

My name is Denise Smith.

December 5th 2016, I laid beside my son Ron, singing in his ear to comfort him while he died. He will be forever 32.

In August 2013 Ron was working a full-time job. He loved his job and his Co-Workers, and often worked 40 plus hours a week.

By the middle of August 2013 Ron was displaying signs that he was unhealthy. Disoriented; trouble walking and urine retention. He was taken out of work with the diagnosis UTI and Norwegian Scabies. This went on for 3 weeks. My husband and I then took him to upstate Emergency room. They ran several tests and ultimately ended up with Aids as the diagnosis. We had no idea what this meant for Ron, but knew we would be by his side to do what had to be done.

I want to talk about "Stigma"

Webster's New World definition "a bad mark on ones record; a sign of disgrace."

Because of Stigma and fear my son Ron did not get tested.

Because of Stigma, Ron's younger brother lied to his friends about Ron's diagnosis and now lives with guilt. We need to stop the judging, this can happen in anyone of our families.

Parents, Guardians, Loved ones... you need to start having conversations with our youth. A five minute conversation could save them. Educate yourself: Talk about regular testing, Paper Condom Use.

Ron's Words

Quote - "Don't put HIV testing on the back burner."

Quote - "Don't even be afraid to be protected, Get tested"

Quote - "God only gives his strongest warriors his toughest battle"



ACR Health

25th

AIDS Walk/Run

**Denise Smith &
Ronny's Team for the
2017 AIDS Walk/Run**