

Hi, I'm Renee and I'm 14 years old. My personality and my kindness are the two best things about me. When I grow up I want to be either a lawyer or a singer: a lawyer because I like to argue and a singer because I like to be on stage! My favorite food is sushi, my fav TV show is *Family Guy*, and my favorite superhero is my sister.

I'm not infected, but my mother is. My life is not as conflicted as most people would like to think. I still do what any 15 year old would do, whether it's play basketball or just listening to music with friends. I have always known my mom was sick. I was always scared she was gonna die when I was at school. I remember crying myself to sleep at night because I was terrified I would lose her. HIV has changed my life because I'm not allowed to talk about it without the stigma that comes with being impacted by HIV.

WISDOM'S TUNE

The heart is crying the pain I have inside. The crown on the heart means I still have power over my life. The music notes and the words 'music' and 'poems' are the ways I release anger and pain. The quote "your greatest fear is you" means you don't have a fear of our sickness, you have a fear of knowing more about our sickness. The words hope and faith is on the heart because without hope and faith, you would be dead.

I hope you remember, you can't get it by touching me, so feel free to give me a hug!

Hi, I'm Destin and I'm 13 years old. The best things about me are that I'm nice and I am fun to play with! My favorite food is Chinese, fav TV show is *Sponge Bob*, and my fav school subject is gym!

I got HIV from my mother when I was born, through her breast milk. My mom died. I am now an adopted child. I have had HIV for 13 years and some people think I should have died. I really try not to think about it that much and if I do I draw to keep my mind off of it.

EARTH, FIRE, WATER & DRAWING

I drew flames, water, plants and a drawing book because drawing takes me away as a distraction from HIV when I think about it.

My life is different because HIV because it segregates us from other normal kids. I can't live a real life cause if I tell kids in my school I'll probably be segregated and they'd probably say stupid reasons why not to be my friend. It also affects me by sometimes making me sick and having to take a lot of pills, which is a pain. I deal with HIV in my life by speaking out, to give people no reason to fear us. You can only get HIV through blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk.

Project Kindle makes me happy and makes me feel better about myself.

Hi, I'm Kasandra and I'm 14 years old. I like helping and caring for people. My most prized possession is my family because my family is the really most important thing to me. I love to surf. I'm like peanut butter and jelly with straight A's. I love reading books and I love my mom. I want to go to college and get my Master's. I love working and even though I'm only 14, I have my own job, to help my mom out.

RAYS OF HOPE

Project Kindle gives me hope and gives me more advantages and opportunities to learn about HIV and positive ways to deal with it.

HIV first came into my life when my dad took me to the beach and told me he was gay. I was breaking and blank inside. My dad gave my mom HIV. My bad thought was that he was going to be rejected by his own daughter, but he didn't. My mom and dad have it, but it did not pass to me or my sister. My mom gets more exhausted now and weaker, she gets easily sick. I can't tell my other family. I was sworn to secrecy. I make sure my parents take their medicine. I make sure my mom is never upset and I work my hardest so she is always proud. I told a friend once about Camp Kindle and they said they didn't want me getting close to them. So, I said I would find new friends who accept me for who I am.

I hope that you remember that people with HIV don't live easy lives, but they have a very positive way of thinking. People like us want to live a normal life. Let that kid who wants to be normal have a normal life.

Hi, my name is Alexis and I'm 14 years old. I love to draw, do hair and have fun and I LOVE to express myself. I my most prized possession is my body because I would love to be respected for my body because if others don't respect your body, things can happen. If I were an animal it would be a lion because it is the greatest animal in the forest or an eagle because to me, it is the 'rep' of loyalty.

A WILD FEELING

It is the way I express myself. The star represents the brightness of myself. The music is for my way of saying music is how people calm themselves down. The lightning is for the anger of how HIV and AIDS make me feel.

I was 12 years old when HIV first came into my life when my mom sat down and told me that she had it. It made me worry because the first thing that came into my mind was... my mama is going to die and that I had to always look after her.

Project Kindle makes me feel comfortable talking about how HIV affects my life.

I have learned that HIV doesn't make you, it breaks you, but you can have it and still be yourself. I hope you remember that life isn't a game, so don't waist it and be hopeless if you have HIV or NOT!

You are bad, you make me sad.
But it's alright because soon there will be light.
So go away. Do not stay.
I'm tired. I'm tired of being afraid.

