



HIV + Aging Research Project | PS

NEWSLETTER

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JEFF TAYLOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HARP-PS

Looking Back & Looking Forward

It's hard to believe 2023 is almost over. It's been an eventful year for HARP. In addition to our monthly Positive Life education programs at the PS Cultural Center, in September we produced the 8th annual Positively Aging

Project at the Mizell Center in Palm Springs in collaboration with multiple valley stakeholders providing HIV & aging services to people with HIV here in the valley. The theme for this year's event was "Body, Mind & Soul", and featured presentations on exercise with Ted Guice, medical cannabis use from a local RN and a cannabis researcher from UCSD, an update on local research trials here in Palm Springs, and our keynote speaker, noted activist Peter Staley, who spoke about his pivotal role in the formation of ACT-UP and his actions against the NIH, FDA, and greedy pharma, as well as his unlikely friendship with Tony Fauci that helped turn the tide on HIV research to get effective drugs developed and available when they were so desperately needed. A signed copy of his autobiography "Never Silent" was given to everyone who attended.

Like all of our programming, the event hybrid on Zoom as well as in-person. The recording is archived on our [HARP-PS YouTube channel](#). As part of our ongoing collaboration as the community engagement partner for the NIH-funded RID-HIV cure research laboratory, we have

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been doing a monthly webinar series on HIV cure research in longterm survivors, including those born with HIV. Our last webinar of the year will feature "San Francisco Patient" Loreen Willenberg, who for decades had an undetectable HIV viral load despite never being on HIV treatment, and eventually cleared the virus on her own. That webinar will be coming up on December 13, stay posted for more details.

In October, we produced a community forum in Atlanta in partnership with local organization SisterLove that serves African-American women living with HIV. The event featured an intimate conversation with RID researchers about why they do HIV research, and two of our advisory board members who've been cured of HIV, "London Patient" Adam Castillejo, and "City of Hope Patient" Paul Edmonds. Each talked about their experiences, with what it's like having been cured of HIV, and serving as living ambassadors for HIV cure research.

For World AIDS Day on December 1, 2023, we have a couple of events planned:

The first will be a ceremony to dedicate a star on the Palm Springs Walk of Stars downtown for beloved local resident Timothy Ray Brown, aka "The Berlin Patient" - the first person cured of HIV in 2007 as part of a bone marrow transplant to cure his leukemia. Sadly, though he was cured of his HIV, his cancer returned in 2020 and claimed his life. The star ceremony will be held on Friday, Dec 1st, at 2:30 pm in the Downtown Park next to the Marilyn statue. His star will be placed in the sidewalk in front of the location of the future AIDS Memorial sculpture. HARP-PS has underwritten the \$15,000 cost of the star. We're seeking contributions to cover the cost for a tax deductible contribution goto [HARP-PS website](#) and choose "Timothy Ray Brown Star" as the donation purpose. Or scan this QR code to donate.



Following the ceremony will be the 2nd Annual Timothy Ray Brown Community Cure Symposium at 4:30pm at the Palm Springs Cultural Center (Camelot Theatre). The program will feature researchers Paula Cannon and Sumit Chanda from the RID HIV Cure Collaboratory, Dr John Zaia from City of Hope, discussing an innovative gene therapy study that will be enrolling volunteers soon, and an interview with Paul Edmonds, a local resident known as the "City of Hope Patient" whose HIV cure was announced at the World AIDS Conference last year. More information is available on our websites landing page at www.HARP-PS.org

For 2024, our two year research collaboration with UC Riverside, USC & University of South Florida of an online "virtual village" will be turned into reality. The project was conceived during COVID to help people aging with HIV stay connected, and to help with the isolation, loneliness, and depression that is part of growing older - especially for the many HIV+ folks who've been priced out of other cities and moved to Palm Springs, a LGBTQ and HIV-friendly place with good HIV care & services. It will provide an online platform where people aging HIV+ folks can meet others like them, interact with their peers, learn about local resources, and access programming on care, services, and research tailored to their specific needs. Stay tuned as the project rolls out in the beginning of 2024.

