Spotlight on Destiny Smith: Women Making a Difference

The Well Project interviews Destiny Smith, Community Advisory Board member and *A Girl Like Me* blogger, for our “Spotlight: Women Making a Difference” series.

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This post originally appeared on and can be read in its entirety at The Well Project.

How did you get your start in HIV advocacy?

I got started in HIV advocacy about seven months after finding out my positive status, the day after Christmas 2017; I was 22 and pregnant with my second child. Advocacy was a way to help me get out of depression and feel normal and help me accept and love myself after finding out about my status.

Are you particularly passionate about a specific topic or demographic?

Yes – I work hard to serve African-American young adults and to help people get comfortable with being tested and knowing their status.

Do you think women living with HIV face unique challenges?

All women face a lot of unique challenges just being women but to be a woman with HIV is so hard to handle sometimes. Because of stigma, so many people have this assumption of you because of your status. As an African-American woman living with HIV, I feel like, because in our community we don’t have the conversation enough, people shun you out and look at you a certain way when they hear about it.

Can you share a story that illustrates how you’ve been successful in working with women living with HIV?

In the spring of 2020, I released a book about having HIV as a pregnant, African-American young adult. I went into detail about how I overcame depression and how dealt with the news when I found out my status. I know that my book has made a lot of young adults, especially in my community, more comfortable with having that conversation of knowing our status.

What advice would you offer a woman who recently learned that she has HIV?

Life is going to move forward with you in it. You have so much to give to the world. And you will always be loved.

What advice would you offer a woman who wants to get started in HIV advocacy?

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The Well Project is a non-profit organization whose mission is to change the course of the HIV/AIDS pandemic through a unique and comprehensive focus on women and girls. Visit their website, https://www.thewellproject.org/, to access fact sheets (English and Spanish), blogs, and advocacy tools, and to join a global community of women living with HIV.

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