

Where Have All the Ribbons Gone?

December 7, 2009 By [Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.](#)



[Next Magazine](#) is the reigning (and only) gay nightlife weekly guide to New York City.

Mostly a mix of party listings, theater and dining recommendations with a dose of escort advertising, to its credit the publication often includes substantive feature articles.

The cover story of the November 27 issue in advance of World AIDS Day is a case in point. “Where Have All the Ribbons Gone?” spotlights three HIV-positive gay men.

On the cover is Mark Nelson, a well-known party promoter; also included are Luna Legacy, a community health specialist at GMHC and Mike Cavanaugh, founder of GayLifeNYC.org.

The tone of the five-page article is set by the deck: “Almost 30 years after it changed the face of our community, have we forgotten about AIDS?”

Here’s an excerpt:

“To live with AIDS in 2009 is scary for a whole different reason: the feeling that, to the gay community, AIDS is no longer their issue. In 2007, The New York Department of Health released a shocking statement: HIV rates in New York City had actually increased 33% among men under 30 since 2001. ‘My belief is that [new people contracting the virus] have never seen the destruction of AIDS,’ explains Nelson. ‘They think by going on the Internet and saying they will only have sex

with [drug- and disease-free] guys, they can practice unsafe habits.’”

Another excerpt that grabbed me:

“Perhaps what has also distanced the gay community from HIV/AIDS over the last decade or more is that the focus has shifted. ‘The face of AIDS is no longer the gay man,’ Mark Nelson points out. ‘It is an African child, which makes some feel the disease is not here.’ As well, the largest increases in New York have not been amongst the photogenic Chelsea boys but instead the ethnic minorities of the outer boroughs, a fact that allows some in the community to dissociate themselves from the disease and focus their energy on more attractive social issues.”

Kudos to Next Magazine for taking on HIV/AIDS and to Mark Nelson, Luna Legacy and Mike Cavanaugh for putting a face to the disease for the LGBT community.

I also hope that Next Magazine (as well as the rest of the LGBT media and mainstream media) will include such coverage outside of World AIDS Day.

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