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## Top HIV & Health Human Interest Stories of 2016

by Winnie McCroy  
EDGE Editor  
Friday Dec 30, 2016

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Deondre Moore

Ordinary people have touched our hearts this year by doing extraordinary things. From Amida Care's great work helping people living with HIV/AIDS get their lives together, to SAGE's new plans for LGBT seniors, from the early work of New York Times trailblazing AIDS writer Jeff Schmalz to the Women Innkeepers of Provincetown pairing up with Cyndi Lauper's True Colors Foundation, our community has stepped up and taken care of our own in 2016!

### Karamo Brown and Deondre Moore are 'Positively Fearless'

From August 31-September 4 at Atlanta's 10th Annual Black

Pride Celebration, activists Karamo Brown and Deondre Moore took the stage to promote their new Positively Fearless movement, celebrating being black, gay and HIV-positive.

"As a gay man, HIV has been always been around me," said Brown, who was the first openly gay African-American housemate on the MTV reality series "The Real World." "I'm negative, but I have friends from both the gay and heterosexual communities who are HIV-positive... We can't stop HIV from disproportionately affecting black, gay, and bisexual men until we stop judging and start supporting those in our community living with the virus." Click [here](#).



Lee Garr (Source:Courtesy Amida Care)

### Amida Care Tackles HIV and Addiction Via Harm Reduction

It was 1997 when Joann, a Brooklyn grandmother, was diagnosed with HIV. She was about 40 years old at the time, and was using drugs. Staying healthy while HIV-positive is a tall order, especially when you are also dealing with drug addiction. For the folks at Amida Care -- a medical health care plan for New Yorkers on Medicaid who are living with HIV/AIDS, and their children -- harm reduction has proven to be a viable pathway from the pitfalls of addiction to a better, healthier life. They provide a Care Coordinator to assist with benefits and services, and pharmacy services. Through their Live Your Life Wellness Program, they also offer classes in healthy cooking and nutrition, African dance, Zumba, yoga, meditation, art therapy and more. Click [here](#).



(Source:Thinkstock)

### Happy and Healthy: New Options for LGBT Senior Living

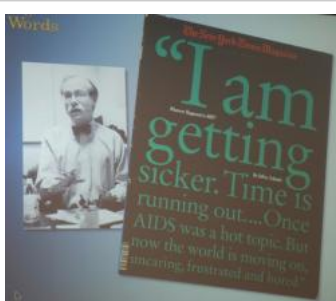
The New York chapter of SAGE -- Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders -- announced the development of New York City's first senior housing, with services designed specifically for the LGBT community. Their Ingersoll Senior Residences and Crotona Senior Residences will together provide nearly 230 units of housing, as well as comprehensive, culturally competent services to older LGBT adults. It's all part of a movement that's sweeping the nation. "LGBT older people face a housing crisis. These groundbreaking developments are an important step toward combating that crisis in New York City," said Michael Adams, Chief Executive Officer of SAGE. Click [here](#).



(Source:Amida Care)

### Art-ivist Romano Johnson Reaches Out to HIV+ Youth About Amida Care

As a child living in the Bahamas, Romano Johnson watched "Showtime at the Apollo" and vowed to his mother that one day, he would perform on that same stage. When he moved to New Jersey in 1996 to finish high school, he set out to achieve that goal, taking the bus and train into the city. But August 2000, he had performed on the venerable Harlem stage. "When I saw the opportunity, I went for it," Johnson told EDGE. "I always loved New York City -- the atmosphere, the people, the place it provided artists to be among other singers, actors, and models. There is just so much talent here." Click [here](#).



(Source:Winnie McCroy)

#### New York Times Remembers Jeff Schmalz in 'Dying Words' Tribute

On Thursday, January 14 at the New York Times building in Times Square, columnist Samuel J. Freedman and Kerry Donahue hosted a multimedia presentation on "Dying Words: The AIDS Reporting of Jeff Schmalz and How It Transformed the New York Times." Schmalz was a rising star at The New York Times, who had carefully kept his identity as a gay man hidden from his superiors to protect his career. But everything changed on December 21, 1990 when he collapsed in the newsroom and was then diagnosed with full-blown AIDS. Courageously, Schmalz chose to report on the disease that was killing him and countless others. Click [here](#).



