



HIV Stops With Me

My journey living with HIV & becoming an advocate continues to grow & now I remind people that HIV Stops With Me as the CEO of My Life.

March 10, 2025 By [JMV](#)

On a cold January morning, I started off 2025 with some hope. I made my way downtown, faces passed, & I was campaign-training bound. Let me tell you about how I booked a campaign with HIV Stops With Me.

But first, let me give you a teaser of the end result. Below is one of my videos for the 2025 HIV Stops With Me campaign. You can [watch them all here](#).

I remember seeing ads for HIV Stops With Me with a nightlife friend Jahlove, shining & looking brilliant, but I never really considered how I could be brought on for something like that. Then I saw another ad with someone that I happened to graduate high school with & the connection seemed to grow closer. Then I was booked to perform at SAGE in Brooklyn in Fall 2023 for their HIV-positive residents & another spokesmodel mentioned me coming onto the campaign. After that, I really hadn't heard anything for a while.

A few months ago (November 2024), my friend Jahlove reached out again & thought I'd be a good addition to the roster of spokesmodels for the upcoming campaign for 2025. I always have reservations about putting my name out there unless I'm fully aware of what I'm taking on. I go into every opportunity with tons of questions. I think it's good.

The next step was getting on a Zoom call with the person in charge, Sheldon. I'd say we spoke for about an hour & in that time he asked me a lot of questions, I told my story, & had questions of my own to ask. When we were finishing up our chat, I was officially brought into the campaign.

The next step was a weekend of group training & bonding plus a photo shoot & video shoot. There was immediately something different about being in this room. Twenty-something HIV+ people from all different walks of life. I sat surprisingly quiet most of the time, having some conversations & getting to know people, but I sat back & wanted to listen.

This was the first time I didn't feel like the resource or the person that had to be there for anyone even though I was. I felt supported. I felt understood.

Each day we arrived to the space where there was a coffee & breakfast setup for us, a designated

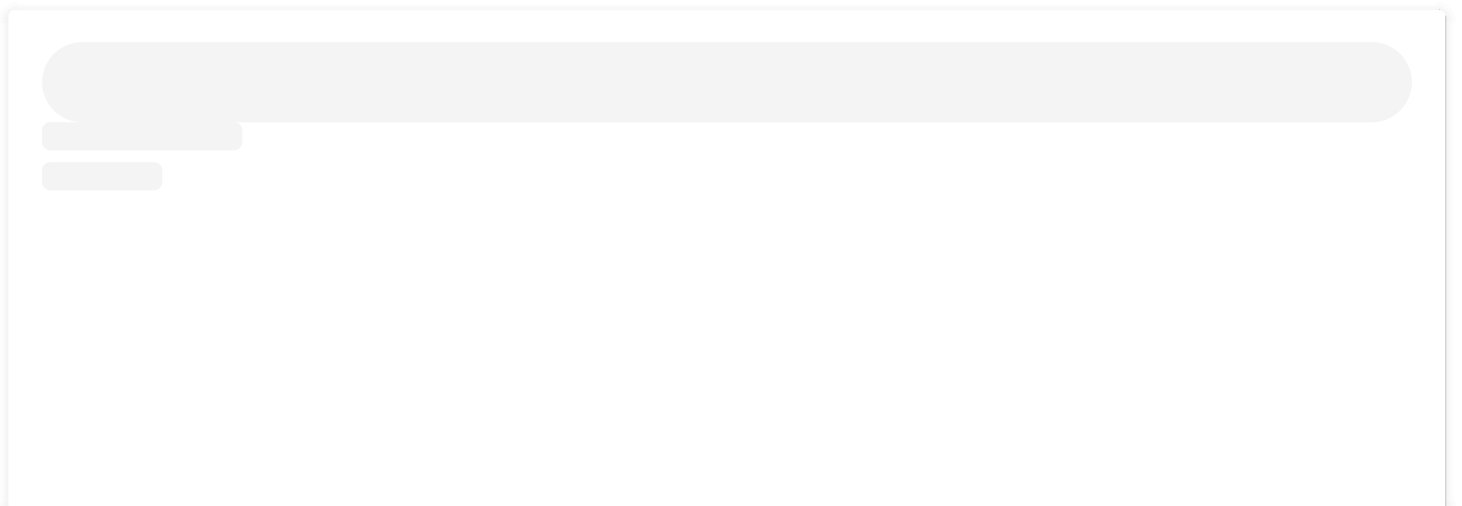
lunch break where we'd have time to learn more about each other, then after the day of training and group activities, we had an outing for dinner where we spent time celebrating ourselves & each other. I definitely grew closer to a lot of these wonderful humans.

Where there was time to learn about the campaign & the logistics of what it was to be a spokesmodel for HIV Stops With Me, we also had a five-minute period to tell our truth & experience of living with HIV. Telling our truth is how we relate to & help educate others. The activities we had were special & allowed us to examine the positive characteristics in each other in what was called "the towel presentation" where we presented someone that truly impacted you over the weekend with a perfectly folded HIV Stops With Me logo branded towel. I was one of the last to receive a towel which was somewhat humbling, but also not really because so many other people had their own breakthroughs that weekend with the bonds they made & it was beautiful to watch. I presented a towel to one of the spokesmodels named Dean. Dean lives in Rochester & told such a beautiful, vulnerable story. The entire weekend we bonded over our recovery from meth addiction, seeing the world through a new lens, drag & nightlife—it was an instant friendship.

There is also this handsome as heck spokesmodel named Robbie that I gravitated toward & we became very close. Many of our sentiments remained unspoken & we could just look in each other's direction & know what the other was thinking. Meeting people you can connect very deeply with is crucial for building community. It goes beyond the surface-level, superficial interactions we have on a daily basis.

While we were all sitting & listening to someone's story, the entire room was drenched in tears. The intensity reaching our hearts & through our souls. It broke everyone in the room down & we had to take a brief recess to reset. It was the first time that weekend that I allowed myself to really be raw & part of the group. I allowed myself to be comforted which was funny because it wasn't even my story that shattered my heart open. I felt myself melt & be held by multiple people at once. I needed that.

The weekend was coming to an end & saying goodbye was difficult. I now have a community of people to lean on & be a resource for. Our ads are up all over New York state with more on the way. My face is all over the New York City subway system and social media for being HIV+ & the CEO OF MY LIFE.





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A post shared by HIV STOPS WITH ME (@hivstopswithme)

I'm truly excited to see where this new journey & continued advocacy will take me this year. I already have so many event ideas in addition to the things I already participate & plan for our community. Check out HIVSTOPSWITHME.ORG to hear my story & get to know the 2025 spokesmodels. I think we all need to be able to tell our stories now more than ever, learn from each other, & build stronger communities. Our bonds must be unbreakable.