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Published on The Well Project (<https://www.thewellproject.org>)

<https://www.thewellproject.org/hiv-information/spotlight-kate-starr-women-making-difference>

Spotlight on Kate Starr: Women Making a Difference

Submitted on Sep 24, 2014



The Well Project interviews Kate Starr, Community Advisory Board member and A Girl Like Me blogger, for the newest in our "Spotlight: Women Making a Difference" series.

What is the thing you are most proud of, professionally or personally?

Personally, I am most proud of my son. I was diagnosed with HIV shortly after learning that I was pregnant through routine testing. One of my first questions was whether or not I would need to have an abortion. Luckily, I had a great doctor who taught me that it was safe for me to have a child and that I could greatly reduce the chances of infection through some basic precautions such as bottle feeding and medication adherence. I never missed a dose my entire pregnancy! After he was born, I set my alarm every six hours and gave him medication exactly as prescribed. My son is HIV negative, happy and healthy!

Why is it important to you to reach out to women specifically?

I feel that women are an underserved population in the HIV community. When I was newly diagnosed, it seemed most of the information/support I found was geared toward men. The Well Project was the first place that allowed me to identify with other women.

What advice or information would you offer a woman newly diagnosed with HIV?

Education is power. It was truly life-changing to learn about HIV from a reliable source like The Well Project. There are a lot of misconceptions and misinformation available. It is important to educate yourself using reputable sources.

What difference has The Well Project made in your life?

The Well Project has given me education, confidence and acceptance. When I was first diagnosed, I felt so alone and fearful. Through The Well Project, I found informative and accurate articles, educating me on HIV. The Well Project accepted me as an HIV-positive woman, when I felt the world would not. In time, this gave me the confidence I needed to not only fight this disease but to become an advocate for women with it. I am forever grateful to this amazing organization!

If you could visit one place in the world, where would it be?

I would visit Key West. I am a HUGE Jimmy Buffett fan and would love to experience a part of his songs! Sit me next to the ocean with a frozen concoction and I'm a happy girl!



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