



Positive TRACTION

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Woman takes HIV journey on the road

Once fearful of HIV disclosure, **SHIRLEY JAGLOWSKI** now is not even afraid of hills

In 1999, about one year after learning that she was infected with HIV, Shirley Jaglowski spotted a brochure for the California AIDS Ride at a community agency.

"I picked up [the brochure] and said, 'Someday, I'm going to do that ride,'" Shirley recalls.

"Someday" has finally arrived for Shirley Jaglowski.

A sudden shock

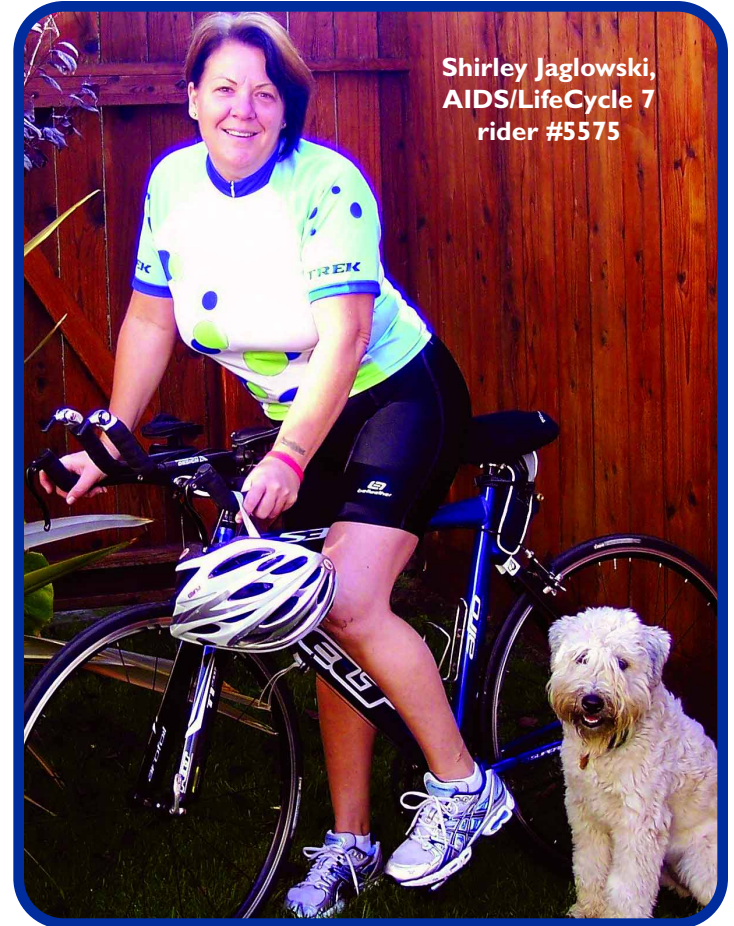
As a single woman living in Orange County, Shirley never imagined that she would find herself infected with HIV.

She agreed to get tested for exposure to HIV only because a friend was training to become a drug counselor, and decided that she would get tested. Shirley offered to join her friend so she wouldn't have to go alone.

Two weeks passed and it was time for Shirley and her friend to return to get the results of their tests. "They told me that they needed to re-test me," Shirley said. "I had never had an STD or anything like that, so I said 'why not?'"

Shirley then learned that both tests had shown that she was HIV-positive.

"It was like time had stopped," Shirley said. "I just couldn't really even hear. The doctor was talking to me; the nurse was talking to me. I could see their lips moving, but nothing they



Shirley Jaglowski,
AIDS/LifeCycle 7
rider #5575

were saying was sinking in."

The news that she was HIV-positive froze Shirley's life. For two weeks, she said, she barely could get out of bed, let alone make it to work.

"I couldn't stop crying," she said. "And I was trying to search my memory banks to find out what I had done in my life that put me in this predicament."

Eventually, she found the strength to resume going to her job. But she kept her HIV status concealed to everyone.

"I was afraid that if I told other people, they wouldn't like

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Longtime AIDS ride participant takes helm at AIDS/LifeCycle

Michael Barron is new to directing AIDS/LifeCycle, but he is not new to AIDS fund-raising rides. Since 1995, when Michael participated in a Boston-to-New York AIDS ride, he has been on 27 rides, including all but one ALC and most of the nine California AIDS Rides. At the end of his first month on the job as ALC director, he spoke with *Positive Traction*.