Thank you for your ongoing support of HARP-PS through participating in our many events, dropping by our booth at PS Pride, and through your financial support large or small. As a grassroots nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of people aging with HIV, we couldn't do it without you. With your continued support, we look forward to expanding our community support and research in 2024



By Jill Gover, PhD
Clinical Psychologist,
HARP-PS Board Member

Coping with the Holiday Blues

The Holidays are upon us and for many people that means counting our blessings, eating favorite foods, spending time with family and friends, gifting and perhaps even reflecting on our lives. Partying and consumer madness aside, there can be a profound sense of gratitude that comes from counting one's blessings. This is a time of year when the depths of our relationships are measured and celebrated.

However, this is also a time of year that can be very stressful for a variety of reasons: Unrealistic expectations of ourselves and others, thoughts of not measuring up, and family estrangement can turn the season of joy into a

season of sadness and anxiety. Despite the media's portrayal of the Beaver Cleaver family as the norm, many families are dysfunctional, and the holidays can be a nightmare rather than a blissful time of celebration. For LGBTQ+ people there's also the stress around family acceptance of sexual orientation or gender identity. Those who participate in family gatherings for the holidays often feel the added pressure of either hiding a part of who they are, or fighting to gain equal recognition for their partner. Those who are estranged from family feel the sadness associated with rejection. And for those who are "orphaned" and bereft of family, the loneliness is even more acute.

LGBTQ+ older adults and those aging with HIV often find the holidays difficult because the emphasis is so much on family, and many of us don't have family. Parents have died, and if we didn't have children, there is no younger generation to embrace us at this time of year. Siblings, nieces and nephews may be geographically far away, and there are no grandchildren to fuss over.

Historically, LGBTQ+ people have formed "chosen families", "logical kin" consisting of friends, to make up for this void in their lives, but during the holidays, it's hard not to feel the loss of family support, especially when it seems like everyone around you is immersed in family.

In order to make the holidays a time of joy rather than of sadness or stress, it's important to plan in advance what you want to do to celebrate the season, and to thoughtfully decide what's realistic, within your budget, and "stress-free".

Developing a plan ahead of time gives you something to look forward to and ensures that you are setting goals for yourself that are manageable and realistic. When feelings of inadequacy, overwhelm, loneliness or sadness surface, it's important to talk with someone about those feelings. Often, the best person to talk to is a therapist - someone professionally trained, and empathic.

HARP-PS is part of a collaborative developing a "Virtual Village" to connect those aging with HIV with resources, including mental health services. So, whether it's sadness, the stress of the holidays or any other problem, we are here to help.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

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The BIG GAY Tupperware Party With Ethylina!



Happy Hour!

Monday Dec 11th

4:00PM - 6:00PM

OneEleven Bar

67555 E Palm Canyon Dr
Cathedral City, CA 92234

Help us Help People
Aging with HIV

one
eleven
BAR

H+ARP

HIV + Aging Research Project | PS



Ted Guice

Certified in Fitness Trainer,
Senior Exercise Specialist
HARP-PS Board Member

Staying Connected and Visible Through Regular Exercise!

Exercise can have significant social benefits for seniors living with HIV. While the physical and mental advantages of exercise are well-documented, the social aspect of physical activity is often overlooked. Engaging in exercise can provide seniors with a sense of community support, and connection, which are crucial for their overall well-being.

One of the primary social benefits of exercise for seniors living with HIV is the opportunity for social interaction. HIV can often lead to feelings of isolation and stigma, making it challenging for seniors to connect with others. However, participating in group exercise classes or joining community

fitness programs can provide a supportive environment where they can meet and interact with individuals who share similar experiences. This social interaction can help combat feelings of loneliness and create a sense of belonging.

