me!

If you could be any animal, what would you be? And why?
A dog because they’re faithful and enjoy just being alive

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