Hi, my name is Dee and I'm 14 years old. The best things about me are that I'm smart, energetic, I love to have fun, and I'm understanding when you have problems. My most prized possessions are my body and my life because you can only have one body and one life. If I were an animal it would be a hamster because I'm cute and cuddly. My favorite TV show is *90210!*

BE GONE

HIV is death to me. It takes everyone I love from me. I feel trapped like I can't get out, but not for long. I'm getting out and I'm strong. I'm gonna prove HIV is wrong. But with the help of my friends we can make HIV be gone.

HIV first came into my life when my mom told me when I was 13 and I was upset, but I've grown to get past it. My life has changed because of HIV by making me more alert about it. HIV affects my family by taking away money. People think I have it just because my mom has it.

Hi, my name is Amanda and I'm 13 years old. I look for the best in people and I'm not quick to judge. I always get to know them first. I love my *Fender* guitar with all my heart, I've played her for three years and I'm really good at it. It always helps me relax and escape. My super hero is Ryan Ross, the lead guitarist for *Panic at the Disco*.

MUSIC HEALS

My picture is my fender guitar, the AIDS ribbon, a sunset, eyes of Ryan Ross, music notes, a skateboard, and a heart with a broken arrow through it. All of this represents serenity to me. These are objects or scenes that help me relax and calm me down. I feel most myself when I'm calm. I love to play music, I play the flute, piano, guitar, barry sax, clarinet and a little tuba, so it's what I love.

My mom has been positive for 18 years and when she gave birth to me, I tested negative. She told me why she was sick all the time when I was 7 years old. For a long part of my life, I was without my mom because she was too sick. She was always in and out of the hospital getting better and getting sick again. HIV meds are a lot for one person to take in. I see how many my mom has to take and she's taken them for 18 years.

One time, I was driving in the car and my cousin needed chap stick and my uncle offered his. My cousin said, "No, I don't want gay on me." Then my mom offered and he said, "No, I don't want HIV on me."

Hi, I'm Gloria and I'm 13 years old. I love music and to walk. I have been living in a foster home with my sis for 6 years.

HOPEFUL

My Heart Art is titled, "Hopeful", because I still have hope. The picture is my heart of hope for HIV/AIDS. My mom died from HIV/AIDS. She is an angel now and is still with me and my sister even though she is in heaven and rests in peace. My HIV positive sis is the only thing and family I have now. I drew this because this shows that I still have hope for a cure and that we shouldn't give up because things in my heart tell me that the cure is on the way.

HIV first came into my life when my sis and I went to visit my mom at her nursing home. My life is different because HIV infected my whole family, but me and I feel guilty I don't have it. HIV affected my family because my father was unfaithful to my mother and her passing it to my sis. One time, we were at a family reunion and my mom told my uncle...he hugged everyone except my mom, my sis, and me.

Project Kindle is a great role model and it gives hope. It makes me feel that there is a brighter tomorrow.

I hope you remember that HIV has negatives and positives. It's serious and can take your life, but it's positive because you can relate to people around the world by coming to Project Kindle. If you want more info go to www.projectkindle.org.

Hi my name is Claudia and I'm 13 years old. I am honest and active and I believe those are the two best things about me. My most prized possession is the love I have for Camp Kindle. I want to be a Marine when I grow up. My favorite color is red and I love lasagna. I am a twin, my bother's name is Carlos.

LOVE TRANSCENDS

I love Camp Kindle. I love it because they help kids, infected with or affected with HIV/AIDS, feel comfortable and welcomed.

I found out that both of my parents had HIV when I was 8 or 9 years old. I confronted them and told them to be honest with me, and so they did. An example of stigma in my life is that I hate when people think it's transmitted through hugging, kissing and sharing stuff. I hate when people are not educated. I deal with HIV in my life by educating people in health class, but I don't share my story. The only place I can do that is at Camp Kindle.

Hi, I'm Cindy and I'm 13 years old. I like to make people laugh. I would love to be a hippo so I could lay all day and be lazy. I love both my mom and my dad, but my mommy is my favorite superhero. I like to draw things like cartoons of people.

IGNITING

I think HIV looks like this picture that I drew of Camp Kindle because Kindle means to ignite or spark interest.

I learned I had HIV when I was seven, the doctor told me. My mom was waiting for me to get older so I could understand how it affects my body. I take 9 ½ pills every night before I go to bed. HIV affects my family by not being able to tell anybody, because they won't like me no more.

I have been coming to Project Kindle for 3 years and I like everything about Camp Kindle and SPEAK OUT. They help me learn more about HIV. I like having a place to talk about HIV with kids my age.

Hi, my name is Natalie and I'm 13 years old. I work good in teams and I'm kind and caring. My most prized possession is my family because we have been through a lot and I will do anything for them.

