Got HIV and Something to Say? Apply for This Free Playwriting Workshop

You might also win $5,000 in the “Write It Out!” virtual program for people living with HIV, created by playwright Donja R. Love.

July 28, 2023 By Trent Straube

Picture it: The curtain opens. Onstage under the spotlight, brilliant actors deliver lines, telling a moving story—that you wrote! You—a person living with HIV and a voice waiting to be heard.

To manifest this scenario for folks in the HIV community, award-winning playwright—and former POZ cover subject—Donja R. Love created the Write It Out! virtual playwriting workshop for people living with HIV.

The free workshop takes place every Tuesday and Thursday from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. across 10 weeks spanning September to December and culminates with a reading on World AIDS Day, marked annually each December 1.

The program is accepting applications now, but don’t delay—the deadline is 11:59 p.m. Friday, August 4. Applicants are assured “strict confidentiality” and “all writing levels are encouraged to apply. For more details, visit LetsWriteItOut.com.

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A post shared by National Queer Theater (@nationalqueertheater)

But wait there's more! The Write It Out! program also includes a $5,000 award that includes a year of dramaturgical support.

Check out photos from last year's readings on NationalQueerTheater.org. Dominic Colón has won the inaugural Write It Out! prize in 2021 for playwrights living with HIV for his work *The War I Know*. Watch that announcement and an interview between Colón and Love below:

"Writing helped me navigate my status after diagnosis," Love explains on the Write It Out! website. "I started Write It Out! (WIO!) as a way for people living with HIV to be in a creative space void of shame and stigma, to be in a community. Now in its third year, I realize WIO! Is more than a writing workshop. It's a family that helps people grow as artists and people living with HIV."

As the website states, "The goal of WIO! is to use the power of imagination and healing to strengthen the voice of those living with HIV and AIDS and transform the theatrical landscape into a more equitable and stigma-free space."

The program is produced by the National Queer Theater in partnership with The Each-Other Project and with support from Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and The Terrence McNally Foundation.

Love is the scribe behind the hit play one in two; the title references the statistic that one in two gay Black men are expected to test positive for HIV in their lifetime. The play ran in New York City in 2019 and 2020; the work was awarded the 2020 POZ Award for Best Play. See the POZ write-up here, and watch a clip from the show below:

Love, who is also a filmmaker and poet, graced the cover of POZ in December 2021, for that year's POZ 100, which celebrated Black advocates. He also spoke with POZ founder Sean Strub in a Q&A titled "Visibility Is Survival."

"[The Write It Out! program] is one of the greatest joys in my life right now," Love said in that 2021 interview. "Like Joseph Beam, who realized that he had resources for community, I realized I was in a similar space.

"Last year, we had 13 writers. One unfortunately had to drop out because of illness, so we had 12 at the end of it. This year, we have 10 writers for a 10-week program. They participate online via Zoom. As far as I can see right now, we'll remain virtual because of the accessibility. Last year, 10

of the 12 writers were not based in New York. Each writer who participates has their work rehearsed and noticed. It gets presented virtually on World AIDS Day.”

Donja R. Love on the POZ cover for December 2021

In related news, Love’s Black LGBTQ digital series i need space debuted online last year (episodes were available to watch until August 31, 2022). For more details about that project, including previews, check out “Watch Black Queer Men Explore Love and Loss in Explicit Video Chats.”

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/got-hiv-something-say-apply-free-playwriting-workshop