

Girlfriend

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in this issue
is UNDER
\$80!

166

WAYS TO GET
YOUR FASH ON

Leighton Meester
"I LOVE BEING ABLE TO FIND
CLOTHES FOR \$20!"

• I'M 18 &
HIV-
POSITIVE. •

• THEY PUT
MY SKULL
IN THE
FREEZER. •

GASP-WORTHY
READS

DO TRY THIS
AT HOME

AWESOMELY
4 EASY
HAIRSTYLES
check out p104

THE FREEBIES ISSUE

OVER \$65,000 OF PRIZES - WHAT WILL YOU WIN?



10

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SUPER 8 MEET OUR 2012 MODEL SEARCH FINALISTS

Life.

AS TOLD
BY YOU

YOUR LIVES. YOUR STORIES.

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Girlfriend? Head to
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The Mag section to
tell us your story.



I'M AN
ORDINARY →
TEENAGER, BUT I'M
HIV-POSITIVE.

US teen Paige, 18, won't let her HIV
status stop her from doing anything.

THE
freebies
ISSUE

MAGGIE STIEFVATER

THE RAVEN BOYS

20 TO WIN! Blue Sargent, the daughter of the town psychic, has always been told that if she ever kisses her true love, she will die. *The Raven Boys* is the first in a four-part series from bestselling author Maggie Stiefvater.

CODE WORD: RAVEN
See page 6 for deets on how to enter.

PERFECT
you!
REALITY
CHECK

This image has not
been retouched.



Looking at me,
you'd never
guess that I'm
HIV-positive.

Growing up, I went to the doctor a lot, but I thought it was just because I had asthma. I didn't really listen to what my doctor and mum talked about during my appointments. I was little, so I just sat there, getting my blood drawn, waiting for my sticker and lollipop.

I had to take medicine every day, but I never really questioned it. Again, I thought it was for my asthma. But in middle school, I realised that my other friends with asthma didn't have to take medicine and weren't missing as much school as I was to go to the doctor. I had heard the word "HIV" during my doctor's appointments, so I decided to ask my mum about it.

I'll never forget the moment my mum told me I was HIV-positive. I was 12 years old and I just straight out asked her, "Mum, am I HIV-positive?". She looked at me and said, "Yes, you are, but you're on medication and are fine. We'll talk about it when you're older and can understand more".

I didn't know much about HIV then – just the scary videos we had to watch in health class that warned us not to have sex without a condom. I believed my mum when she told me I was fine.

A little while later, I told my best friend of my HIV status. Within a couple weeks, the whole school knew. I

was bullied a lot. One day, I went to school and saw a note on my locker. It said "No AIDS at this school!" in damning letters. My name is Paige, but people would call me PAIDS. I started having stress-induced seizures because I hated going to school so much. I used to have a lot of friends, but – almost overnight – everyone was scared to hang out or even touch me.

To deal with my stress, my mum suggested I join the soccer team. I liked it at first, but not long after I started, my coach outed me. "Paige, is it true that you have AIDS?" he asked me in front of everyone. I told him no and went home. Just because I'm HIV-positive does not mean I have AIDS, but I didn't feel like I needed to explain that to him. When I told my mum what happened, she was furious. She went straight up to my soccer coach and gave him a piece of her mind. "I think we should tell the other teams about Paige's HIV status," he told my mum. "Other kids will be too scared to touch her and then we can score more goals." Disgusted, my mum and I decided I would quit the team and spend the rest of Year 8 being homeschooled.

Even though my mum had wanted to wait until I was older to explain how I got HIV and what it meant, she sat me down and explained everything after the bullying started. HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus, and it's a virus that causes AIDS – a deadly disease. People with HIV have a harder time fighting off sicknesses because it attacks their immune

system, the part of the body that fights off germs and diseases. Many people with HIV can stay pretty healthy, as long as they take medication every day, like I do.

You can't "catch" HIV from someone the way you can catch a cold. It isn't passed through the air and you can't get it by touching someone. You can't even get HIV from kissing someone who has it. There are four ways someone can be infected with HIV: having unprotected sex with someone who has it, sharing needles, through a blood transfusion at the hospital (but since all donated blood is tested for HIV, the chance of this happening are almost impossible), or getting it from your mum when she is pregnant with you, which is how I got it.

My parents divorced when I was two, and a couple months later my mum found out she had HIV. Then, she got me tested and found out I had it too. She called my dad, but he denied giving it to her. However, when I was six, my dad died of AIDS, which is caused by HIV.

I didn't want other HIV-positive kids to have to do through what I went through, so I decided to get certified by the Red Cross as an HIV and AIDS educator and speak to various schools, churches and other groups about what it means to have HIV. I think people teased me because they just didn't know much about it.

Since I'm so open about my HIV status, all the guys I've dated have known about it before asking me out.

I've never had someone break up with me because of it, but I did date a guy whose parents wanted him to break up with me when they found out. They were just scared and trying to protect their son, but once we told them we weren't having sex or doing anything to put him at risk, they were more accepting of our relationship.

THE *freebies* ISSUE

SIX TO WIN! The Palm Beach Collection is giving away prize packs consisting of hand-poured soy wax candles and alcohol-free reed diffusers in delicious scents such as Tahitian Mango, Coconut & Lime and French Vanilla. Visit palmbeachcollection.com.au.
CODE WORD: LUXURY

See page 6 for deets on how to enter.