RAIN & SHINE

My picture is happy and sad. I drew this because it is happy when we come to Camp Kindle people care for each other. It is sad on the other half because it is for people that don't know HIV and don't want to share nothing with a person that is HIV positive.

I was about 2 years old when my mom died in her bed from AIDS and now every time I wake up, she is not there.

Project Kindle is a place where I meet new people and everyone treats each other the same and not different. It's a place to get support and to share. I hope you remember that you can't get it from a hug or holding hands and that Camp Kindle is there for people that are affected or infected with HIV/AIDS.

Hi, I'm Chris and I'm 12 years old. My best quality is that I am an athlete. I like to play football, basketball, and baseball. I can swim, run and a bunch of other motions. I like to play video games. I have a dog and 3 brothers and a sister.

IN HONOR OF

My picture is a baseball diamond because I want there to be a cure for HIV and AIDS and I love baseball, so I drew a baseball diamond to represent me and my wish for a cure. I want to be remembered for playing ball and I dream 4 a cure. The words say it all.

My mom got HIV in her 20's from a guy she dated named Michael who had HIV. She didn't know she had it for about 7 years. She first found out when she got sick like 15 or 20 times. She decided to go to the hospital. The doctor drew blood. He came back and told her she had HIV.

Since then, my life has been different because I don't live with my mom and nobody knows about my little secret except the people at Camp Kindle.

Hi, my name is Briana and I'm 13 years old. The best things about me are that I am kind and caring. I love spaghetti and my favorite holiday is MY BIRTHDAY!

THERE WILL BE A CURE

I drew this picture because I think that the more and more people that come to Camp Kindle, there will be a cure and I think Camp Kindle is the best Camp that supports HIV/AIDS.

My real dad was cheating on my mom, he caught it and gave it to my mom. He beat my mom. We left him. He apologized. We went back. She was real sick and in the hospital. She had tubes in her arms and throat. My step dad said, "just pull the plug." My life is different because of HIV because if it weren't for HIV, I would still have my mom. Someone kicked my mom out once because she used their toilet.

Project Kindle makes me and my family feel like we fit in.

PEACE & LOVE

Campers were asked to participate in an activity where they brainstormed all the things that came to mind when they think of HIV/AIDS. Bare witness to their reality.

Doctor

Angry

Cure

Hope

Bad

Worried

Care

Fear

Family

Sad

Unfair

Camp Kindle

Hate

Virus

Unhealthy

Sickness

Fight

Meds

My dad

No cure

Virus/disease

Hospital

Feelings

Struggles

Faith

Friends

Mom

Love

Disappointed

Health

T-cells

Graveyard

Hopelessness

That's it

Different

People

Sister

Learning

Wondering

The world

Dream

Sickness

Difficulties

SPEAK OUT

Hardships

Doctors

AIDS

Stressed

Shots

Unnormal

Disgust

Strange

Death

Angry

Pain

Strength

Emotional

Along

Freedom

Trapped

Normal

Opportunity

Forgiveness

Tears

Secrets

Depressed

Life risking

Questions

Think

LOCK ON AIDS

~Anonymous

During the summer of 2009, Camp Kindle campers participated in an activity where they each created a personal Coat of Arms.

On the first day, the campers drew the front of the Coat of Arms or Shield. They were encouraged to think of a quality, trait or interest that they were proud of and wanted to show off to the entire world. They spent the day drawing this symbol on the front of the shield, the side that everyone sees.

On the second day, the campers drew the other side of the shield. They were encouraged to think of a quality, trait or secret that is more personal. The inside of the shield represented what they hid from the outside world, what they protected.

During the activity, the honesty and courage of more than 200 young people, ages 7 – 15, stirred discussion, provoked thoughts, comforted losses, shed tears, kindled support, and ignited hope.

“Lock On AIDS” represents the inner and outer conflict of not only these children and their families, but every individual whose life has been touched by HIV/AIDS.

Let this Heart Art be our shared Coat of Arms in the fight against HIV/AIDS and let it's meaning be decided by our own personal experiences, knowledge, and unique truths. Let the key in the center of the AIDS ribbon signify education, and hope for a cure.

