

to throw it away regardless of how noble the cause. While the death rate from AIDS has gone down, the infection rate continues to rise, especially among African American women and the Latino population. It is true there are medications that keep the virus dormant for many years, but many have harsh side effects and are costly. The virus is also subject to mutations caused by a high rate of reproduction which renders current medications ineffective.”

“Before raising thousands of dollars for the foundation, there are three messages I wish to get out to the public. I want the public to understand HIV/AIDS is still very much a problem. People battling the AIDS epidemic are fighting a new type of ignorance besides prejudice – complacency. The second message is if you want something badly enough then it is obtainable. The Appalachian Trail has a ninety percent failure rate. One has a better chance of graduating medical school. I had virtually no hiking or camping experience before I became interested in doing my hike for the JDAF. Be that it may, I still want to achieve this goal and am putting off any type of post-college career/education until it is finished. And finally, the only way to completely eradicate AIDS is through awareness, education and prevention. I would especially like to reach out to high school and college students to participate in the fund-raiser. If it were not for my college’s support in bringing the DiPaolos to my campus last year, this fund-raiser would not be happening. There is so much people can learn from the courage displayed by Joey DiPaolo, who is now a successful, healthy adult despite having contracted HIV two decades ago. Joey DiPaolo is currently 25 years old and has his own business in addition to running the JDAF with his mother, Carol.”

If you would like to help Jesse Saperstein in raising funds for this cause, please send your donation to The Joey DiPaolo AIDS Foundation, 108 Vineland Ave., Staten Island, NY 10312 or call (718) 967-5609. Fax (718) 605-5881 or visit their Web site at www.jdaf.org

Editor’s Note:

If you wish to read Jesse’s journal while he’s on the trail, visit his Web site: www.HikeForAIDS.org

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