

OFFICIAL  
SELECTION  
TORONTO  
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# PEDRO



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## ABOUT THE MOVIE

In BMP Films' first scripted project, *PEDRO* celebrates the extraordinary life of Pedro Zamora, a young man who when he found out he was HIV positive at 17, made the courageous decision to dedicate the rest of his life to speaking out about his condition in an attempt to raise awareness about the disease in his community, even testifying before the United States Congress to argue for more explicit HIV/AIDS educational programs aimed at youth of color before auditioning for *The Real World* in 1993. His appearance on *The Real World* brought his story and his message to MTV's youthful audience and beyond, and when Zamora's health began to deteriorate in late 1994 (after he left the show), it became front page news nationwide, and his death at age 22 provoked a worldwide outpouring of grief.



# THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU WATCH PEDRO

*PEDRO* tells an amazing story, but also communicates some serious messages. For many individuals and organizations watching *PEDRO* is a great opportunity to have discussions about these issues or help motivate new and old members to get involved.

Here are some things you can do before watching *PEDRO* to make the most of the experience.

## Organize A Viewing Party

Wanna host a viewing party for *PEDRO*? Here are some tips:

- **CHOOSE A LOCATION** - Believe it or not, a house party doesn't have to be held at a house although that may be easiest. Think about who you want to come and where those people would be most likely to attend such an event. Some ideas: your house/apartment/dorm room, a local café, a school common area or classroom, a library, conference room, religious center, or at the office of a local organization that works on issues raised in the film. Just make sure that location is received MTV, MTV Tres, mtvU or Logo on April 1 if you plan on watching it live. The film will be available to watch online for a limited period of time at [pedro.mtv.com](http://pedro.mtv.com) and then will be available on DVD by early summer 2009.
- **INVITE PEOPLE** - Send out emails, text messages, call people, tell people in person, send an Evite or start a Facebook group around it. No matter what you do, invite everyone you want to be there and make sure to ask people to RSVP if they can come. This is important to make sure you have enough seating for everyone.
- **PLAN YOUR HOUSE PARTY AGENDA** - Whether you expect five or 50 guests at your viewing party, it's important to organize event so it runs smoothly and you get what you want out of it. If your goal is to get people together just to watch the movie with friends then just make sure you have the space to do so and you're all set. (be aware though, most the time people will ask for drinks or snacks so plan accordingly). If you have other goals like having meaningful discussion on the topics in the movie or want to use *PEDRO* to rally people to take action then you need a more thought out agenda. In that case, use the attached Viewer Discussion Guide in your planning. Either way, keep in mind that a viewing party should be fun and social, so be sure your guests have time to mingle. Allow time at the end of your party to discuss the film. There are discussion questions on page six of this guide to help you engage your guests.
- **FOLLOW UP** - By organizing a viewing party like this you will automatically assume a bit of a leadership role if you didn't have one already. In such a case you may want to think about following up with people who want to get involved in one of the issues brought up in the movie. You could have some folks there that want to get more involved or maybe even enough people there to start up your own group. In either case, try to help people out that want to do more and maybe even plan help seek out some organizations you all can get involved with after seeing the movie.

## THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU WATCH PEDRO

### Prepare Yourself And Your Audience For Pedro's Emotional Impact

*PEDRO* is an extremely poignant movie and as a result may have a profound effect on its viewers. Here are some ideas on how to prepare before watching the film:

- Prior to screening the film, remind the audience to be prepared for the film to have a strong emotional effect on them. You can say, "While watching this film, you may feel emotional. Don't hesitate to excuse yourself, use the bathroom, get a drink or walk around if that's what you need to compose yourself. Don't feel obligated to watch the movie if you're feeling uncomfortable."
- Prior to starting the discussion after the screening, take the audience's "pulse" — are they sad? Inspired? It may be helpful to take a few moments to allow viewers to process what they saw before starting the discussion.
- Finally, because there may be many viewers in the audience who have been personally affected by HIV/AIDS, you may suggest a moment of silence to honor all of those friends and relatives who have been lost to this epidemic.



