The “Ready to Live” Music Video Shoot

June 9, 2011 By Shawn Decker

Last Monday Gwenn, two friends (thanks Sara and Ben for coming along!) and I hit the road for the two-hour drive to DC to participate in an HIV/AIDS anti-stigma music video. The day went very smoothly outside of the fact that Gwenn was feeling a bit under the weather… it really sucks to feel bad and have to travel.

Why did we have to? The director, Monte Montgomery, wrote us into the script of the video shoot to have us represent what we are: a sero diverse couple. The concept of the video was that HIV status shouldn’t keep you from participating in, and enjoying, life. The name of the song is “Ready to Live”, a very inspirational little tune. Caressa Cameron, Miss America 2010, was on hand to sing the main verses of the song, and was backed up by a live band, and a few vocalists singing in both Spanish and English. (With a rap included- this song casts a wide net.)

In the video, each member of a flash choir reveals their HIV status. It’s done in such a care-free way, one of the goals of the video is to help people with HIV make peace with their status. I love any public service announcement about HIV that takes the feelings of those who are positive truly into account, and it’s why I agreed to be a part of it. After talking to Monte, and seeing his work, I knew his heart was in the right place. And on Monday, his crew made the day look effortless, taking all of the volunteers comfort levels into account by providing meals and a place to sit indoors until filming started.

It reminded me of the opposite experience I had years ago, when I was part of a television program in London. Several people with HIV- of vastly different levels of health- were gathered for a group interview, and over the course of two days of filming there were moments when the health of those participating was egregiously overlooked. On Monday, all the positoids participating seemed to be doing well health-wise, but looks can be deceiving and I know how well I can hide it when I’m feeling worn out and not up for much. I was deeply impressed with Monte’s care in undertaking the project, and not seeing past the participants in looking ahead to what will surely be a wonderful end result.

As for Gwenn feeling bad, I asked her if she wanted to stay home on Monday, since her health is my greatest concern, but she insisted on going. So I did my best to let her rest during the car ride up, and during the down time we had once we got to the shooting location. And, when they started rolling, she was a champ. Today, she is feeling much better than she was earlier this week- needless to say I’m very happy about that.

Of course, once the music video is edited and done, I’ll definitely be posting it here on the blog.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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