Exercise also provides a platform for seniors living with HIV to build relationships and establish friendships. By regularly attending exercise classes or joining fitness groups, they have the opportunity to connect with others on a regular basis. These shared experiences can lead to the formation of meaningful relationships, where individuals can provide support, encouragement, and understanding to one another. Having a support network is essential for seniors living with HIV, as it can help alleviate feelings of isolation and provide a sense of community.

Furthermore, exercise can serve as a platform for advocacy and raising awareness about HIV. By participating in community fitness events or fundraising walks, seniors living with HIV can contribute to the larger HIV community and help reduce the stigma surrounding the virus. These events provide an opportunity to educate others about HIV, share personal stories, and inspire others to get involved. By being visible and active in the community, seniors living with HIV can become advocates for change and create a more inclusive and supportive environment.

In addition to the social interaction and advocacy opportunities, exercise can also improve self-esteem and body image. HIV can often lead to changes in physical appearance and body composition, which can impact self-confidence. Engaging in regular physical activity and seeing improvements in strength, flexibility, and overall fitness can boost self-esteem and promote a positive body image. This newfound confidence can translate into other areas of life, leading to increased social engagement and a more positive outlook.

To summarize, exercise offers numerous social benefits for those aging with HIV. By participating in group exercise classes, joining fitness programs, and attending community events, seniors can find a supportive community, build relationships, and raise awareness about HIV. The social aspect of exercise is crucial for combating feelings of isolation, reducing stigma, and promoting overall well-being. By incorporating exercise into their routine, people aging with HIV can experience improved social connections, increased self-esteem, and a sense of belonging.

My earnest desire is to help you stay healthy, fit and connected - *To Thrive with HIV!*

**CLICK FOR
FITNESS OVER FIFTY**





Tom Roth

Volunteer Director, David Lynch Foundation HIV Wellness Initiative
Certified Instructor, Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental Meditation

I'm Tom Roth, a long-time meditation teacher, volunteer, and LGBTQ researcher living in Palm Springs. I launched the HIV Wellness Initiative in 2016 in partnership with the SF AIDS Foundation, with funding from the David Lynch Foundation. We provide Transcendental Meditation (aka TM) instruction to people living with HIV and their caregivers in the Coachella Valley. We are volunteers teach who teach TM courses, offering this effective personal development technique at no charge, providing evidence-based health and wellness support to our community, especially for those who are aging and living with HIV.

I am 67. TM is by far the single-most important thing that I do each day for my own personal health and well-being. That's why I am so passionate about sharing it with the community.

What is Trancendental Meditation?: TM, is an easily learned, simple, natural, effortless mental technique, practiced for 20 minutes twice a day, sitting comfortable with eyes

closed. TM is not a religion, a philosophy, a belief, or a lifestyle. It is a technique. Anyone can do it and obtain benefits.

What will I learn?: In the TM course, you learn how to effortlessly transcend — go beyond the active, busy, surface level of your awareness, and tap into a natural state of calm, inner peace and silence deep within your own mind. This restorative and enlivening experience is typically unavailable from apps and other meditation approaches.

Personalized Instruction: The TM technique is not “one size fits all.” It's taught one-to-one and is carefully personalized for you. Only certified TM teachers can instruct you in the authentic TM technique, and you will enjoy free lifetime follow-up and support anywhere you live.

Absolutely effortless: Maybe you've tried other meditation practices. Maybe you're just curious. Anyone can learn and practice TM — even if you think you can't meditate. No trying to “empty the mind” or “clear the mind of thoughts”. No mindfulness (monitoring of thoughts). No concentrating. No control of the mind. Practiced sitting comfortably.

Evidence-based: Over 350 peer-reviewed, published scientific research studies have found the TM technique to be highly effective for stress-related conditions, brain function, cardiovascular health and more.

