Advocating for HIV/AIDS Coverage in LGBT Media

June 11, 2009 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

Advocacy works, even in journalism. Chris Crain, a well-known former editor of LGBT publications and the founding author of the Citizen Crain blog, provides fresh evidence.

He took a months-long break from his blog, but has since returned. Here's an excerpt of a recent post by Crain:

"I had to smile when I read a post welcoming me back to blogging from a somewhat unlikely source: Michael Petrelis. It was something of an understatement for Michael, a longtime gay, AIDS and human rights activist, to write that we have had 'a sometimes adversarial acquaintance over the years.'

"I still differ with him on his methods at times, as well as on substance occasionally, but then and now Michael was at times spot-on in his criticism. **I particularly took to heart his complaint that we should never do a story about HIV/AIDS without at least one**

quote from someone living with the disease, and I worked with the reporters to make it something of a rule for our coverage."

If Petrelis hadn’t applied pressure on Crain, then the result arguably could’ve been less fair and accurate coverage of HIV/AIDS in the LGBT media.

I encourage us media types to use that advocacy tool on our own publications. For example, I don’t see anything unethical with reporters making a case to their editors for more inclusive HIV/AIDS stories.

Journalists aren’t activists, but I don’t believe there’s anything wrong with us advocating for better journalism.

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