Help Lark Lands Battle Cancer

Friends of the longtime HIV advocate and former POZ science editor are asking for support.

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Editor's note: Lark Lands was in remission after this request for support, but she died in 2019. Our condolences to her loved ones.

Lark Lands, PhD, has dedicated her life to helping others. Whether through her work as a treatment advocate, science journalist and health educator focusing on issues concerning people living with HIV, hepatitis, diabetes (she was diagnosed with type 1 of the disease as a child) and other health conditions or through H.O.P.E. (Helping Orphans by Providing Empowerment), the organization she founded to support orphans and impoverished families in South Africa, her knowledge and spirit have touched the lives of countless friends and strangers alike.

Now, the former science editor for POZ is in need of some help herself. True to form, however, she's not the one doing the asking; her friends and former colleagues—some of whom personally benefited from her wisdom and advocacy in the early days of the HIV epidemic—have set up a GoFundMe page on her behalf. Two of them include POZ founder Sean Strub and former POZ senior editor Bob Lederer.

"Lark is a unique, irreplaceable combination of brilliant research scientist, resourceful integrative healer and generous, empathic counselor," said Bob. "Through her prolific output as a speaker, writer and editor—particularly at POZ, where I was thrilled to work with her as science editor—she has helped saved thousands of lives."

Lark is struggling with Stage IV metastatic cancer that has spread to her lungs and is now on oxygen full-time. But this doesn't mean the woman who in her many articles for POZ and hundreds of lectures on HIV and integrative nutrition across the country offered hope to so many has given up. In an email sent to friends in July, she wrote, in part: "The only thing I'm really interested in is oncolytic viruses to treat cancer. The research is showing amazing results at top cancer research centers. People with other 'incurable' cancers have been cured. So there's always hope."

Although Medicare covers many of Lark's medical expenses, it won't pay for the portable oxygen concentrator she needs when away from home, so a chunk of the money being raised will go toward purchasing one. Additionally, it seems Lark may qualify for a clinical trial that's testing the oncolytic virus treatment she is so optimistic about; if she is indeed eligible and able to enroll, her participation (which will involve travel and other expenses) will be costly.

To help our longtime friend and advocate keep up her fight, please click here. To read a personal testimony about Lark by her friend and longtime HIV advocate Nelson Vergel, click here.

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