Research on TM and Living with HIV/AIDS: An initial study at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation with forty HIV-positive individuals practicing TM for just three months showed: A 51% decrease in HIV related physical problems, 43% increase in vitality, 42% improvement in general health, 27% decrease in perceived stress, 22% improvement in emotional well being, 38% reduction in anxiety, 36% reduction in anger and hostility, and a 39% decrease in depressive symptoms.

Non-profit: The Transcendental Meditation technique is taught in the US by Maharishi Foundation USA, a federally recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization. All revenues go entirely to support the organization's educational and charitable initiatives.

Ready to learn more, or sign up for a course?

Please contact me!

Tom Roth
troth@tm.org



Steven Drew Auerbach
COO - Director of Business
Development HARP-PS

To Our Community and Supporters

2023 Has been a wonderful year of growth at HARP and our vision for future growth of our organization exceeds that in 2024. Aside from our continuing educational programs and research, internally we have tackled several projects as well:

- A complete redesign of our website thanks to Sunny Wood, and our amazing volunteer Ken Vergonet who also keeps our social media up to date (and has for numerous years) with a fierce commitment than is a gift to HARP-PS
- A new look for our bi-monthly newsletter thanks to our talented and resourceful volunteer Jim Ferguson, who wears more hats than should be allowed with a generosity of spirit that is boundless.

- An updated Palm Springs Pride Booth where we were able to meet and speak with the many individuals we currently serve as well as meeting others that will be served by us in the future. We could not have done this without a team made up of our board members and several other volunteer.

Though we are so fortunate to have amazing volunteers, the growth of our organization and the services we provide for people aging with HIV is reliant on your generosity.

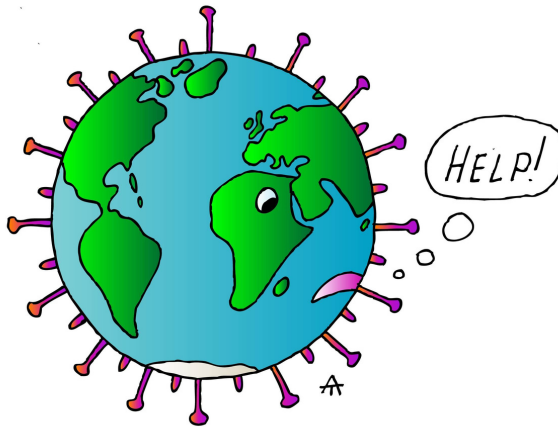
Won't you please consider a financial contribution in honor of someone that is aging with HIV, or whom we have lost to AIDS so that we may continue our mission by following this link or scanning this QR code?



NO AMOUNT IS TOO SMALL!

We all look forward to a day when HIV is eradicated but until then, we thank you for allowing us to support those that still struggle with the many issues inherent with aging with HIV.

Thank you,
Steven



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December 2023
Look over here 

January 2, 2024
“**Commitment to Life**”
APLA Documentary Screening

February 6, 2024
“**Beyond Testosterone**”
Nelson Vergel

March 5, 2024
HIV and The Law
Andrew Vincent Alder-Larue

April 2nd, 2024
CROI Update
Golkoo Morcos, Bios Clinical
Research

December 1, 2023
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM
Timothy Ray Brown
Walk of Fame Star Dedication Ceremony, Museum Way
Palm Springs. CA

December 1, 2023
4:30 PM - 6:30 PM
2nd Annual Timothy Ray Brown
Community Care Symposium

6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Reception
Palm Springs Cultural Center
2300 E Baristo Rd,
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Register
Now



A Very Special Thank You To Our Volunteers!

Ken Vergonet – Social Media Manager Extraordinaire

Jim Ferguson – Layout of Newsletter, Administration, And a few other things!

*Chad Sain – Photographer (Chad Sain Photography) a great person, artist,
and friend to HARP-PS*

And, Our newest Volunteer Scott Graf, a wonderful addition to our team!