

Mom and Son Are Both LGBTQ Ministers Honored for Their HIV Work

The duo runs Relationships Unleashed, a Black-led LGBTQ group in Tennessee that helps folks living with HIV.

May 3, 2021 By [Trent Straube](#)

Gwendolyn Clemons lost a transgender sister to AIDS in 1991. She didn't want to see another family endure that ordeal, so in 2014, she and her son, Davin, founded Relationships Unleashed, a [Black-led](#) nonprofit in Memphis that focuses on helping people living with [HIV/AIDS](#). This spring, the [32nd Annual GLAAD Media Awards](#), which honor fair and accurate [LGBTQ](#) representations in the media, shined a spotlight on Gwendolyn and Davin, both of whom are ministers and identify as LGBTQ.

<https://t.co/NeZJUZZ21FW> Thank you [@memphisnews](#) for the local news coverage of [@UnleashedKWAM](#) non profit work here in Memphis, TN. For more information visit <https://t.co/DQ7KGkkX48> [@geequeme_gwen](#) GET READY! GET READY!! [#iamunleashed](#) [#blacklivesmatter](#) [@glaad](#)

— Davin D. Clemons (@DavinClemons) [April 22, 2021](#)

During the awards ceremony, they appeared in a video that highlighted their work (watch it at the top of this article). “Our goal is to liberate Black and brown people through education, empowerment and enrichment,” Davin said in the [GLAAD](#) video. “We offer all types of treatment and support for people who are living with HIV. We help them take care of themselves and their families—especially through this year, this pandemic.”

Gwendolyn has an MBA and has worked in criminal justice for over three decades; Davin has a doctoral degree in leadership in ministry. He's also a former police officer and LGBTQ liaison with the Memphis Police Department, which he sued in 2014 for discrimination.

Both mother and son are elders at the [Cathedral of Praise Church of Memphis](#). They also founded The Unleashed Voice Media Marketing Firm, LLC, which has produced a radio show, a podcast and a national LGBTQ magazine.

NEW PODCAST ALERT!

Posted by [Relationship Unleashed a Nonprofit 501 c3 Organization](#) on [Saturday, May 1, 2021](#)

The Memphis Commercial Appeal newspaper and The Associated Press [recently highlighted](#) their accomplishments at [Relationships Unleashed](#), noting that, according to [AIDSVu](#), “Memphis has high rates of HIV: In 2018, 6,090 people were living with HIV in Memphis, and 84% of that population was Black.”

Last year, the nonprofit received a grant from the COMPASS Initiative—the name stands for “COMmitment to Partnership in Addressing HIV/AIDS in Southern States.” [Gilead Sciences](#), which manufactures numerous blockbuster [HIV medications](#), launched the COMPASS initiative in 2017, dedicating \$100 million over a decade to tackle HIV in the South. Each year, the initiative awards millions of dollars in grants to local groups.

In general, the grantees receive COMPASS funding for programs that reduce HIV stigma, raise awareness of HIV, build organizational capacity, tackle substance use and promote mental health, trauma-informed care and well-being. The grantees are selected by four organizations referred to as coordinating centers. They include:

- Emory University Rollins School of Public Health
- Southern AIDS Coalition
- University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work
- Wake Forest University School of Divinity.

To learn more about COMPASS on POZ.com, read about the [2019 grantees](#), the [2020 grantees](#), the

[debut of the initiative](#), the launch of [seven new interventions to reduce stigma](#) and the launch earlier this year, thanks to a \$5 million grant, of [faith-based coordinating center](#) to address the HIV epidemic in the South.

Thank you [@memphisnews](#) for the local news coverage
of our non profit [@UnleashedKWAM](#) Relationship
Unleashed! Our work is hard but it is very necessary and
we love ♥ what we do! [#iamunleashed](#) #38126
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[pic.twitter.com/zPoCYHAeQN](#)
— Rship Unleashed (@UnleashedKWAM) [April 25, 2021](#)

Did you know that in 2019, African Americans represented 13% of the U.S. population but 43% of new HIV cases? In the South, they accounted for 52% of HIV diagnoses. You can learn more about [HIV among African Americans](#)—and several other minority populations—by visiting the [HIV/AIDS Basics on POZ.com](#) and clicking on the “HIV in Specific Populations” section. And check out the information in the write up for 2021’s [National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day \(#NBHAAD\)](#).

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<http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/mom-son-lgbtq-ministers-honored-hiv-work>