# UNDERSTANDING PEDRO

## Discussion Questions

1. How did the movie *PEDRO* make you feel? What is your first reaction?
2. Why do you think MTV chose to cast Pedro Zamora for *The Real World*?
3. Why do you think Pedro wanted to be on *The Real World*?
4. Why does Pedro feel that *The Real World* is “the artificial world”?
5. What did the MTV producer mean when he asked Pedro, “Are you always on-message?”
6. What problems did Pedro experience with his family? How do these problems affect HIV/AIDS in the community?
7. How was Pedro’s family supportive of Pedro and his illness? How were they not supportive?
8. What could parents learn from this film?
9. What role does silence have in this film? What role does silence have in the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Latino community? Does it hurt the community? How?
10. What role does stigma have in this film and in the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the community in general? Does it hurt the community? How?
11. What is the significance of Pedro’s night sweats?
12. How does this movie relate to events in your life?
13. What is Pedro’s Call to Action? Why is it important?
14. What is YOUR Call to Action?



## UNDERSTANDING PEDRO

### Glossary Of Terms

Several terms are used in the movie that may not be clear to all viewers. Below are brief definitions and descriptions of some of those terms.

#### *La virgen de la caridad del cobre (Our Lady Of Charity)*

La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre is the Catholic patron saint of Cuba and is seen as a symbol of Cuba. In Santería, she has been equated with the goddess Ochún. Different Latino countries have different patron saints. For instance, Mexico has La Virgen de la Guadalupe, and the Dominican Republic has La Virgen de la Altagracia. They are all variations on the Virgin Mary.

#### *Orisha*

An Orisha is a spirit or deity that reflects one of the manifestations of God in the Yoruba religion. This religion is practiced throughout the world and is now expressed in several varieties, including Santería as well as others. These varieties are practiced throughout areas of Latin American and part of the United States.

#### *Santero*

A practitioner of Santería. Santería was developed among the Yoruba people in Cuba in an attempt to retain traditional West African religious beliefs while appearing to practice Catholicism.

## **AFTER YOU WATCH PEDRO, TELL OTHERS!**

### Send A Message To Local Media

#### Writing An Op-Ed

An op-ed stands for “opposite the editorial page” because op-eds normally appear on the page that is opposite from the publication’s editorial page. Op-eds offer a strong opinion, a solution, and ask for help from the community. The author’s name is included and that person is generally not a paid member of the newspaper or publication. An op-ed is different from an editorial, which is an opinion piece written by the editorial board of the publication.

- After seeing *PEDRO*, figure out the best Vangle to take in writing an op-ed. Use the historical significance and the political messages to make the op-ed relate directly to the problems or concerns of your community. Feel free to use the sample op-ed included here as a template, but be sure not to use it word for word as newspapers will not print an op-ed that appears to be a form letter that may show up in another newspaper.
- It is always best to call a newspaper to see if there is interest in your op-ed before actually sitting down to write it.
- Many daily newspapers print guest op-eds (fairly long commentaries of between 400 and 700 words) to supplement syndicated or staff columnists on their editorial or opinion pages.
- The advantage of writing an op-ed is that it is written entirely in your own words (as opposed to you being interviewed by a reporter for an article) and is usually not heavily edited unless you’ve gone over the word limit. It also has a byline.

# AFTER YOU WATCH PEDRO, TELL OTHERS!

## Sample Op-Ed

### ***Real World Provides Real-Life Lessons***

In 1994, MTV's Real World cast a groundbreaking real-life character named Pedro Zamora. Pedro's story was very real — at age 17 he tested positive for HIV and made the decision to share a very personal journey to raise awareness about the realities of the disease. Pedro's experience, far too short because he died at the age of 22, is recreated in a new film airing on MTV called *PEDRO*. The timing couldn't be better as April is STD Awareness Month.

I corralled a group of friends to watch *PEDRO* with me. As a peer educator at Planned Parenthood (OF \_\_\_\_\_ AFFILIATE), having honest conversations about sexual health is nothing new to me. But this poignant movie left all of us reeling with a range of emotions. We sat silently watching as someone our age, 17, learned he had contracted HIV/AIDS. In 1994, Pedro had very few people he could turn to. He was blessed with a sister and family who stood by him as he made the brave decision to "go public" by speaking out at events, testifying before Congress, and ultimately living his life in front of the MTV cameras for *The Real World: San Francisco*.

