

A letter from
JENNA BUSH

Dear Reader,

I hope you are inspired by Ana as much as I am. To me, her words and her life are like a song—a song of hope and resilience. I met with Ana for more than six months and listened to the melody and lyrics of her life, as we sat on her porch watching the day go by, or in her small living room, or in a café. This is her story—her song—not mine.

As the months passed, I was intrigued by Ana's complexity. She is only seventeen, but she is wise beyond her years. Once, when we discussed her first party and her first boyfriend, her eyes filled with the light and energy of a young girl. She giggled as she described walking from school to the party and dancing freely. Then Beatriz began to cry. She held and rocked her baby, and suddenly she wasn't a girl anymore . . . she was a caring mother.

One Sunday, in the meeting room of the church, she flirted with Berto like a teenager. Yet when they doted over their baby, she was a woman, loving and protecting her child. As she told me joyfully about swimming in the waves of the Pacific Ocean, she was a girl again. But as I walked out of the church and turned to watch her support Berto, who was now showing increased signs of AIDS-related frailty, she suddenly became an adult.

Ana is not alone in this dichotomy of children who grow up too soon. Many kids around the world are forced to take on the responsibilities of adults before they are ready. Often their childhood ends prematurely because they are orphans, live with illness, disability, or in extreme poverty. Some are forced to work at an early age instead of going to school. These children are excluded from living with the basic necessities. They do not have adequate food, clothing, shelter, or access to decent medical care and education.

With the assistance of UNICEF and other organizations that help children, there is hope for kids like Ana. She has broken the cycle of illness, silence, and abuse by educating herself. She is determined to survive both for herself and for her daughter.

You may be asking, "What does this have to do with me? How can I help? What could I possibly do to make a difference?"

There are so many ways that you can make a difference in your family, school, community, and around the world. These don't need to be grand gestures that require travel or a lot of money. Simple signs of friendship and acceptance can often change the lives of those on the outskirts of society. You can also volunteer for programs that help those in need. In the following pages, you will find some ways you can become more aware of the themes of the book: HIV/AIDS, abuse, exclusion, and exploitation. You will also find ways you can get involved in helping to solve these crises around the world and in your town. Every child deserves a chance for a better life—a safe and healthy life. You can make a difference. You have the power to help kids find strength and hope—just as Ana has.

And if you need help yourself, don't be ashamed and don't keep it a secret. Look at the resources provided here. Talk to someone you trust at home or in your school, religious group, or community. Ana didn't have many choices in her situation, but as more and more people become aware of children in need of protection, more programs and safe havens have become available to them. So don't be afraid to ask for help. Don't keep silent, don't feel ashamed. Remember Ana. Live like Ana and take the steps you need to have a safe, optimistic life.



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are young people throughout the world who live in the same conditions and face the same hardships as Ana. Whether you want to help globally, right next door, or from your computer, you can fight HIV/AIDS, abuse, poverty, and exclusion. Talk to your parents or caregivers about what you'd like to do. You can improve kids' lives everywhere. *You* can make a difference.

If you have ...an hour

EDUCATE YOURSELF.

Learn more about HIV, abuse, and programs that interest you by researching online or visiting your school or local library.

“PASS ON THE GIFT.”

Donate money to buy cows, sheep, rabbits, honeybees, ducks, and other animals to help hungry communities throughout the world feed and educate themselves. Heifer.org tells you how you can donate and other ways you can volunteer for Heifer International programs if you want to do more.

SHARE INFORMATION.

Use the discussion questions at the back of this book and your research to talk about the tough issues you read about in *Ana's Story*. The more you discuss the facts, the faster stigmas will dissolve.

If you have . . . an hour a week

VOLUNTEER.

Stop by or call your city hall or municipal building and find out if there's a volunteer network from which you can learn more about local projects.

BECOME A MENTOR.

Go to a community center nearby to find out if it has a program for younger kids who need older role models

and friends. Or become a Big Brother or Big Sister at www.bbbs.org.

