

#changingthecourse

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

# Building HOPE...

one woman at a time



#onewomanatime

[www.thewellproject.org](http://www.thewellproject.org)



HOPE



SELF-ESTEEM



COMMUNITY



ADVOCACY



thewellproject



“ [The Well Project] has influenced me to be fully engaged in my HIV care and to educate myself about HIV and how to support others. ”

-- 2016 Survey Participant

## Letter from the Executive Director

In The Well Project's ongoing pursuit to be the best that we can be, we have focused our efforts over the last several years on ensuring that our programs are fulfilling an important need, working to determine the best possible format for our resources, and exploring how we can even better improve our offerings. In 2015, in response to feedback from our community advisors and users, as well as needs assessments and evaluations, we significantly expanded our programming to increase access to advocacy tools, trainings, and capacity building. Since then, we have been thrilled to witness the synergy between our information, community, and advocacy resources, and we have been eager to measure the impact of these programs on our users' lives.

In 2016, The Well Project designed and launched *Your Voice Counts: The Well Project 2016 User Survey*, our most comprehensive user survey to date. The analysis and resulting report focus on the impact of The Well Project's online resources on engagement with healthcare, self-care, emotional well-being, personal relationships, and quality of life among women living with HIV (WLHIV). While the report is framed within the context of the HIV care continuum, it also highlights the need to expand optimal outcomes beyond viral suppression and include broader measures of well-being and quality of life.

Among the many important findings from the survey report (which you can read more about on pages 4-5), one that especially resonated for us was this: **76 percent of WLHIV survey respondents reported that using The Well Project's resources made them feel more hopeful about the future.** Why is this important? 2016 was the year, in a backlash to years of progress, that a platform for racial, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination was exposed and empowered, and much of that feels targeted directly at our community. Add to this a deep sense of change and fear of the unknown and many of us are left feeling adrift, if not worse. If ever there was a time that we needed hope, it is now.

How, you may ask, can a web resource bring hope to so many? It's a multi-step process. First, reading about the experiences and resilience of WLHIV helps women realize they are not alone, and that others—like them—are not only living with HIV, but also thriving. Participating in The Well Project's supportive, empowered community has been proven to improve WLHIV's self-esteem and decrease self-stigma, enabling them to accept only respectful and caring behavior from loved ones. From there, we witness time and again WLHIV beginning to advocate for themselves on a multitude of levels. They also increasingly advocate for others living with HIV—thereby spreading the hope for a better future to others in their communities and beyond.

As we navigate these tumultuous times, we look forward to continuing to foster hope, decrease stigma, and advance progress towards ending the HIV epidemic. We are extremely grateful for everyone who played a role in making The Well Project a success this year and every year, including our team, community advisory board, board of directors, funders and donors, and each and every person who utilizes our programs to improve their knowledge or well-being. **Together, we can change the course of the HIV epidemic... one woman at a time.**

Krista Martel  
Executive Director

#buildinghope



“The Well Project’s resources have helped me learn more about HIV and empowered me to want to become an advocate and educator. It has also helped me step out of the shadows of feeling ashamed.”

-- 2016 Survey Participant

## MISSION AND VISION

**The Well Project is a non-profit organization whose mission is to change the course of the HIV/AIDS pandemic**

through a unique and comprehensive focus on women and girls. Since its founding in 2002, The Well Project has established itself as the premier online resource on women and HIV both nationally and globally, directly reaching more than one million users annually. Focusing on three critical areas related to women and HIV—information access, community support, and advocacy—The Well Project is leveraging technology to dramatically improve health outcomes and quality of life for women and girls living with HIV.

### INFORMATION ACCESS

Providing access to lifesaving, relevant, and culturally competent information to women and girls is the cornerstone of The Well Project’s programming. We maintain the largest, most comprehensive library of educational fact sheets on HIV and women. These 110+ fact sheets (reviewed and updated annually) address a wide range of issues affecting women and girls living with and at risk for HIV and help improve health literacy, increase engagement in healthcare, and improve overall health outcomes. Many of the most popular fact sheets have companion slide decks that can be leveraged to share information with others in their communities. We are committed to making this information broadly accessible and are in the process of translating a growing portion of this content into Spanish.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We believe that stigma is the single largest barrier to ending the HIV pandemic and

we are committed to implementing programs and resources that break down stigma, shame, and the resulting isolation. Through our online platform and social media networks, The Well Project has created a safe space for women living with HIV to share experiences, connect with others, and build a strong community of women living with HIV. Launched in 2009, *A Girl Like Me* has become a unique sisterhood and vibrant community of support for women living with HIV from diverse backgrounds (geographic, socio-economic, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). We launched *Una Chica Como Yo* in 2015 to provide the same opportunities for Spanish-speaking women.

