

The National AIDS Memorial Grove impacts my life internally. I am able to connect emotionally because my mother's friend Maribel is infected with HIV. Maribel, someone who is very important to me, has been infected with HIV since 2003. When Maribel found out she was HIV positive, she was shocked. Maribel never expected to have HIV because she was not sleeping with different men. Sadly, Maribel was infected by her husband Julian, which had outside relations with other women. When Maribel found out she was HIV positive she feared for her unborn child. Maribel went to get tested to prevent transmission from mother to child. For Maribel it was very painful to know that her husband had outside relationships that affected her health and put her daughter Mayra in danger. It is disappointing for Maribel to be infected with HIV by her husband, the person she loved and trusted. It makes me furious how her husband was so irresponsible.

However, it is inspiring how Maribel is using this negative experience to enjoy life more happily. She is sharing her experience with other women in Mexico by educating other people about HIV and AIDS. Maribel does this by explaining what are HIV and AIDS and the difference. She also speaks to them about preventing HIV and AIDS. Helping others has made Maribel take moments in life less seriously; she does not worry about little problems because she knows she can not fix them all. Her faith has become stronger and prays for herself and others to get better. Maribel laughs more; she tries to teach women to love and respect themselves.

The way Maribel helps others is similar to the National AIDS Memorial Grove by how they contribute to people with HIV and AIDS by showing support. People with HIV sometimes feel rejected and lonely, and hopeless which the National AIDS Memorial Grove nurtures those

who have been touched by AIDS through love and hope. People with HIV are supported by National Aids Memorial Grove because they have provided beautiful gardens such as, the Pines center and the Fern Grotto, which are full of life, making the family members feel close to those who passed away through an environmental process. This is a place where they are honored and do not reject people who are sick. Family members also learn to heal their pain as they meet people that have pass through the similar situations of losing a loving friend or family member. They have a moment alone to express their feelings and remember their loved ones. The National Memorial Grove gives them the trust they need to let out their internal conflicts, like blaming themselves or hating the other person. Their fear and sadness has diminished because they are in an environment where they are understood. It's a place where no one is judged and they can feel open to speak about their situations.

Being exposed to all the information of the National AIDS Memorial Grove increases my awareness of AIDS. Now, I speak to my friends about taking control of their sexual life and to be safe. I promote AIDS information to my family and friends because they have the opportunity to prevent HIV or AIDS. As a teenager I have a positive affect on my friends by providing them with this information because I am able to communicate better with them than some of their parents. It is very important at an early age that we take responsibility for our actions.