After letting the impact of Pedro's story sink in, we had a group discussion. Imagine a group of teenagers and a few of our parents talking candidly about sexually transmitted infections (STDs). Actually, don't imagine it — try it. It could keep you safe and healthy, and it could even save your life.

Consider this: Nearly 50 percent of high school students have had sexual intercourse, and 35 percent are currently sexually active. Oh, and nearly 15 percent of high school students have had sex with four or more people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found out all of this from a compilation of surveys conducted in 2007. In addition, last year the CDC reported that at least one in four teenage girls has an STD. One last stat for you: people who have an STD are up to five times more likely to contract HIV if they are exposed to it through sexual contact.

That's why the premiere of *PEDRO* is so important. It reminds us to stop being complacent, to be vocal, and to continue to dispel the myths and stigma that persist about sexually transmitted infections.

The good news is that we're not alone. In partnership with MTV, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and the CDC, Planned Parenthood (OF \_\_\_\_\_ AFFILIATE) is committed to raising awareness among teenagers and parents about STDs, including HIV/AIDS. During the month of April, these organizations are partnering for the GYT09 campaign — Get Yourself Tested '09. We are working to raise awareness, educate, reduce the stigma, and get people tested for their own health and safety. In our community, Planned Parenthood (OF \_\_\_\_\_ AFFILIATE) offers [AFFILIATE: ADD EITHER "FREE" OR "LOW COST"] confidential HIV and STD testing, education, and information to anyone who seeks it. In honor of Pedro and in observance of STD Awareness Month, Planned Parenthood (OF \_\_\_\_\_ AFFILIATE) will be (INSERT YOUR AFFILIATE/GROUP ACTIVITIES).

MTV will run *PEDRO* again. It provides an opportunity for you to watch the real-life story of a brave and courageous young man who put himself out there so others could benefit from his experience. Watch the movie, learn from his experience, and get yourself tested. Knowledge is power.

## **AFTER YOU WATCH PEDRO, TELL OTHERS!**

### Send A Message To Local Media Writing A Letter-To-The-Editor (LTE)

A letter-to-the-editor, or an LTE, is written for and sent to a newspaper or magazine to present an organization's or individual's position on an issue, make a correction, or respond to another story or letter that appeared in the publication. A newspaper normally publishes a handful of LTEs in each edition.

- Write a letter-to-the-editor in response to the film. Feel free to use the sample letter-to-the-editor included here as a template, but be sure not to use it word for word as newspapers will not print an LTE that appears to be a form letter that may show up in another newspaper.
- Be sure to keep an eye on the letters page to see if letters in opposition to the film are published.
- Letters-to-the-editor must be short to reduce the odds that they will be edited. Try to make your points in two or three brief paragraphs.

## **AFTER YOU WATCH PEDRO, TELL OTHERS!**

### Sample Letter To The Editor

Watch the movie and get yourself tested

This week, I watched the movie *PEDRO*, about Pedro Zamora — the groundbreaking real-life character in MTV's *The Real World: San Francisco*, which aired in 1994. It's about the extraordinary life of a young man who found out he was HIV positive at 17 and spent the rest of his short life speaking out in an attempt to raise awareness.

As a peer educator at Planned Parenthood (AFFILIATE), I will use this movie as a way to get people talking about sexually transmitted infections (STDs), including HIV/AIDS.

Here's why: Nearly 50 percent of high school students have had sexual intercourse, and 35 percent are currently sexually active. Oh, and nearly 15 percent of high school students have had sex with four or more people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found out all of this from a compilation of surveys conducted in 2007. In addition, last year the CDC reported that at least one in four teenage girls has an STD. One last stat for you: people who have an STD are up to five times more likely to contract HIV if they are exposed to it through sexual contact.