### ADVOCACY

The Well Project provides advocacy training and capacity building to ensure that women living with HIV play an integral role in the development of women-focused interventions, research, guidelines, and clinical trials. Since 2015, we have offered an ongoing webinar series that highlights the basics of HIV science and treatment, trains women how to become HIV treatment advocates, and addresses prevention, transmission, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health. We have increased our presence at relevant conferences, making presentations when appropriate and providing support for our bloggers and community advisory board to attend. Our Women’s Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS (WRI) focuses specifically on elevating, enhancing, and expediting HIV treatment and prevention research on women and girls and identifying gaps in clinical care and research.

#missionandvision



# IMPACT

In 2016, The Well Project conducted our most comprehensive user survey to date to understand who is using our resources, how they are being used, and their impact on WLHIV. *Your Voice Counts: The Well Project 2016 User Survey Report* is an analysis of the survey and demonstrates that The Well Project's programming has had a significant

impact on the lives of women living with HIV (WLHIV), including on their engagement in HIV care and a number of quality-of-life indicators. *Your Voice Counts* also demonstrates that there is more to the health, well-being, and quality of life of people living with HIV than merely achieving an undetectable viral load.

#impact

## WHAT? WHAT WELL PROJECT RESOURCES ARE PEOPLE USING AND HOW?

**#information**  
 >110 fact sheets on HIV and women, plus slide sets

**#community**  
 A Girl Like Me/  
 Una Chica Como Yo  
 Social media  
 Monthly e-newsletters

**#advocacy**  
 WATCH! treatment  
 advocacy webinar series

**THE WELL PROJECT'S Resources WLHIV Participants were Most Likely to Share**

- 41.7% HIV information and fact sheets
- 14.3% information posted on Facebook and Twitter pages
- 13.1% information from treatment advocacy webinar series
- 11.9% blogs from A Girl Like Me/Una Chica Como Yo
- 9.5% news from e-newsletter
- 9.5% reports from the Women's Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS

## WHY? WHY ARE WLHIV USING THE WELL PROJECT'S RESOURCES?

**TOP 3 GOALS** of WLHIV for using THE WELL PROJECT'S Resources

- 1 Increasing their knowledge of HIV and its treatments
- 2 Improving their health outcomes
- 3 Becoming more empowered to advocate for themselves

## HOW? HOW HAS THE WELL PROJECT IMPACTED WLHIV?

**IMPACT ON ENGAGEMENT IN CARE**

WLHIV were more likely to:

- Talk with providers about medication options, concerns, and side effects: **74.8%**
- Communicate well with healthcare providers: **68.9%**
- See healthcare providers regularly: **56.3%**
- Take HIV medication regularly as prescribed: **54.4%**

**IMPACT ON SELF-CARE & OUTLOOK ON LIVING WITH HIV**

WLHIV were more likely to:

- 75.7% FEEL HOPEFUL ABOUT FUTURE
- 81.6% FEEL CONNECTED TO A COMMUNITY
- 70.9% ACCEPT ONLY RESPECTFUL, CARING BEHAVIOR FROM THEIR PARTNER, FAMILY AND/OR FRIENDS
- 82.5% ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES
- 80.6% ADVOCATE FOR THE NEEDS OF OTHERS LIVING WITH HIV