What motivated you when you did your first AIDS ride in 1995?

I was cheap! A friend who was doing the ride asked me for a donation. As I was deciding what I wanted to give, *See back page*

Shirley Jaglowski leaves fear and shame behind

From front page

me anymore, that I would be shunned by my family, that they would be afraid of me,” Shirley said.

Slowly stepping out

An encounter at an AA meeting signaled a shift in Shirley’s ability to deal with living with HIV.

At the meeting, she met a woman who later brought her to AIDS Services Foundation in Irvine. There, Shirley was assigned to a case manager who set her up with an appointment with a doctor, and she enrolled in ADAP so she could access medications. She also began to participate in workshops at ASF, where she met other people living with HIV.

“Gradually, I realized that HIV wasn’t quite a death sentence, like I thought,” Shirley said.

That knowledge gave Shirley courage to take increasingly bolder steps out of her self-imposed shell. Shirley’s friend who had become a drug counselor invited Shirley to speak at workshops about getting one’s life back on track. Shirley talked openly about some of her experiences, but continued to shield her HIV status.

“Every time I talked about what I did to change my life, I wasn’t able to tell my whole story,” Shirley said. “I was only able to be half of who I was. I felt like some of my best friends were friends with someone I didn’t even know.”

After three years of feeling like she was lying to herself and to everyone she met, Shirley decided that not everyone has to know, but some people do.

“It’s not like I walk down the street and someone says, ‘Hi, Shirley, I’m Jim,’ and I say ‘Hi Jim, I’m Shirley, I’m HIV-positive.’ It’s not that way. But if you’re somebody I want in my life and I want you to



Photo by Bob Katz

Positive Pedaler Shirley Jaglowski spoke at the AIDS/LifeCycle 7 kickoff party in L.A. on Jan. 18

come back tomorrow and I want you to have dinner at my house and I want to buy you a birthday present and I want to celebrate your joys with you, then there’s something about me that you need to know.”

Helping to raise awareness

Soon, Shirley was taking larger strides in disclosing her situation to others.

She began to participate in speaking engagements for ASF at high schools and colleges, sharing her experiences as a woman with HIV/AIDS and helping others to understand the disease. In the course of her volunteer work for ASF, she met her husband, who also is HIV-positive.

Shirley also has an adult son and daughter from a previous marriage. Last year, her daughter rekindled Shirley’s interest in participating in an AIDS fund-raising ride.

“She trained for six months and did the Long Beach Marathon,” Shirley said. “That doesn’t sound like a magnificent feat to a lot of people but she’s not athletic. She never ran a day in her life.

“My father died of lymphoma, and my daughter trained with the lymphoma team. She raised so much money! I watched her cross the finish line and she just inspired me.”

At an event where AIDS/LifeCycle was performing outreach, Shirley met Pam Garcia from the ALC staff.

“I thought, if this is something I want to do, I may as well do it now. I said I’m 48 years old and I’m not getting any younger. I too am not athletic, but it’s not going to get any easier than it is now.”

A flag caught her eye

While watching the DVD

“I thought, if this is something I want to do, I may as well do it now. I said ‘I’m 48 years old and I’m not getting any younger. It’s not going to get any easier than it is now.’ ”

in the ALC welcome packet, Shirley saw riders with orange flags on their bikes. Before long, she found herself joining Positive Pedalers, signing up for PosPedsConnect, and submitting an RSVP to a Pos Ped training ride.

“I met Brendan Patrick on the ride,” Shirley said. “At the time he didn’t know who I was and I didn’t know who he was but he had his Pos Ped jersey on.”

Shirley, ALC Rider #5575, describes Brendan’s enthusiasm for riding as “contagious.”

“Brendan was behind me about three miles as we were going up a hill and he was like ‘DOWNSHIFT! DOWNSHIFT! Why are you working the bike, honey? Let the bike work for you!’ ”

Her boldest step yet

In January, Shirley stood behind a microphone, in front of hundreds of guests at the AIDS/LifeCycle kickoff party at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel, and talked candidly about what brought her to the ride.

