#WorldAIDSDay And the Lessons of #HIV Unlearned

November 30, 2020 By Shawn Decker

Tuesday, December 1 is World AIDS Day.

This virus has claimed millions of lives worldwide. It's inspired great acts of humanitarianism. It's been equipped with more catchy and clever phrases than the act of sexual intercourse. It's been the cause of the day. It's been grossly ignored. HIV inspired fierce activism that has been utilized in the medical and political fields to better the lives of people living with not only cancer, but many other life-threatening conditions as well...

HIV changed the world as a whole. This pebble of sand on the beach that is my life was certainly changed in so many profound ways as a result of contracting the virus. I'm one of the lucky ones that has lived to tell the tale. That had access to life-saving treatments when I needed it the most. Alongside Gwenn, I've been able to share my story and a little bit of hope to millions of people in many different forms of communication. It's humbling. It's been the honor of my lifetime to educate people about the many ways that this epidemic has challenged us, and continues to do so.

I'd be remiss if I didn't add this: with COVID-19 there have been so many unforced errors. So much suffering. So much loss. The longterm effects for those who have survived will continue to be a part of our story. The recklessness and callousness exhibited by those sworn to protect us will be a stain on our collective history, as well as the personal history of those who enabled it... we are far from over COVID-19 but, if you can do better next time, please, do better.

Because there will most certainly be a next time.

One of the hardest things for me to swallow about 2020 is the fact that the AIDS epidemic didn't teach enough of us the lessons that would have made COVID-19 easier to deal with. The well-being of others should be just as valued as our own well-being. We are one collective being, and we just keep trying to chew our own damn nose off of our face... it's not a pretty sight.

So, lastly, I'll write what I've been writing on here for months: stay as safe as your circumstances allow. We owe it to our healthcare workers who have had our backs, fronts, outsides and insides whenever we've needed them the most. So let's return that favor and have theirs, too.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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