TEACH A SKILL.

Use your talents and interests by coaching a sport, sharing your culture, reading a book aloud to someone, teaching music, or leading an arts and crafts project in your community.

TUTOR A STUDENT.

Contact your local board of education to find out if there is a volunteer tutor coordinator for your district. Or call a school directly and ask how you can help a child.

PROVIDE SUPPORT AND COUNSELING.

Volunteer for an HIV/AIDS or abuse hotline. You'll have to go through some training, but after that's over you'll probably have to commit to only a few hours each month.

If you have . . . a day

Observe World AIDS Day on December 1. Talk to a person in charge and organize an event at your school, place of worship, or community center. Find themes,

toolkits, posters, and other resources at:

- www.worldaidscampaign.info
- www.omhrc.gov/hivaidsobservances/world/

If you have . . . a month

ORGANIZE DONATION DRIVES.

Contact a local shelter, hospital, school, or place of worship about organizations in the area that accept donations for those in need. Then get permission to start collecting. You might consider these ideas:

- An October coat and blanket drive
- A November canned food drive to help feed families who otherwise would not be able to celebrate Thanksgiving
- A December gift drive for the holidays
- An any-time-of-year drive for the basics: toiletries, diapers, and simple health-care supplies

If you have . . . a summer

MAKE TRAVEL COUNT.

Talk to your parents or caregivers about giving back during your school breaks and take a trip that's fun

and fulfilling. Find a community service opportunity in another part of the world. Here are some suggestions on where to start:

- Academic Treks (www.academictreks.com)
- Lifeworks (www.lifeworks-international.org)
- World School (www.worldschoolinc.org)
- Habitat for Humanity (www.habitat.org)
- See if your house of worship is organizing any trips to work in another part of the country or world.

If you have . . . a year

SPONSOR A CLASS.

Help out in an elementary school classroom. Organize a group to visit the students, raise money for supplies, or donate books to the room.

JOIN KEY CLUB.

The world's largest student-led organization asks members to commit to fifty hours of community service. If your school doesn't have a Key Club, start one. To find out how, log on to www.keyclub.org.

WRITE TO A PEN PAL.

Ask your teacher about exchanging letters or emails with students in a class in another country. This is a great way to meet new people in new places and find out more about their cultures, their countries, and their needs. And you can make interesting new friends.

Make a difference with UNICEF . . .

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, provides lifesaving nutrition, clean water, education, protection, and emergency response in 156 countries. For more than sixty years, UNICEF has been the world's leading international children's organization, saving more young lives than any other humanitarian organization. While millions of children die each year due to preventable causes such as measles, treatable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and as a result of violence, UNICEF, with the support of partnering organizations, donors, and volunteers alike, has the global experience and reach to give children the best hope of survival. Whether you have a little or a lot of time, think about supporting UNICEF's efforts.



VOLUNTEER FOR UNICEF.

Register online at www.unicefusa.org/volunteer to access special volunteer resources, take online training sessions, communicate with other volunteers, and learn the latest information about UNICEF's programs and volunteer opportunities.

TRICK-OR-TREAT FOR UNICEF.

Visit www.unicefusa.org/trickortreat for free collection boxes and information, then dress up and invite some friends or a younger brother or sister to go out on Halloween and collect money.

LEARN MORE ABOUT

***THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN* REPORT.**

Educate yourself about UNICEF's mission to save children's lives around the world by reading the report at www.unicef.org/sowc07, and encourage your teacher to use online lesson plans at www.TeachUNICEF.org.

BECOME ONE OF THE VOICES OF YOUTH.

You can speak out on all kinds of issues, from health to abuse to human rights. To find specific ideas, check out www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction.

GET YOUR FRIENDS INVOLVED.

You can create your own fundraising web page and introduce friends and family to UNICEF. Log on to www.unicefusa.org/friendsaskingfriends to find out how.

