The Well Project is 20 Years Strong! [1]

Submitted on Nov 10, 2022

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Overview

The Well Project is thrilled to commemorate our 20th anniversary and the incredible ways we have been able to address educational gaps, foster community connection among women living with HIV, decrease stigma, expand leadership capacity, and advance research and policy over the past two decades — all while centering and lifting up the lived experiences of women living with HIV. Over the course of the next year, The Well Project will honor this milestone in several ways, including launching a new storytelling project, *Hearts and Minds of The Well Project* [2], which shines a spotlight on some of the extraordinary individuals who have contributed to making The Well Project what it is today.

"I am honored to lead The Well Project as we celebrate this important milestone, 20 years strong," said Krista Martel, executive director of The Well Project. "I'm so proud of everything the organization has accomplished over the past 20 years, and especially of the diverse community we have been able to build over the last decade. The voices, experiences, and expertise of our staff, community advisory board, board of directors, and Women's Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS members inform everything we do and enable us to support a community of women from all over the world. I'm so excited to be able to feature some of these strong, world-changing individuals during this year-long celebration."

Annual Fundraising Drive – #20for20!

We are pleased to kick off our fundraising drive, #20for20, in conjunction with the launch of our 20 Years Strong anniversary campaign. Our goal is to raise $20,000 by the end of 2022 in honor of our 20th anniversary. Doing so will ensure that The Well Project can continue to foster STRONG connections, STRONG community support, and STRONG leadership among women living with HIV. Please consider making a recurring or one-time tax-deductible donation [3] – and remember that no gift is too small!

Hearts and Minds of The Well Project

*Hearts and Minds of The Well Project* is a storytelling project that shines a spotlight on some of the extraordinary individuals who have been instrumental over the past 20 years in making The Well Project the organization it is today. This diverse group includes people who have worked behind the scenes as well as those you might be more familiar with because they serve in a more public-facing role. Over the next year, you'll see portraits of women living with HIV, members of our community advisory board and board of directors, staff members, partners, and other allies of The Well Project. A new story will be released each month to highlight the diversity of our community and the individuals who have contributed to the growth and development of The Well Project.
"The Well Project is not just an organization saying they're trying to help women; it's honestly trying to. For me, its goal is to empower women and make them be better than who they are in the sense of, Let me pull that out of you so you can recognize that yourself." — Kim Canady-Griffith

Read all the stories in the Hearts and Minds of the Well Project series [2]

**Brief History of The Well Project**

The Well Project was founded by Dawn Averitt and her brother, Richard Averitt, in 2002. Dawn was diagnosed with HIV in 1988 at age 19 and has since become one of the nation’s most prominent HIV and AIDS treatment advocates. The Well Project was conceived to address the staggering gap in information designed for women living with and vulnerable to HIV and has since evolved to focus on increasing HIV awareness, advancing research for women and HIV, promoting better standards of care, educating women on how to manage their HIV, improving the inclusion of women in clinical trials of new HIV treatments, building community, and expanding leadership capacity among women living with HIV.

We are humbled by the work we have engaged in and the connections we've made over the past 20 years and we're excited to share just a few key milestones:

- **2002:** Dawn and Richard Averitt co-founded The Well Project
- **2003:** Launched The Well Project web portal, providing more than 100 fact sheets on topics related to HIV and women
- **2003:** Established the Women's Research Initiative on HIV/AIDS (WRI), a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral think-tank, dedicated to identifying gaps for women in HIV prevention, treatment, and cure research and policy
• 2006: Launched The Well Project web portal in Spanish
• 2009: Created A Girl Like Me (blog for women living with HIV)
• 2012: Supported A Girl Like Me bloggers from the US, Nigeria, Uganda, and South Africa to attend the International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) for the first time, representing The Well Project and promoting information at our booth in the Global Village
• 2014: Formed The Well Project's first community advisory board to provide guidance on the organization's strategic vision and programming
• 2014: Updated and relaunched The Well Project web portal based on a community-input process
• 2015: Developed and offered initial treatment advocacy trainings and leadership development programming
• 2019-2022: Transitioned from a contractor model to a dedicated staff model by hiring five full-time staff members, three of whom are women living with HIV

More recent highlights include:

• Building capacity among providers and increasing health literacy among women living with HIV by providing trusted, judgement-free, medically accurate information about HIV and women to millions of people though fact sheets, slide sets, pamphlets, webinars, and conference presentations
• Creating a strong global community of women living with HIV through our blogs, A Girl Like Me and Una Chica Como Yo, our highly engaged community advisory board, and our social media platforms
• Becoming the leading US advocacy voice on breast/chestfeeding, bringing together the top experts in the subject, advocating for changes in CDC guidelines, supporting and uplifting a cohort of breast/chestfeeding parents, and hosting multi-disciplinary conversations to advance efforts
• Creating strong partnerships with more than 40 mission-aligned groups and organizations across intersecting issues, including networks of people living with HIV, reproductive justice, and medical provider associations, among others

We are so pleased with all we've been able to accomplish over the past two decades, but most of all, we are honored to have been able to create a community of women living with HIV around the world. We look forward to continuing this work in the decades to come and ensuring that no woman ever lacks the support and tools she needs to thrive with HIV. We will continue to advance our mission to end the HIV pandemic...one woman at a time.

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