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In addition to reviewing and updating >110 fact sheets in our library, we developed five new fact sheets based on recommendations from our community advisory board including Trans Women and HIV, a Resource List for Trans Women Living with HIV, Why Race Matters: Women and HIV, Long-Term Survivors of HIV, and Finding a Cure
- Added “En Español” section on website, translating 10 of our most popular fact sheets
- Significantly increased our presence at major HIV conferences including CROI, AIDS 2016, Women Now!, USCA, PWN Summit, HIV is not a Crime, AIDSWatch, and more
  - Issued one conference update and >15 blogs
  - Presented at Iris House Summit, USCA, and PWN Summit
  - Provided eight scholarships to AIDS 2016, Women Now! AIDS Watch, USCA, and PWN-USA Summit
- Executed second year of WATCH! treatment advocacy webinar series, hosting five webinars with 14 expert speakers and nearly 600 viewers
- Increased our numbers across the board:
  - Page views and unique users up 9%
  - Average session duration on website up 17%
  - U.S. users up 12%, with top states mirroring those with largest numbers of women living with HIV
- Added four new partners: Be PrEPared, Project Inform, Translators without Borders, W.O.R.L.D.
- Increased partnership activity, including:
  - NWGHAAD (Office of Women’s Health)
  - Twitter Chat discussing REPRIEVE Trial and HIV/CVD #HIVheartchat (NIH/Harvard)
  - NWGHAAD Twitter Chat (PWN and Greater Than AIDS)
  - NYHAAD Twitter Chat on Youth + Education (Advocates for Youth)
  - Webinars “Before the Pen Hits the Pad: PrEP Education for Healthcare Providers” and “PrEP and Women in the U.S.” (U.S. Women and PrEP Working Group)
  - USCA session on IPV and Women Living with HIV (Greater Than AIDS/Empowered)
  - Twitter Chat for Day of Action to End Violence Against Women Living with HIV (PWN-USA, along with co-sponsors National Network to End Domestic Violence, The Women’s HIV Program at UCSF, Christies Place)
- Webinar “PrEP in Practice: Considerations for HIV Prevention Among Women of Color” (The Women’s Collective)
- Supported two women living with HIV to serve as part-time global ambassadors (U.S. and Nigeria) and one woman living with HIV as a part-time communication manager
- Developed new materials, content, and media, including postcards, pins, and bracelets; added Instagram account

## AND MORE!

Reviewed & updated  
**>110 FACT SHEETS**  
on women and HIV

**REACHED**  
**>2 MILLION**  
with online content + social media

**POSTED >140 BLOGS**  
on *A Girl Like Me, Una Chica Como Yo,*  
and *Voices from our Allies*

 **424 POSTS**  
**984,000 IMPRESSIONS**  
*153% increase from 2015*

 **641 TWEETS**  
**505,000 IMPRESSIONS**  
*73% increase from 2015*

**UPDATED**  
**26**  
**SLIDE SETS**  
of our most  
accessed  
**FACT SHEETS**

**ADDED**  
**SIXTEEN**  
**NEW BLOGGERS**

**TOP 10 COUNTRIES**  
**REACHED BY THE WELL PROJECT**

1. United States	6. Australia
2. India	7. Nigeria
3. Philippines	8. Kenya
4. South Africa	9. Canada
5. United Kingdom	10. Mexico

**22**  
**E-NEWSLETTERS**  
**=112,750**  
**IMPRESSIONS**

**TOP 5 FACT SHEETS IN 2016**

1. What are HIV & AIDS?
2. Sexually Transmitted Infections or Diseases (STIs or STDs)
3. HIV Transmission
4. Oral Sex: What’s the Real Risk?
5. HIV-Related Pain

#successes



**“ The WRI uniquely interrogates specific areas of HIV research among women through a cross-disciplinary lens, allowing us to view and address issues from all possible angles. There’s simply no other meeting out there like it.”**

*-- Dawn Averitt, WRI founder*

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE WRI 2016: WOMEN AND CURE RESEARCH

**The Well Project established The Women’s Research Initiative** on HIV/AIDS (WRI) in 2003 to elevate, enhance, and expedite research on women with HIV. Over the last 14 years, the WRI has brought together a diverse group of extraordinary national HIV/AIDS thought-leaders and stakeholders in clinical care, research, academia, community-based services, advocacy, government, and the pharmaceutical industry, as well as women living with HIV (WLHIV) to accelerate our understanding of HIV disease in women.

Every year the WRI convenes a meeting to address a specific topic area. Recent topics include the intersection of trauma and HIV, the HIV continuum of care among women, and enhancing HIV research and care for women by contextualizing their lives. Our 2016 meeting, “Women and HIV Cure Research,” focused on women across the spectrum of HIV cure research, from research participation and conduct, to ethics and stakeholder engagement, to advocacy, policy, and funding around HIV cure.

