

Speaker Profile

Teniecka Hannah **Teniecka Hannah**



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My name is Teniecka Hannah, 25 years old, from Colorado Springs, CO. I am a volunteer for the American Red Cross on a Military installation and a junior at Colorado Christian University studying Organizational Management in Human Resources.

Before finding out in May of 2001 that I was HIV positive my life was normal; heading in the direction I wanted to head. I was real sick, I went to my dad's

base to find out that I had thrush, a symptom of HIV. I was tested and later found out that I was HIV positive. My emotions were everywhere; scared, angry, confused. The military informed my family of my status and I immediately began to feel different being around them. I had a tough time for about a year trying to get an understanding of what being positive meant. After I got a grip on everything, I went to a local organization in my area, and they have been working with me since my diagnosis. I really appreciate them for all they have done and continue to do for my family and myself.

Sitting back and pondering the last five years, I realize how selfish I had become. I felt that everyone should pity me and feel sorry for me. I felt like this for the longest time but I have come to a realization that the world does not owe me anything. I need to be opening my mouth and instead of complaining and feeling sorry, do something about it. I want to play an active role in helping prevent the spread of HIV and let people gain knowledge.

Since testing positive for HIV, I look at the world in a very new perspective. Life is a precious treasure and if taken lightly can be gone in moments. My family is now handling the news much better than when they first learned about my diagnosis. My fam-

ily makes me feel accepted; they take interest in me and what is going on physically, mentally, and emotionally. I am glad to have them care so much about me to make sure I eat right and do what I am suppose to.

Hey! I got a master plan that's just going to excel me in the future! I'm determined to go back to school for my Master's in Business Management. I would also love to open my own non-profit organization to help and give back to my community. For now, I plan on staying focused, getting through my classes and living life to the fullest.

I am especially thankful, honored, and blessed to have an opportunity to help and not just sit back. I understand that I have a purpose and my goal is to fulfill that purpose in whatever way I can. At the end of the day, I want to know I made an impact on someone. I also have a goal to let people know that there is hope for the present and the future. I cannot change my past but I can definitely learn from my mistakes and keep moving. Challenges come throughout life and one just needs to know how to deal with different circumstances. I am thrilled, passionate for making changes in people's lives and looking forward to a fruitful future.

Gratefully,

Teniecka

A Quick Look

Age - 26 years old

Location - Colorado Springs, CO

Sex - Female

Race - African American

HIV+ since - May 2001