Get involved

BE A FRIEND.

You never know whose day you might change with a little kindness. Inclusion and friendship are the first steps toward developing trust, and trust can open many doors.

TAKE ACTION.

You really *can* make a difference. Start small, but start.



PROTECT YOURSELF, PROTECT OTHERS

Ana's Story addresses the ways unprotected sex and sexual abuse spread HIV and how other forms of abuse, poverty, exclusion, and the lack of education put children in danger.

When it comes to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), STIs don't care what color your skin is, how much money your family makes, what country you live in, or how old you are. They can infect anyone who gives them a chance.

However, there are ways you can reduce your risk of contracting a disease or infection. By ending or reporting an abusive relationship, making smart decisions about sex, or just speaking up and educating yourself and the people around you, you can help

protect yourself and you can be an example to others.

No matter what you've done or haven't done, or what's been done to you in the past, it's never too late to get the facts and take steps to protect yourself and the people you love.

If you're hurting, in trouble, or want guidance, speak with someone you trust—your parents, a sibling, a school counselor, or a religious leader. If you can't do that—for whatever reason—there are other sources of support and information.

Protect yourself from HIV/AIDS and other STIs

GET THE FACTS.

There are a lot of myths and misinformation about sex out there. There are also a lot of great resources where you can get the truth—like a doctor or a professional organization. Knowing the facts can help you decide what's right for you.

MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS.

By getting the facts and educating yourself, you can be empowered to make the decisions that are right for you.

Don't let anyone pressure you into doing something that makes you uncomfortable. Whether you choose to wait until you're married or older to become sexually active, give yourself as much time as you need to make a well-thought-out and mature decision. When you're ready, make sure your partner respects your choices.

REDUCE YOUR RISK.

There's only one way to be 100 percent certain you won't get an STI—abstinence. There are a lot of ways to show you love or care about someone without having sex. If you decide abstinence is right for you, don't let anyone tell you otherwise. But if you decide that you're ready for a sexual relationship, the best way to protect yourself from HIV and other STIs is to be faithful to your partner and use a condom every time. No exceptions—ever.

GET TESTED.

If you have unprotected sex, if the condom fails, or if you've been raped or sexually abused in any way, don't wait to find out whether you're HIV-positive or have contracted any other STI. If any test comes back positive, you'll be able to begin treatment sooner. That

could be crucial to living a long, healthy life. And if you become pregnant, you'll be able to get information about taking care of yourself and your baby.

Protect yourself from an attack, abuse, and rape

Sixteen- to nineteen-year-olds are three times more likely than all others to be the victims of rape, attempted rape, or attempted sexual assault.* Remember that it's *never* your fault if someone attacks you, but there are ways to protect yourself.

STAY ALERT AND READY.

You may love your iPod or MP3 player, but turn it down or take your headphones out when you're walking or jogging in a place you don't know well. Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Let your parents or guardians know where you will be and when you will return. If possible, keep your cell phone in hand—just in case you need to call for help fast.

STICK WITH FRIENDS.

You go to parties, movies, or the mall to mix and hang

out, but it's always a good idea to come *and leave* with a group of people you know. You should also plan to check in with one another regularly.

GET OUT OF FRIGHTENING OR UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATIONS.

No matter where you are, when “no” doesn’t work, leave. Say whatever you need to say to get out of an uncomfortable situation: “My friends and I were going to meet up. They’re probably looking for me,” or “My parents will be home any minute.” Or just *go*. Don’t worry about anybody thinking you’re not cool—choosing safety is the coolest and most important decision you can make.

Get help if you need it

If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) recommends that you take these steps:

- *Go to a safe place.* Ask a friend or adult to stay with you.
- *Don't shower, brush your teeth, use the toilet, or change your clothes.* These activities can erase evidence.

