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Spotlight on Masonia Traylor: Women Making a Difference

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Image



The Well Project interviews Community Advisory Board member Masonia Traylor for our "Spotlight: Women Making a Difference" series.

What is the goal of your advocacy work?

My goal is to ensure that the voices of women and youth living with HIV/AIDS are maximized for awareness and education and support. I also want to encourage my community to take a stronger stand on managing the current HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Do you have a specific focus?

Women and youth

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

Although I understand that the height of the epidemic has always primarily affected men who have sex with other men, after getting diagnosed I really saw the lack of women representation. My reality was that I didn't see women who looked like me battling this disease, especially at my age. I felt alone.

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

Currently I'm most proud of my resilience and my fight to have the happiness and joy that I deserve.

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

Hawaii near some beautiful waterfalls and clear water.

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

Don't lose yourself because of this diagnosis and keep joy on the forefront of your life. Remain positive with your outlook on life.

Can you share a story that illustrates how you've been successful in working with women living with HIV?

Social media can be used for so many negative things but I'm a firm believer that EVERY negative can be turned into a POSITIVE. I was skeptical about using social media to disclose my status but by doing so, I learned that:

I am not alone as a woman living with this virus

I offer hope to others just by continuously pushing forward and finding reasons to live.

One beautiful opportunity came my way and I nearly turned away from it. I met someone via my inbox from out of state where a young lady was newly diagnosed. She was frightened and lost about how to manage moving forward. I was afraid to talk to her because I wasn't in a motivating space at that time. However I was able to guide her as a peer from hundreds of miles away to a place where she was able to accept her diagnosis, date a wonderful partner, and trust her peace again. It felt amazing to be a part of that process and I would do it again if it continues to save lives throughout this epidemic!

How do you use The Well Project personally?

I use The Well Project personally to add fuel to my fire so that I don't forget my WHY. I use it to remind myself that I am not alone in my personal life or in my advocacy work. There are many people battling cancer, lupus, depression, mental health and so much more and resilience to survive HIV/AIDS offers HOPE to everyone!

In your work?

I recommend that others access The Well Project's resources and I leverage it in my own advocacy work.

What difference has The Well Project made in your life and work?

The Well Project has played a beautiful role in my survival in that I no longer had to dig to find diverse voices of this epidemic.



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