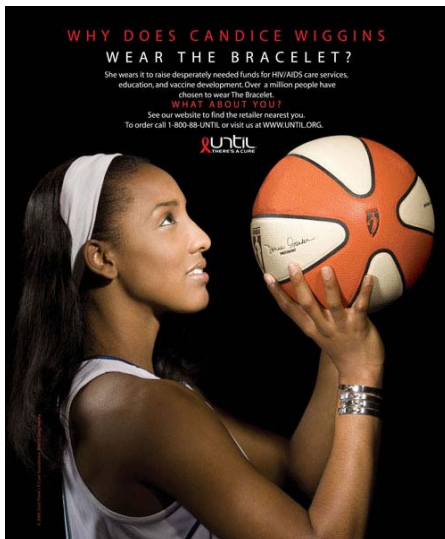


Candice Wiggins: Phenom With A Cause

by Maren Symonds

Fear. It's not a word one would normally associate with Candice Wiggins. Bright, energetic, competitive, and unfailingly upbeat, Candice rocketed to national fame as an elite high school and collegiate basketball player. In her senior year at Stanford, she led the Cardinal to a championship bid and earned the 2008 State Farm Wade trophy as National Player of the Year. She continues to dazzle fans, players, and coaches alike as the 2008 WNBA's Sixth Woman of the Year and a member of the WNBA's 2008 All Rookie Team with the WNBA Minnesota Lynx. Despite her success, this 22-year-old phenom knows what it's like to be a frightened little girl.



Just shy of her 4th birthday, Candice's father, Alan Wiggins, became the first major league baseball player to lose his life to complications from AIDS. It was early 1991, nearly a year before Magic Johnson's startling announcement when he tested HIV positive. Ignorance and misinformation about the disease proved a breeding ground for fear and suspicion. The afflicted were condemned, their loved ones avoided. "It was a scary time. No one would talk about it," Candice recalls. "A young girl wants to know about her Dad dying of AIDS. But it was taboo."

Candice's mother made sure that AIDS would not have the last word. Angela Wiggins rose above her own pain to nurture her daughter's considerable gifts in the classroom and on the playing field. She encouraged her daughter to transform their family's misfortune into an opportunity. Candice remembers her mother saying, "You can do something about it. You can give it a voice. You can uplift your father's tragedy and turn it into a positive thing."

Candice has chosen to break the wall of silence about AIDS through a partnership with Until There's A Cure (UTAC), a non-profit organization that raises awareness and funds to combat AIDS through the sale of *The Bracelet*. To date, the organization has raised over \$9 million for vaccine development, care services, and youth education. The latter captivated Candice's imagination.

"AIDS is very confusing for children. It's hard for them to understand. The media tells them to be afraid of it," Candice notes. "They need to know what it is and what they can do about it. Wearing The Bracelet is a great way to start the conversation."

Candice gladly lends celebrity to AIDS advocacy. She's as poised and confident with a group of kids or teens as she is on the court. And she's not afraid to talk about AIDS. "It goes beyond awareness and prevention. When you don't talk about it, it stays with you. It really affects you as an adult." Candice knows. She lived it.

UTAC supports Candice's passion for AIDS awareness with an on-line educational toolkit. **Together.Until.Org** provides data on HIV/AIDS, age-appropriate medical information, and social network links for the *We Are Together* campaigns. Candice's alma mater, La Jolla Country Day School, used this resource on a recent AIDS Walk during which they raised over \$800 for AIDS-related causes.

With 33 million afflicted worldwide and 7400 new cases every day, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a formidable opponent. Candice approaches the challenge as she approaches life. "I'll dream big dreams and then work as hard as I can," she promises. "You never know what one person can do."

* * * * *

Headquartered in Redwood City, CA, Until There's A Cure® Foundation is a national organization dedicated to AIDS awareness and prevention education, care and services for those living with AIDS, and vaccine development.