This is a conversation every parent and teen should have. MTV will run *PEDRO* again. April is STD Awareness Month. What better time to watch the movie, learn from his experience, and get yourself tested. Knowledge is power.

## RESOURCES

### The Hiv/Aids Epidemic In The United States

[Excerpted from HIV/AIDS Policy Fact Sheet, published by Kaiser Family Foundation, February 2009.]

The first cases of what would later become known as AIDS were reported in the United States in June of 1981.<sup>1</sup> Since then, 1.7 million people in the U.S. are estimated to have been infected with HIV, including more than 580,000 who have already died and more than 1.1 million estimated to be living with the disease today.<sup>2,3</sup> Every 9½ minutes, someone in the U.S. is infected with HIV.<sup>4</sup> The response to the U.S. epidemic has yielded numerous successes, but challenges remain:

- While the number of new HIV infections (incidence) is down from its peak in the 1980s, new estimates indicate that HIV incidence in the U.S. is higher than previously thought.<sup>5,6</sup>
- HIV testing is important for both prevention and treatment efforts and rapid testing is now much more widely available. Routine HIV testing is now recommended for all people ages 13–64, yet 21% of those infected with HIV don't know it, and many people with HIV (36%) are diagnosed late in their illness.<sup>7</sup>
- Treatment advances have substantially reduced AIDS-related morbidity and mortality and extended the lives of many. Still, not all who need treatment have access to it and treatment is not a cure.<sup>8</sup>
- The epidemic continues to have a disproportionate impact on certain populations, particularly racial and ethnic minorities, and gay and bisexual men.

1. CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1981). *MMWR*, 30.

2. \_\_\_\_\_. (2009). *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*. 19.

3. \_\_\_\_\_. (2008). *MMWR*, 57(39).

4. Wolitsky, R. (January 6, 2009). *CDC presentation*. Washington, DC.

5. Hall, H.I., et al. (2008). "Estimation of HIV Incidence in the United States". *JAMA*, 300(5).

6. CDC. (August 2008). *Fact Sheet: Estimates of New HIV Infections in the United States*.

7. \_\_\_\_\_. (2006). *MMWR*, 55 (RR14).

8. Teshale, E.H., et al. (February 2005). "Estimated Number of HIV-infected Persons Eligible for and Receiving HIV Antiretroviral Therapy, 2003—United States." Abstract #167, 12th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections.

## RESOURCES

### Statistics On Hiv/Aids And Its Impact On The Latino Community

- Nearly half of Latinos report that HIV/AIDS is a more urgent problem in their communities today than it was a few years ago, while only 15 percent of non-Hispanic whites report the same.<sup>9</sup>
- According to the CDC, HIV/AIDS is the number-four killer of Latinos aged 35 to 44 in the United States.<sup>10</sup>
- While Latinos constitute 15 percent of the population in the United States and Puerto Rico, they account for 16 percent of all AIDS cases since the beginning of the epidemic and 19 percent of all people in the U.S. living with AIDS.<sup>11</sup>
- According to the CDC, Latinos are more likely than whites and African Americans to learn of their HIV status late in their disease progression.<sup>12</sup>
- Puerto Rico has the second highest rate of HIV-related deaths in the United States and its territories, and more than three times the national death rate.<sup>13</sup>
- Among all race/ethnic groups, Latinos were the only group to see heterosexual infection in new HIV cases double between 2001 and 2004. Among Latinas, the rate of heterosexual infection increased from 23 to 51 percent and among Latino men the rate increased from five to 11 percent.<sup>14</sup>
- Improvements in HIV/AIDS treatment have brought a decline in the numbers of new HIV cases and deaths among all race/ethnicities — except for Latinos.

9. Kaiser Family Foundation - KFF. (2006). "Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS," (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006).

10. CDC. (August 2008). Fact Sheet: Estimates of New HIV Infections in the United States.

11. CDC. (August 2008). Fact Sheet: Estimates of New HIV Infections in the United States.

12. Schwartz S., et al. (2006). "Late diagnosis of HIV infection: Trends, prevalence and characteristics of persons whose HIV diagnosis occurred within 12 months of developing AIDS." *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 43(4),491-494.

