Youth and Advocacy

Social media casts a spotlight on youth working to end the epidemic.

April 1, 2019 By Joe Mejía

A lot has changed since 1994, the year POZ was founded. That was two years before antiretrovirals ushered in the era of effective treatment for HIV and 10 years before the launch of Facebook gave rise to social media's domination. Back in 1994, gay white men in urban centers were the face of the virus. Today it's young people of color in rural areas—namely, men who have sex with men and trans women—who are disproportionately affected by HIV. In response, young people are pursuing careers in HIV, forming their own AIDS service organizations and using social media to organize, protest and educate.

Whether they're tweeting their critiques of the president's HIV policies or using Instagram to share their HIV stories or to promote adherence, today's youth are taking the mantle from their activist forebears to become the next generation of those acting up to end the epidemic. April 10 is National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day; search #NYHAAD on social media to see what the youth are up to.

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