“Over the years I have sadly learned that I am not alone with this disease,” she said. “There are countless others. And although I would not be who I am today with out their support, it is bittersweet that I am not alone.”

After Shirley finished speaking at the ALC kickoff party, a young woman walked up to her and gave her a big hug, “She said, ‘I’m positive, too, and I don’t tell anyone.’ My heart went out to her.”

In the beginning of Shirley Jaglowski’s journey as a woman living with HIV, she was afraid of how HIV would alter her life.

Today –10 years later— Shirley is excited about where that journey may take her next. +

— PAUL SERCHIA



Positive Pedalers on AIDS/LifeCycle 6 on Day 5 in Lompoc.

Spirit of Positive Pedalers saluted by AIDS/LifeCycle

AIDS/LifeCycle honored the work of Positive Pedalers with the presentation of the **ALC Spirit Award** at events in San Francisco and Los Angeles in January.

On Sunday, Jan. 13, at the AIDS/LifeCycle 7 kickoff party at the Galleria at the San Francisco Design Center, longtime Pos Ped Board member **Wilfredo Ortiz** accepted the Spirit Award on behalf of the entire group. Six days later, at the ALC 7 kickoff party at the Sheraton Gateway Hotel in Los Angeles, longtime Pos Ped and Emeritus Board member **Bob Katz** accepted the award.

In remarks to kickoff party guests made following the presentation, Wilfredo announced that ALC7 will be his 20th AIDS ride. Wilfredo added that he has reached “the happy age of 50” and has lived half of his life with HIV. “When I first start riding on these events 13 years ago, I never thought I’d reach either mark,” Wilfredo said. “Holding this award validates and reinforces my personal mission to ending the stigma of disease through a positive public example.”

Accepting the Spirit Award in Los Angeles, Bob acknowledged the progress that has been made in the care and treatment of HIV and AIDS and saluted the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center for their roles in those advances.

The inscription on the Spirit Award recognizes Positive Pedalers for courage, strength and commitment, and thanks the group “for blazing trails, for inspiring us, and for the positive impact you’ve had on so many individuals. Thank you for being the spirit of AIDS/LifeCycle.”

As of Feb. 15, 250 Positive Pedalers had registered for AIDS/LifeCycle 7, including 40 roadies. +

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Michael Barron talks about ALC, Pos Peds

From front page

I thought I could probably fund-raise. So instead I signed up to ride, and my friend and I became tent mates. It was the height of the epidemic. At that point, it felt like I was going to a memorial every other week.

So you've been with this epidemic every step of the way. In some ways, AIDS is the polio of our generation, the World War II of our generation. Someday very soon, hopefully, people will be able to look back on the epidemic and ask, "What did you do?" I'll be able to say that I made a difference.

How were you involved in the past couple of ALCs? In ALC 2 or 3, Chris Cole brought me out as an unpaid consultant, so I could help however I could with the rides. I started out in logistics. I did that the first year, and then every year I came out helping the logistics team. For the past three or four years, I've been with the logistics director from start to finish.

If anybody has ever put on a birthday party for someone, you know how cumbersome it can be. Try doing that for 4,000 people over nine days! What I did was I would drive around with the logistics director so she could be constantly on the phone as we move from camp to camp. You put out all kinds of fires and hope that none of the participants ever sees the chaos in the kitchen.