As with every WRI meeting, WRI 2016 featured presentations by experts highlighting cutting-edge evidence on women and HIV and examining successful strategies to increase women’s participation in research and advocacy. Presentations described the state of HIV cure research among women, highlighting that women are severely underrepresented, which has resulted in insufficient data to allow us to understand sex differences related to HIV cure. Next, the group investigated the ethics of cure research, a critical topic to explore when preparing to recruit participants for this kind of research, in particular.

The meeting also addressed opinions about HIV cure among people living with HIV (PLHIV), with an emphasis of women, including research in which 400 PLHIV were surveyed on the risks and benefits of cure research. The WRI also hosted a panel of WLHIV who shared their thoughts on the risks and benefits of HIV cure research. While it was clear that the women saw the compelling need for more and better cure research for women, they were also cautious about ethical issues related to the research and eventual cure.

WRI 2016 then focused on how this group specifically can advance HIV cure research among women. Themes and recommendations emerged for moving cure research forward so that it ultimately works for women. The meeting concluded, as always, with a roundtable discussion of attendees’ personal commitments about how they will use the knowledge gathered at the meeting in their own work over the coming year.

Since its inception, the WRI has been instrumental in effecting change in research for women and HIV. By addressing issues that affect women through a variety of lenses, the WRI is able to expand understanding of effective treatment and prevention for women and girls living with or at risk for HIV.

#research



“**The connection with empowered, positive women keeps me totally involved in activism and the management of my health.**”

-- 2016 Survey Participant



**Expanded reach = Exponential impact**

## NEXT STEPS

**Our efforts over the course of 2016**, as demonstrated by our 2016 User Survey, provide evidence that our programs are breaking down isolation and stigma, connecting women to a supportive community, and improving their engagement in care. Our programming makes women living with HIV feel less alone and experience less self-stigma. Our users feel connected to a community and more hopeful about the future. And our resources are having a profound impact on their engagement in care – they are more likely to communicate well with their healthcare providers and see them regularly. We are particularly excited to see the women accessing our resources use what they’ve learned to better advocate for themselves and empower others with the knowledge, hope, and confidence they have gained.

In the coming year, we will continue to maintain and enhance the programming that has been so successful as we work to expand our reach, particularly among the most underserved and isolated women. We commit to:

- Build new partnerships and further cultivate current partnerships
- Undertake targeted outreach efforts to increase awareness of The Well Project’s online resources
- Continue to regularly update our library of 110+ fact sheets while developing new content to address emerging areas of need
- Increase our engagement and communications with new members
- Expand our capacity building and leadership development of women living with HIV
- Further develop our program evaluation and impact assessment mechanisms

The Well Project will implement these activities in the context of our strategic plan, which focuses on the following objectives:

- Become the premier global resource on women affected by HIV by providing accurate, current, culturally relevant information to women living with and at risk for HIV
- Build a strong and engaged global network of women living with HIV
- Build leadership and advocacy capacity among women and girls affected by HIV

We will continue to advance these objectives and will reassess our projected outcomes and measurements of success over the next several years. While we have focused over the past years on strengthening our programs and infrastructure and evaluating the impact of our resources, we are now eager to focus on engaging a broader base of users. The efforts described above will enable us to reach new populations of women who are particularly in need of information, support, and advocacy tools. They will also help us achieve our goal of improving the health and quality of life for all women living with HIV.

