

# Call for donations

## Requesting funds to appeal

**the case of an HIV positive woman found guilty of sexual assault for not having disclosed her serostatus before having sex.**

Help us collect the funds necessary to appeal this unprecedented case.

Send your donations to:

Fondation québécoise du sida,  
1 Sherbrooke St. East, Montréal (Québec) Canada, H2X 3V8  
(Please write « Valentine Fund » on the back of your cheque or money order)

The following text was written by close friends of the woman in question.

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"In times when we don't know  
Let this be our prayer,  
When we lose our way  
Lead us to the place,  
Guide us with Your grace  
To a place where we'll be safe."

This past week the words and melody of "Prayer" (as sung by Celine Dion and Josh Groban) have been going around and around in our heads. We have been involved in a drama, and we would like to tell you about it.

We are trying to help a very special French-Canadian friend of ours find HER way back to a safe place. We've been involved with her and her son since January of 1994 when we were introduced by a friend who is a social worker, who works exclusively with people living with HIV/AIDS. Her little son was then 3. She had unknowingly become infected with HIV from her husband, the little boy's father, to whom she'd been married for 3 years, since 1988. She only found out that she was infected one week after her husband died in 1991. (Neither of them had known that he was infected. They had carried on a normal married relationship, for 3 years.) When she found out she was infected she was devastated, but learning that her little son was 100% healthy, she set out to look for parents for him in the event of her death. We gave our commitment to her to be those parents if and when the time came, and have been involved ever since. She has gone on to live far longer than ever expected and we were never needed as "parents" However, she and her son are both a wonderfully enriching part of our lives. We have had many happy memories together. At one point, to establish the relationship and to help when her health was low, her son came to live with us for much of 6 months, just after we were blessed with our own beloved son in October 1994. For a while we had two children here - a baby and a 3-year old!

In the summer of 2000, at her son's soccer match, she met the father of one of her son's team-mates. The relationship developed. She followed the professional advice of all the doctors, etc. who were helping her, and used protection when the relationship became intimate. The medical professionals also advised her, (as they advise all people in her condition to this day), that AS LONG AS SHE USED PROTECTION, it was completely safe for the partner and therefore NOT necessary to inform the partner of her condition initially (i.e. the first 1 or 2 times). Because of the potential stigma involved for her son amongst his friends and team-mates if word got out about her condition, she took this option of not initially informing her partner. She DID all that had been professionally advised. She DID ensure that protection WAS used. She DID inform her partner of her condition before the second time they were together when he started to profess his love for her. He was stunned at first, and did not see her for several weeks, but then came back to her, saying that he loved her and wanted to be with her, regardless of her condition. They ended up living happily together for about 3 years. In 2003, things started to go downhill for them. (We did not see them at this time, due, among other things, to professional commitments elsewhere.) Over a period of time, her partner became very controlling of her and harshly critical

of her son, with escalating verbal abuse. She decided that the atmosphere in the home had become unhealthy for her and especially for her son, and that she had to END the relationship. Not long after, she became a victim of conjugal violence. In December 2004, after a 911 call, police arrested her partner. She ended up at the hospital with head, face and neck injuries as well as emotional stress. Her son, who had saved her life, had his arm broken trying to protect her. What had been, in our eyes, a happy love story, had turned into a very tragic story!

Her ex-partner was charged and found guilty of assault in 2005. Just before his sentence was handed down (in an apparent attempt to get himself acquitted), he disclosed that SHE was HIV-positive. He made the accusation against her that she had had UNPROTECTED sex with him when they were first intimate five years before, in 2000, AND had not told him of her condition. She, the victim of conjugal violence, who had always followed the professional advice given to her to a "T", was charged with criminal assault. The man, who is completely NEGATIVE for HIV/AIDS, and who had been found guilty of battering her, was, at the time of making this accusation, then given an unconditional pardon. (!!!)

**On Valentine's Day, 2008, exhausted from the months of hearings, in a state of increasingly frail health and now bankrupt, she heard the judge's decision. She was GUILTY.** The judge had decided that SHE was unbelievable, even though she had total support from her medical team and relevant medical experts in this specific field. Many other people, including ourselves, also vouch for her honest, ethical character. On March 14 she faces a prison sentence. Her son (now 17) risks losing his Mom. Their relationship, such a close and loving one, is on the verge of being physically ruptured. We are sickened by the fact that HIS life could be ruined too, by something that is a TOTAL FALSEHOOD. There is NO way that we can stand idly by and let this happen!!

Our friend spent Valentine's night in the hospital after collapsing from the strain, and then stayed with us for a few days for support. She came back for the past few days. She is gradually recovering strength to go on. Our friend was a beautiful, young, bright, "girl-next-door" when we first met her, who had worked for 16 years in a responsible position in a big company. She is still the wonderful and dedicated mother we first met, and underneath all this current sadness and turmoil, there remains the vibrant girl who loves music, nature, reading, horseback riding, skiing, sky diving (!! ) and ESPECIALLY her son. We want to help get her back to the safe place where she belongs. With the help of all those who stand by her we WILL get her back.....at least to live out the rest of her days a FREE woman.

**We are reaching out to everyone we can think of to raise the immediately-required \$30,000 needed for the judicial appeal.**

Your contribution to help stop this injustice would be wonderful and is urgently needed. We prefer NOT going to the media, in order to protect our friend, her son and possibly even ourselves from her ex-partner. We, together with others who support her, have started a fund, at the Fondation Qu'Ébécoise du SIDA, called "The Valentine Fund", to help with the legal costs of her appeal. The address is below. Any surplus would be used to help others living with HIV/AIDS with their own legal issues.

Please make your cheque\* out to:

**Fondation Québécoise du SIDA** (IMPORTANT: put "**VALENTINE FUND**" on the bottom of the cheque to ensure it gets directed to this specific issue)

Please send the cheque to:

**Fondation Québécoise du SIDA  
1, rue Sherbrooke est, Montréal, QC, Canada, H2X 3V8**

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this story. Thank you so very much for your help.

Sincerely,

\* Receipts will be issued for \$20 and over.