

Flashbulbs And Shutters Shed Light On HIV/AIDS

(NAPSA)—This year, people infected with and affected by HIV let their voice be heard in a unique and personal way: through the lens of a camera.

Although HIV prevention and management have improved significantly since the beginning of the epidemic, the most recent data from 2006 indicate that the annual incidence of new infections was approximately 56,300 in the United States alone, and that approximately 1 million people have the disease. As the Obama Administration has underscored in their recent awareness campaign, “Act Against AIDS,” this means that in this country someone is infected with HIV every nine-and-a-half-minutes (on average).

In an effort to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and battle the stigma still associated with the disease, Bristol-Myers Squibb has created a national HIV photo contest, inviting people infected with or affected by HIV to create and share a photograph with an essay that represents their personal fight against the disease.

“So many of us have a story about how HIV has impacted our lives,” says Broadway star, HIV advocate, and photo contest spokesperson Sheryl Lee Ralph. “All the people who have participated in this HIV photo contest have brought their own powerful



Someone once said...“Life isn’t about how to survive the storm, but learning how to dance in the rain.” Having lost my husband and child to AIDS, I lift my head to the heavens in a sea of calm and give God praise.

stories to the public, helping to break down the stigma that continues to surround this horrible disease.”

In addition to Sheryl Lee Ralph, a number of celebrities and key HIV/AIDS activists have partnered with Bristol-Myers Squibb on this effort, including HIV community advocate Frank Oldham, artist and photographer David Martinez and POZ magazine editor-in-chief Regan Hofmann.

More than 1,000 people entered the contest and offered their own compelling stories. This included Grand Prize Winner Jacqueline of Durham, N.C. Jacqueline lost both her husband and child to HIV/AIDS. Despite this, she remains hopeful

about the future, recounting an old saying, “Life isn’t about how to survive the storm, but learning how to dance in the rain.”

Show your support and view these photos for yourself by visiting www.hivphotocontest.com.

Although progress in the fight against HIV in the United States has been significant, based on the most recent CDC data:

- 1 million people are currently living with the disease
- Annual incidence of new infections was approximately 56,300
- Every nine-and-a-half minutes (on average), someone new is infected