#lookingahead

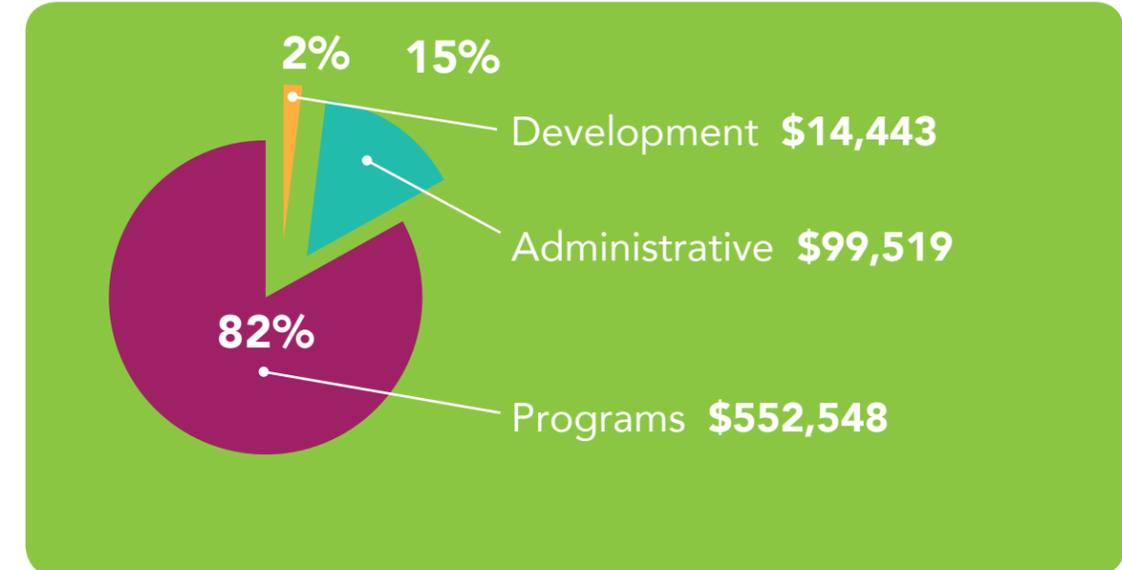


# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

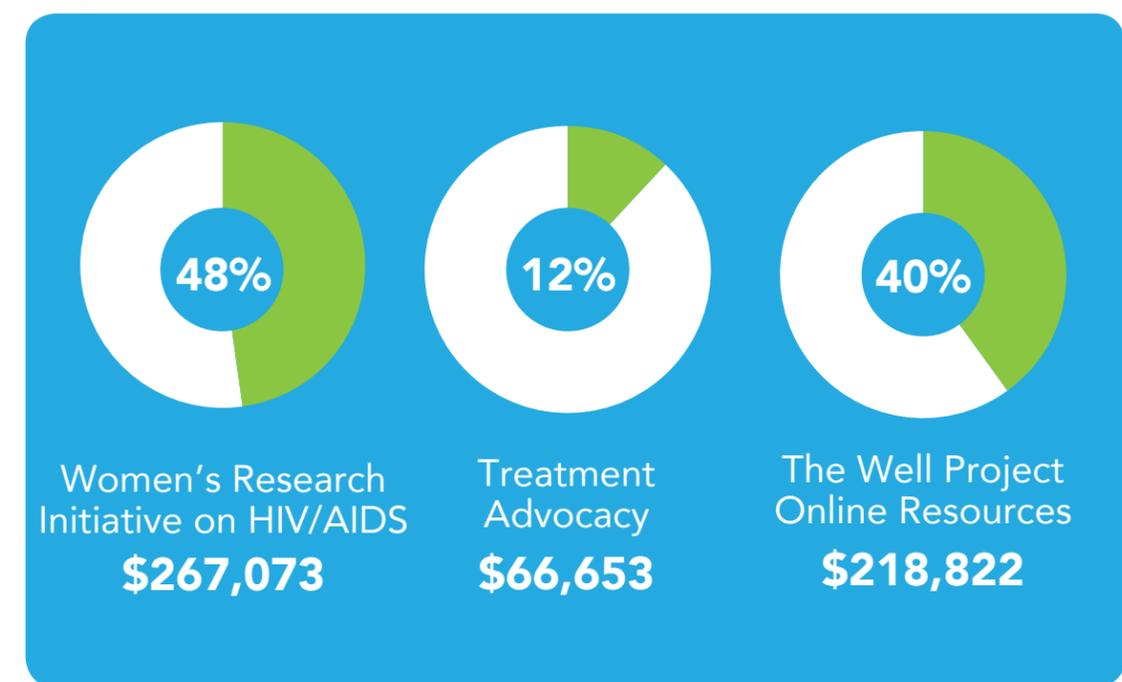
Sources of Revenue: TOTAL=\$1,164,889



Expenditures by Function\*: \$666,510



Expenditures by Program: \$552,548



\*Does not include non-cash expenditures from in-kind donations of \$528,653.

#financials



## 2016 SUPPORTERS

### GRANTORS

We are profoundly grateful to the following organizations that support our efforts and resources through grants. They are an instrumental part of all that we do.

- Bristol-Myers Squibb
- Broadway Cares/Equity Fight AIDS
- Gilead Sciences
- Janssen Therapeutics
- Merck
- ViiV Healthcare/Positive Action

### IN-KIND DONORS

These organizations donate services at a variety of levels that enable our programming and we deeply appreciate their partnership.