(Source:Courtesy Lynn Mogell)

#### Women Innkeepers of Ptown Team Up With True Colors Fund

The Women Innkeepers of Provincetown partnered with Cyndi Lauper's True Colors Fund in an effort to raise awareness about LGBT youth homelessness, focusing attention on the True Colors Fund during Women's Week 2016. This year's 32nd annual women's festival offered attendees the chance to engage with the True Colors Fund through special events and information sessions on their programs. Click [here](#).



(Source:http://www.aidsunited.org)

#### AIDS United Mobilizes People Living With HIV to Fight Stigma

Through the AIDS United Positive Organizing Project, 17 community-based organizations throughout the country will tackle HIV-related stigma and discrimination in their communities by advancing grassroots organizing among people living with HIV. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is becoming more widely understood as a powerful addition to the prevention arsenal. Click [here](#).



(Source:http://www.aidsunited.org)

#### ACRIA Works For Youth HIV Prevention With Love Heals

ACRIA, a New York-based international AIDS research and education organization, and an authority on issues related to older adults and HIV, announced an expansion of its work to include youth by acquiring Love Heals, the Alison Gertz Foundation for AIDS Education, a highly successful organization that is the leading provider of HIV/AIDS education to young people in New York City."As AIDS organizations face an exciting new era working to reduce HIV infections with better outreach tools and advances in HIV prevention, treatment, and care, ACRIA's joining forces with Love Heals allows us to fill gaps in HIV prevention strategies and provide a greater compliment of programs and services to people of all ages with life-saving HIV

prevention and health education," said ACRIA Executive Director Benjamin Bashein. Click [here](#).



(Source:http://www.actupny.org/)

#### Activists Convene Town Hall to Combat Youth Homelessness and HIV

On Tuesday, May 24, ACT UP NY, homeless youth, and over 15 NGOs convened at Town Hall at the LGBT Community Center from 6-8 p.m. to address the overlapping HIV and homelessness epidemics in New York City and around the State. In New York City, nearly 24,000 children, sleep in shelters or on the streets each night. Up to 45 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ -- although they make up just 5 to 10 percent of the overall youth population. They are forced onto the streets because of family strife and rejection of their gender identities and/or sexual orientation. Click [here](#).

#### A Focus on Intimate Partner Violence and HIV

One in three women in the U.S. experiences intimate partner violence (IPV), and for women living with HIV, the figure is one in two. Research has shown that persons with abusive partners have a higher risk for HIV and, if infected, have worse health outcomes. This fall, Greater Than AIDS launched Empowered: Women, HIV, and Intimate Partner Violence -- to bring greater attention to IPV and to provide resources for women who may be at risk of, or dealing with, abuse and HIV. The Empowered campaign was developed in partnership with the National Domestic Violence Hotline, loveisrespect, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Positive Women's Network-USA, and The Well Project, with additional support from The Elizabeth



**WATCH TONYA'S STORY**



(Source:www.greaterthan.org)

Taylor AIDS Foundation. Click [here](#).

Empowered: "One in Two" (2:20)



Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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AIDS | By Winnie McCroy | Oct 27

For clients battling HIV and addiction, Amida Care's harm reduction approach can work.

### Art-ivist Romano Johnson Reaches Out to HIV+ Youth About Amida Care

AIDS | By Winnie McCroy | Feb 27

Artist and activist Romano Johnson is a man on a mission -- a mission to help other HIV-positive youth stay healthy by accessing the services of Amida Care.

### AIDS United Mobilizes People Living With HIV to Fight Stigma

AIDS | By EDGE | Nov 15

Seventeen grantees are working on an AIDS United initiative to mobilize grassroots efforts battling the stigma that still surrounds HIV.

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**PopUps: Penélope Cruz to Play Donatella Versace in 'American Crime Story'**

After rumors that Lady Gaga would play Donatella Versace for the third season of "American Crime Story" were shot down,

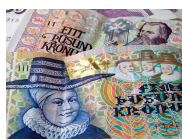
Ryan Murphy has cast finally cast the role: Penélope Cruz will play the Italian designer in the upcoming FX anthology series.

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