13. KFF. (2009). "Age-Adjusted Death Rate for HIV Disease, 2005." Kaiser State Health Facts.  
<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparemaptable.jsp?ind=527&cat=11>.

14. CDC (2004). HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, 16.

## RESOURCES

### Statistics On Hiv/Aids In African-American Community

[Excerpted from HIV/AIDS Policy Fact Sheet, published by Kiser Family Foundation, February 2009.]

- Based on the CDC's recent estimate of HIV/AIDS prevalence,<sup>15</sup> there are more than 500,000 Blacks living with HIV and AIDS in the U.S. Analysis of national household survey data found that 2% of Blacks in the U.S. were HIV positive, higher than any other group.<sup>16</sup>
- Blacks also have the highest rate of new HIV infections and new AIDS cases of any racial/ethnic group, followed by Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Latinos, American Indian/Alaska Natives, whites, and Asians. The AIDS case rate per 100,000 for Blacks in 2007 was more than 9 times that of whites.<sup>17</sup> The HIV rate was 7 times greater among Blacks than whites in 2006.<sup>18</sup>
- Blacks accounted for 56% of deaths due to HIV in 2005; Latinos accounted for 13%.<sup>19,20</sup> Survival after an AIDS diagnosis is lower for Blacks than other racial/ethnic groups, and Blacks have had the highest age-adjusted death rate due to HIV disease throughout most of the epidemic.<sup>21,22</sup>
- HIV was the 4th leading cause of death for Black men and 3rd for Black women, ages 25–44, in 2005, ranking higher than their respective counterparts in any other racial/ethnic group.<sup>23</sup>

15. CDC. (2008). *MMWR*, 57, (39).

16. McQuillan, G.M., et al. (January 4, 2008). *NCHS Data Brief*, 4.

17. CDC. (2009). *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*. Vol. 19.

18. Hall, H.I., et al. (2008). "Estimation of HIV Incidence in the United States". *JAMA*, 300 (5).

19. CDC. (August 5, 2008). *Slide Set: HIV Mortality (through 2005)*.

20. NCHS – National Center for Health Statistics. (April 24, 2008). "Deaths: Final Data for 2005." *NVSR*, 56 (10).

21. CDC. (2009). *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*. Vol. 19.

22. \_\_\_\_\_. (August 5, 2008). *Slide Set: HIV Mortality (through 2005)*.

23. \_\_\_\_\_. (August 5, 2008). *Slide Set: HIV Mortality (through 2005)*.

# RESOURCES

## Online Resources

### Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) is the nation's leading sexual and reproductive health care advocate and provider. For more than 90 years, we've done more than any other organization in the United States to improve women's health and safety, prevent unintended pregnancies, and advance the right and ability of individuals and families to make informed and responsible choices.

**[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)**

### Advocates for Youth

Established in 1980 as the Center for Population Options, Advocates for Youth champions efforts to help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Advocates believes it can best serve the field by boldly advocating for a more positive and realistic approach to adolescent sexual health.

**[www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)**

### Go Ask Alice!

Go Ask Alice! is a health Q&A Internet resource. It works to provide readers with reliable, accurate, accessible, culturally competent information and a range of thoughtful perspectives so that they can make responsible decisions concerning their health and well-being.

**[www.goaskalice.columbia.edu](http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu)**

### Sex, Etc.

Sex, Etc. is on a mission to improve teen sexual health across the country! Each year, seven million young people visit Sexetc.org, and thousands read our national magazine to get honest and accurate sexual health information. We've helped teens with answers to their questions about sex and relationships, pregnancy, STDs, birth control, sexual orientation, and more!

**[www.sexetc.org](http://www.sexetc.org)**

### It's Your (Sex) Life

Being in control and smart about the choices you make in your life - and that includes about sex - is what It's Your (Sex) Life is all about. Get more information about sexual health and find out where to get tested for HIV and other STDs and meet others who are thinking about how to protect themselves, their partners, their communities, and how to fight HIV/AIDS on a global scale.

**[www.itsyoursexlife.com](http://www.itsyoursexlife.com)**