



CHANGE
CENTER FOR HEALTH
AND GENDER EQUITY

Women Living With HIV: Testimonials

Martha Zarate, United States

My name is Martha Zarate. I was diagnosed 10 years ago when I was five months pregnant, by that time I was using drugs and alcohol for 26 years. After the doctor put me in treatment for HIV my daughter was born negative, and for me it was a good reason to stop using, but I couldn't, and because of that I put myself into a lot of problems. Now I was not only HIV positive, I was living with AIDS and also tired of using drugs. I decided to do something for my life and I started in recovery. Now I am 5 years clean. I am a very strong woman. **“I am a very strong woman.”**

When I was one year clean I started working for a clinic as a peer advocate doing outreach and testing for the Latino community. I have worked with them for three years and I have learned a lot. The thing I have gained is the passion to help others in my same situation. After that I had the opportunity to work for another agency called Christie's Place. They love me and trust me and made me a family case worker and peer navigator to work with 51 cases (they are all HIV positive). I also coordinate a recovery group every Friday and another one on Saturdays that is just for women.

I have a relapse prevention group for women and transgender people and a family movie group every month. We also pass the message to hospitals and institutions with the hope of keeping people living with HIV clean. I am also a mother of 2 and very blessed...God bless! •



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