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## Spotlight on Kate Starr: Women Making a Difference

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*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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