LONG-TERM SURVIVORS OF HIV
Honouring the Past
Shaping the Future

For immediate release

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Press Release

HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day: **Survivors Gather in Sitges to Preserve Stories and Shape the Future**

As the world marks HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day on June 5, a recent international gathering in Sitges, Spain, highlighted the power of storytelling, community, and lived experience in shaping the future of the HIV response.

In March, from 25 to 28, 2026, long-term and lifetime survivors of HIV from Europe, the United States, and Canada came together for the HIV Long-Term Survivors of HIV Summit in Sitges, near Barcelona. The gathering created space for survivors across generations and communities to connect, reflect, and share their experiences of ageing with HIV.

More than a conference, the Summit was an opportunity for people who have lived through decades of the epidemic to learn from one another, discuss ongoing challenges, and help build a shared "Legacy Chest", a digital audiovisual collection of survivor stories intended to educate, inspire, and support advocacy for years to come.

"Being surrounded by so many different people was deeply affirming. Hearing stories of resilience and survival was both inspiring and moving, while also carrying a quiet sense of sorrow for the lives and possibilities that could have been," reflects Julian Hows, EATG representative to the initiative.

Participants spoke openly about the realities of ageing with HIV, including stigma, mental health challenges, isolation, healthcare access, and the importance of peer support and community leadership. The conversations also celebrated resilience, survival, activism, and the bonds formed over decades of living through the epidemic together.

"As long-term survivors of HIV, we carry not only the memory of what we endured, but the wisdom, resilience, and leadership needed to shape what comes next. The Summit in Sitges reminded us that our stories are not just history; they are a living legacy that continues to inspire advocacy, healing, and hope for future generations," says Linda H Scruggs, Ribbon Co-Executive Director.

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Realize Co-Executive Director, Kate Murzin, described the Summit as *"a unique opportunity to reflect on how far the HIV movement has come thanks to the leadership and fortitude of long-term survivors. In an era when communities most affected by HIV are being vilified, funding for ongoing support is limited, and the population of people living with HIV is aging, it's critical that we don't lose ground. Long-term survivors know how to bring about positive change."*

The Legacy Chest will preserve their lived experiences while creating a practical resource for advocacy, healthcare education, and community organising. This group continues to forge a new path as the first cohort of people to age with HIV over the long-term. In some ways, the situation has now come full circle; when first diagnosed, many Summit attendees and other long-term survivors encountered systems that were ill-prepared to respond to their needs and as these needs have evolved, many supports have not. Organisers hope the stories collected will help ensure that long-term survivors continue to inform policies, services, and public understanding of HIV and ageing.

"It's more important than ever that we honor the stories of long-term survivors. By sharing our stories, we show the resilience within ourselves and our communities, and help light the way forward," says Jeff Berry, Executive Director of The Reunion Project.

The stories gathered in Sitges are now being curated into a digital archive that will be shared publicly in the coming months. The first will be premiered in The Silver Zone, a Global Village networking zone for ageing and older people living with HIV, at the International AIDS Conference in Rio de Janeiro from 27 to 30 July.

On HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day, the message from Sitges is clear: long-term survivors are not only witnesses to history; they continue to lead, teach, and shape the future of the HIV movement.

Learn more about the initiative: https://www.eatg.org/projects/long-term-survivors-of-hiv/

#HLTSAD #HIVLTS2026 #AgeingWithHIV #AIDS2026

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The project is led by the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) in partnership with Ribbon – A Center of Excellence (USA), The Reunion Project (USA), and Realize (Canada). It has been developed by EATG and partner organisations, and was made possible through grants from Gilead Sciences, ViiV Healthcare and Merck, Sharp & Dohme.

EATG European AIDS Treatment Group
THE REUNION PROJECT
realize FOSTERING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND OTHER EPISODIC DISABILITIES
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