

# Changing story

Business



It never occurred to us; a group of young and ambitious youth, that death would snatch one of us away too soon before we even realize any dream. Whether you waste your life or enjoy it, in a moment it can change and, finally, dwindle into nothing.

It was during the summer holidays. We were all in the spirit of having fun after finishing school term and taking pleasure in ourselves. Jane was a close friend that we shared a lot in life. Jane lived in the neighborhood just as the other five of my friends: Mary, Ashley, Mark, Anthony, and Shirlene. We all went to the same school and hanged out together.

We were inseparable. For a long time before, everyone had glorious plans for summer with his or her family, but this time we were all craving for something different. We believed that, since we had all turned seventeen, it was time to do something different, especially, for the society. Within a short period, we decided to visit the sck in the hospital. It was a bright morning that predicted a perfect summer day. It was barely nine in the morning, and we set out to the nearest hospital having arranged with authorities prior our visit.

We carried something we thought would encourage patients in the hospital; from food to niceties like chocolate, from cards to flowers, from personal notes to scripture verses. The spirit was high, and we all felt good. I had never before visited the sick in the hospital just as many of my friends. We were all passionate and moved by the conditions of most patients. However, the hospital staff was indeed helpful in guiding us and ensuring of no

infection on us. Finally, we visited the HIV positive ward where most people were bedridden.

The patients were exceedingly happy to see us with gladness written on their faces for having visitors. We shared news and some impression with them, and they were all appreciative. Some were strong enough to tell their stories off how they infected. Others encouraged to an HIV test. And that was what rang in our minds when we finally went out of their ward.

In a moment, while getting some fresh air before leaving the hospital, Jane suggested that we could all be tested. Everyone wanted to know his or her status. Nobody hesitated, so we went for it. ...I still remember that instant as one of the longest times of our life. Counseling did not take long just as testing. I vividly remember the somber atmosphere that engulfed when Jane ran out of the testing room crying and screamed, “ I am positive!”.

I passed out. How could Jane be HIV positive? Though I never knew her sexual life, but it never occurred to me even in the wildest dream that Jane had HIV. We were all devastated. Jane received a lot of counseling, and her parents were supportive. And in three days, however, Jane committed suicide. It was a double tragedy.

My perception on HIV changed: It knows no boundary.