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## **Spotlight on Wanona Thomas: Women Making a Difference**

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Image



*The Well Project interviews Wanona Thomas, Community Advisory Board member and A Girl Like Me blogger, for our "Spotlight: Women Making a Difference" series.*

### **What is the goal of your advocacy work? Do you have a specific focus?**

The goal of my advocacy is to get ALL people to feel more comfortable with embracing and accepting life and the life experiences we are dealt, whether it comes from something we brought on ourselves by the choices we make or it's just something that was already preordained for us.

### **Why is it important to reach out to women specifically?**

Being a heterosexual black woman who is part of the 16% (6,341) of HIV diagnoses (in 2017), I feel it is extremely important to reach women, and especially women of color.

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

After speaking out about my trials and life experiences I can honestly say I am proud of the woman I am growing into. I am still young and making mistakes but I am finding the blessings in my lessons and I am growing from them and using them to move me forward into a more meaningful leadership and career role. I am now a motivational speaker, certified life coach, HIV educator and on the Community Advisory Board for The Well Project!

### **If you can visit one place in the world, where would it be?**

Barcelona, Spain

### **What advice would you offer a woman newly diagnosed with HIV?**

Don't hold your head down too long because amongst the eyes of the world you are still a Queen. No matter what life has thrown at you, it doesn't devalue who you are and what you are worth. I want her also to know it's a huge community out here with open arms and waiting to give the love and support needed to keep pushing and fighting.

### **What difference has The Well Project made in your life?**

The Well Project was the first organization that took me under their wings and allowed me to not only express myself but also be myself with nothing but love and acceptance. It's a complete judge-free zone. The organization is willing to help expand your knowledge and training to bring you to the tables to make a difference, if that's what you want to do. The Well Project has made it possible for me to attend conferences and trainings, which have helped me be a better person and all-around leader. I am continuously growing and being amongst people who have genuine love and offer nothing but positivity in any aspect of life.