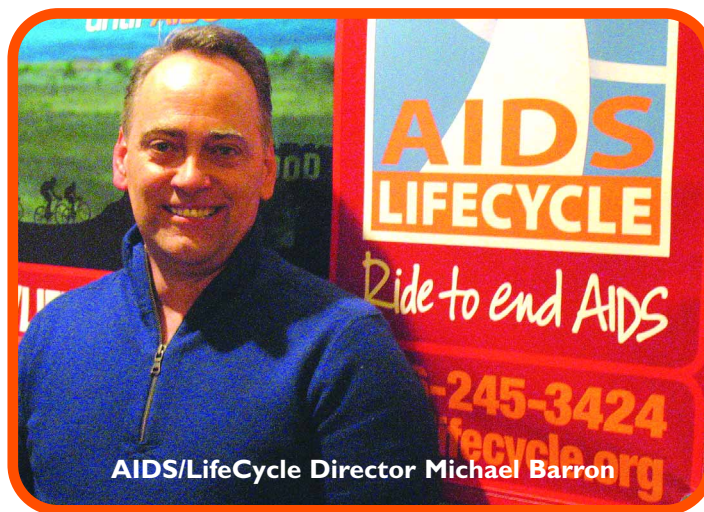
Once we couldn't cross the bridge because of a brush fire. And I happened to be near it, so the logistics team sent me back to try to help them. Things like food running out at one pit stop so we take food from one pit stop to another. Roadies have an incredible system now that they self-manage so many of their things. But often all of command is done with phone lines that move from camp to camp sometimes they need a set of eyes, just trying to keep

the machine going **ALC has been growing, with San Francisco and L.A. capping out with cyclists.** It's set up so in the end we have approximately 2,500 cyclists, after attrition of around 28-32%. Most walks, runs, rides usually have a one-third attrition rate; some have more.

Training and fund-raising are usually not the reason for the attrition at all. It's usually life changes that people never thought of. Seven months ago I never would have guessed that I would be living in Los

Angeles in the first two or three years there's a lot of learning on the job, how to produce the marketing, how to produce the logistics, and how to ensure that the event is something that is memorable, and then how to help participants with fund-raising. I think ALC 5 and ALC 6 just blew those doors wide open and shot us on a curve. Last year's growth of over 500 riders was a huge leap that I think was a blessing and a curse at the same time.

We have to keep the ride manageable so the experience



AIDS/LifeCycle Director Michael Barron

Do you remember the first time that you heard about Positive Pedalers?

I think it was California AIDS Ride 3. The next year was Spokesbusters. I knew a number of people who were involved with Spokesbusters. We had some Spokesbusters on the Red Ribbon Ride, and we had Positive Pedalers on the Red Ribbon Ride and the SMART ride.

We have 250 Pos Peds members have registered for ALC 7, including 40 roadies. Can you point to any reason why more Pos Peds signed up for ALC 7?

There's a buoyancy to an event like this. After successive years, more and more people want to be a part of something that's succeeding.

is still as high as it has been and the safety is as high. I would love to have 5,000 cyclists on the road because we would make that much more money for the agencies, but I don't think we could support them and I don't think the roads could support them. So I think the cyclists and the roadies and the donors trust the ride and specifically the agencies. This ride is owned, produced by and benefits the agencies. That's a very strong thing.

For Positive Pedalers, I think the ride is also benefiting from the belief that being positive not a death sentence anymore. It's something that has drawn people together at this point. Positive Pedalers has such a progressive, positive message —no pun intended!

How can Pos Peds help ALC?

First off, the awareness you raise is amazing. Just as GLBT issues have gained from the experience of people being up front and open and knocking down walls of ignorance, Positive Pedalers do that with your flags on the bike and the jerseys you wear.

As true as it sounds, just doing what you're doing does so much on the ride itself. I'm always torn between honoring those who are living their lives truthfully and courageously, being public about their status, as well as honoring those who are open about being gay, and those who have lived through this epidemic and who remain negative for some reason, whether it's from sheer dumb luck or being smart.

It's a mixed message that we send. I'm not sure that there's any better message out there. Stay negative if you can, and if you're positive, it's just another part of your life that you can live with.

ALC offers a great opportunity for people who are HIV-positive to take the step to be open about it.

The more honestly you live your life and the more you live as if you have nothing to hide, the more walls of ignorance you break down.

Do you do any cycling?

I've barely done any cycling since 1995. For seven months after the first ride, I didn't want to look at that bike! It brought back memories of being passed by grandmothers and everybody else.

The ALC staff is investigating a bike for me, so I'm going to be doing training rides. I'm definitely out of shape, but the will is somewhat willing. There's an office of avid and rabid cyclists out there, so, yeah, I'm sure I'm going to be indoctrinated again. You hang around swimmers and you get in the pool more often; you hang around riders and you get on a bike more. +

Join PosPedsConnect today! Visit www.pospeds.org for details