- Google Ad Grants
- Pricing Engine
- Translators without Borders
- Underwood & Roberts

### DONORS

Every year The Well Project undertakes a fundraising drive to raise awareness about the organization, expand our funding base, and support our activities. We would like to thank everyone who donated to our 2016 fundraising drive. Your support contributed significantly to the work we did and the increased reach and impact of our programs.

- |                        |                       |                   |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Erika Aaron            | Riely Clough          | Anat Ichak        | Julie Price           |
| Mark Abramson          | Jason Cohen           | Robert Johnson    | Kim Reed              |
| Ada Adimora            | Jenna Conley          | Jennifer Kates    | Kim Rice Whittemore   |
| Matthew Ammentorp      | Thorne Conley         | Naina Khanna      | James Robinson        |
| Karen Ammentorp        | Jim Fishel            | Anthony C. Kibort | Nick Roxborough       |
| Prem Anjali            | Carrie Foote          | Vickie Lynn       | Tara Sansone          |
| Judy Auerbach          | Stephanie Haas        | Jeanne Martel     | Jo Schaaf             |
| Dorothy Auerbach       | Darlene Harden-Fuller | Wesley Martel     | Mr & Mrs Kirk Smith   |
| Sandi and Dick Averitt | Donald and Susan      | Larissa Martell   | Hans Spiegel          |
| Dawn Averitt           | Heitzman              | Linda Nagaoka     | Lisa Stewart          |
| Richard Averitt        | The James             | Sarah Oakes       | Melissa Tischler      |
| Ginny Baillie          | Heitzman Family       | Shurland Oliver   | Orlando Torres        |
| Sarah Bedford          | Michael Heitzman      | Beth Pastor       | Fulvia Veronese       |
| Dee Bell               | Robert and Della      | Alan Posner       | Celeste Watkins-Hayes |
| Jennifer Brownstein    | Heitzman              | Tonia Poteat      | Shannon Weber         |
| Carol Cantor           | Mary Jo Hoyt          | Roger Prescott    | Renee Zipprich        |

### PARTNERS

We are honored to work with mission-aligned organizations that share our vision of connecting women and girls living with HIV across the globe to each other and to life-saving information. Now, more than ever before, it is vital that we work together, lift up each other's work, and strengthen our voices as a united front.

- Advocates for Youth
- AIDS United
- ATHENA
- Be-PrEPared
- Christie's Place
- Empowered/Greater than AIDS
- HIVE
- Iris House
- National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc.
- National Women and AIDS Collective
- National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day/Office of Women's Health
- Please Call Me by My True Names
- Positive Women's Network – USA
- Prevention Access Campaign (U=U)
- Project Inform
- SisterLove, Inc.
- SMART
- The Women's Collective
- TheBody.com
- Translators without Borders
- U.S. Women and PrEP Working Group
- Until There's a Cure
- Women's HIV Program at UCSF
- WORLD

**"We are proud of our ongoing partnership with The Well Project, which produces some of the highest quality and most accessible resources for women living with HIV globally, and is an important resource for our members. We work together to raise the profile of important issues impacting women living with HIV, including intimate partner violence, stigma, and reproductive justice. Together, we have been able to cultivate, support, and uplift a community of women and people of trans experience living with HIV."**

-- Naina Khanna, executive director of PWN-USA

#gratitude



## LEADERSHIP

### TEAM

- Kelly Bower, operations manager
- Jenna Conley, communications director
- Lisa Fitzpatrick, MD, medical editor
- Olivia G. Ford, consulting editor
- Darlene Harden-Fuller, art director
- Juliana Hawawini Johnson, web coordinator
- Tiommi Jenae Lockett, communications coordinator
- Krista Martel, executive director
- Maria Mejia, global ambassador
- Theresa Mack, MD, MPH, medical editor
- Bose Olotu, global ambassador

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- Bose Olotu, Nigeria



**Together we can change the course  
of the HIV epidemic...one woman at a time.**

**Visit [www.thewellproject.org](http://www.thewellproject.org) to access:**

**#information**

**#community**

**#advocacy**



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**888-616-WELL**

**To find out how you can make a tax-deductible donation or support  
The Well Project, please contact [kmartel@thewellproject.org](mailto:kmartel@thewellproject.org).**

**#connect**