Hello, my name is Ariauna Carver. I am currently a first-time freshman at Harris-Stowe State University. In the fall semester of 2016 I plan to transfer to Tennessee State University and begin my major of Psychology. My family has been very morally supportive of me through this college experience. My biggest supporter is my mother. I love and admire her so dearly. She literally one of my best friends. She is such a strong person. She is actually the person I am writing this paper about due to the fact that she is HIV/AIDS positive.

A person living with HIV is predicted to have developed AIDS when their immune system very weak and can no longer fight off certain opportunistic infections and diseases, such as pneumonia, meningitis, and some cancers. Some people may develop symptoms similar to flu within the first two to six weeks of catching the virus while others may not show symptoms for many years while the virus slowly worsens.

My mother announced to my sister and I that she was HIV positive when I was about 12, although the family rumored that she'd been positive long before. She cried for weeks after telling us, I guess that she was embarrassed about it, even in front of her own children. Honestly, at the time, I was a little… very embarrassed about the situation as well. I was a kid at the time, not very educated about the disease, so I felt as if my mom was “nasty”. I sometimes felt like less of a person than my friends because I had the “infected mommy”. I never told any of my friends about it. Even some of my family members taunted and teased me about my mother’s disease, so why wouldn't my friends do the same?

Now being 19 and more open minded and educated, I understand that my mother is still just as human as any other person. Testing HIV/AIDS positive could happen to anyone, and it's not always because they were sexually active. I try to be very supportive of her through her hardships and breakdowns through this situation. Even till this day, she's very embarrassed about her condition. I understand why though. A lot of people are not educated about the disease likewise to my childhood days. Society and social media is still very insensitive about the disease. Some view it as nasty. Some feel that it is okay to joke about it. Some even say “That's what they deserve”. Actually, there has been times where my mother was bullied on social media about her illness. There has even been a time where my mom, my sister and I were
walking in a store and one of her ex-friends drove by and yelled out “That lady has AIDS!”.

Although my mom put on a good game face, I know her feelings were hurt.

Even though I've become comfortable with the situation and who my mother is, I'm still not very open about it. There is only one person who's not blood related to me that knows about my mother’s condition and that is my best friend. I feel that he can understand my situation because he also has family members that are HIV/AIDS positive. We can both understand how each other feels.

Drugs for HIV change all the time and the medication is extremely expensive. She gets by as best as she can. That fact that she's unemployed doesn't make things easier. There's been times where doctors has tried out new medications on her and she's become very I'll from them. It is very hard on the family to see her go through all that she has.

Although there is no cure I admire the fact that my mom has not let that get her completely down. Some people give up and don't try to do anything. She still has dreams, she still has goals that she is trying to accomplish. It's been hard for her to find another job which is really stressful for her because she still has responsibilities that government assistance can't help with. She has her dark moments but she rarely lets her children see it.

The hardest part for me is the unknown. You can't stop the inevitable but not knowing is the hardest part. We never know when she's going to get sick again, let alone how sick she will be.

Although this is a very emotionally tough battle for me, I will continue to love and support my mother through her hardships with this virus. My mother is a strong woman. Everyday we just pray for better days together.