King of the Hill

~Phillip, 9 years old

People think I'm untouchable
Because within me harbors a great fear
Some turn their heads and walk away
But I exist, I exist

Persistent are those who want to interfere
They say love between us is forbidden
But I say they simply don't understand
I exist, I exist

Reach out and touch my skin
Realize its just within
Like me for the real me
I exist, I exist

You grasp a hold of my hand
Understanding there was never danger
Society announces it's a sin
I exist, I exist

I began to feel the cries of the negro by the Mississippi
Shackled by the choice for ignorance
Oppression numbs my soul
I exist, I exist

~Bryan Jackson

Hi, I'm Melissa and I'm 13 years old. My best qualities are that I like having fun and I like to be happy. My favorite TV shows are *Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, & *South Park*. I like to invent, go to the movies, skate, swim, play computer games, listen to music and hang out with friends.

END OF THE RAINBOW

My picture is called "End of the Rainbow" because there is hope for my sister and me at the end of the rainbow.

HIV first came into my life when I found out my step sister had it. I felt bad. When I see her drink medicines I do something funny to make her happy and make her laugh to forget about that. When I think of HIV I feel sad, I feel like I want to help others. I make my sister forget about that and talk about other things. In fact, when I grow up, I want to be a doctor so I can help others.

Hi, I'm Cameron and I'm 11 years old. The two best things about me are I'm chill and I love to sleep. My most prized possession is money because I LOVE IT!! My favorite place is my home. I think there should be peace. Wherever there is not peace, I wanna see people find peace. Everybody needs peace, but not everybody finds it. I'm the type of person to help them find peace. It has to start slowly by loving and caring for people who need it.

HIV first came into my life when I learned my mom had it. It was pretty hard 4 me because it was my mom and I just lost my dad when I was 10, so I did not really know what 2 do. When I think of HIV, I think of my mom. I love her more than I would ever love anybody else. My life is different because of HIV because people think different of me and my family.

HEAL MY HEART

In my Heart Art, I drew the heart with a sword through it and cloth around it. The heart symbolizes my heart and my love and the cloth is like a shield. It's a loose shield because I have love and my love is extended even though I have so much love there are still scars and blood for the pain that is there. I have three scars for three big hurts I've been through. The sword is there because even with the shield, I can still get hurt. The heart, sword, and shield are on the inside of my coat of arms because it is too painful to have on the front where everyone can see. If it was on the front, people might treat me differently because I'd stand out. They might ask questions I don't want to answer.

Hi, I'm Krisa and I'm 12 years old. My two best qualities are my goofiness and my personality. I like taking naps, eating, riding bikes, watching my brother, and dancing. My favorite TV show is *So You Think You Can Dance*.

LISTEN UP

Camp Kindle V.S. The World because I can speak my true thoughts and feeling about HIV/AIDS at Camp Kindle. In the real world, I have to keep it quiet. So it's hard to have all the feelings building up inside me. The role Project Kindle plays in my life is the opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings honestly about HIV/AIDS.

When I think of HIV, I think of Camp Kindle and how things would be a lot harder without it. I also think of hope and how we were also pushing forward to find more hope.

HIV first came into my life when my dad sat my brother, sister and myself down on the couch and told us. He was very nervous because he thought we would hate him. I was really young when he told me so I didn't quite understand what it was. HIV affects my family because I have to see him sick all the time and on different medications. One time the doctors were giving my dad too much of one medication and he was having seizures like 4 times a day and without my mom, it was really hard.

Please remember that HIV/AIDS doesn't always affect gay people or drug users and we're not all bad people. HIV does not care, it will infect anyone.

THE ONLY CURE IS HOPE

~Chantal, 12 years old

“I would never stop loving you from doing something you love” ~ Chantal’s Mom

Project Kindle is an organization founded on the hope of committed staff, volunteers, donors, lost loved ones, and survivors who have committed to never stop doing what it loves; improving the quality of life for children, young adults and families through recreational experiences, educational programs, and support services.

Project Kindle gives me hope. When I think of Camp Kindle, I think of all the friends I have there and it makes me feel there is still hope for people impacted by HIV/AIDS. ~ Renee

Project Kindle makes me happy and makes me feel better about myself. ~ Destin

Project Kindle makes me feel comfortable talking about how HIV affects my life. ~ Alexis

The role Project Kindle plays in my life is the opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings honestly about HIV/AIDS. ~ Krisa

When I came to Camp Kindle, it was the first time I’ve ever talked about HIV with other people besides my mom. ~ Amanda

Project Kindle is a great role model and it gives hope. It makes me feel that there is a brighter tomorrow. ~ Gloria

I think that the more people that come to Camp Kindle, there will be a cure and I think Camp Kindle is the best Camp that supports HIV/AIDS. ~ Briana

My life has been different because I don’t live with my mom and nobody knows about my little secret except the people at Camp Kindle. ~ Chris