- *Call and report the attack to authorities.* Call 9-1-1 to report to the police if you have been raped or sexually assaulted. You can also call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE to help you understand what to expect if you decide to report the crime.
- *Get medical attention quickly.* In addition to having your physical injuries treated, you can talk to a professional about the risk of STIs and pregnancy.
- *Have a doctor or nurse perform a “rape kit.”* This exam collects evidence such as hair and fibers. Having a rape kit done does not mean you have to report the crime—that’s your decision to make when you’re ready. But the evidence will be there if you do choose to report the sexual assault or rape.
- *Talk to someone.* No matter how long ago the attack occurred, talking about it can help. You can find a counseling center near your home by visiting the following website: tools.rainn.org/bin/counseling-centers.

It's still abuse if . . .

Abuse isn't always sexual. If you're being hurt in any way, anywhere, don't keep silent. Whether it's a girlfriend, boyfriend, or older adult in your life, no one has the right to threaten, hurt, or overpower you either physically or emotionally. If you are being abused, here's what you can do:

CONFIDE IN SOMEONE YOU TRUST.

Talk to a parent or family member, a friend, a friend's parent, a teacher, a coach, a religious leader, or someone else you can trust. You can also contact a local youth services agency. To find one near you:

- Visit www.childhelp.org/get_help/local-phone-numbers.
- Call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD.

BULLYING IS ABUSE , TOO.

Like other forms of abuse, bullying continues—unless someone stops it. If you're being bullied in school, at sports practice, in the neighborhood, or on the internet,

Stop Bullying Now suggests the following ways you can help put a stop to it:

- Talk to your parents, teachers, or coaches.
- If you can, stay away from the bullies until the bullying stops.
- Ignore your bullies as much as you can. Don't respond to emails, but print them out and save them to show to an adult.
- Stay calm. Bullies want to upset you. Stick up for yourself if it feels safe, then walk away.
- Find out more at <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp>

It's not just about you

Protecting yourself can also help protect those you love. Making the decisions about sex that are right for you, whether it's abstinence or practicing safe sex when you're ready, also protects your partners. While you need to protect yourself, you also have an obligation to protect others when it comes to sex. Don't be selfish or careless, and be honest with your sexual partner—relationships are a two-way street in every way.

Be a friend

Anyone who has been sexually assaulted—or is being abused in any way—needs friends. Sometimes it's hard to know what to do or say. RAINN and the Teen CASA have a few suggestions for helping a friend who is working through tough times.

LISTEN AND OFFER SUPPORT.

Don't judge, and don't feel you have to say something. Let your friend do the talking, and don't betray the trust.

GET HELP.

It's best if someone who has been raped is examined as soon as possible, whether they plan to report the crime or not. Call your local hospital to find out if it has a SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner) or SAFE (sexual assault forensic examiner).

If your friend decides to report the rape or abuse to the police or authorities, be there for them. You can go to the police station or make the call to 9-1-1.

GET INFORMATION.

Put together a list of counseling centers, hotlines, and websites that provide information and help with recovery. Let your friend contact them when he or she is ready, or offer to make a call or do more research for specific advice about how to help in this particular situation.

REPORT BULLYING.

Let a teacher, coach, or parent know that someone is being bullied. You shouldn't encourage mean behavior; get help from an adult and put a stop to bullying in your school.

WEBSITES AND HELP LINES

Maybe you're in crisis or just curious about health or how you can help. No matter what kind of information you're looking for, you can go to reliable sources to get advice and answers. Here are a few you might want to check out.

adolescentaids.org
Adolescent AIDS Program,
Children's Hospital at Montefiore

Montefiore Medical Center will answer all your questions about HIV/AIDS testing, including why it's important and what you can expect. There's even a clickable map so you can find a testing center in or near your community.

hivtest.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

How do you know if you're HIV-positive? Get tested. You can learn about the different types of tests and type in your ZIP code to find a testing center near you. You'll also get the 4-1-1 on National HIV Testing Day.

acsa-caah.ca

Canadian Association for Adolescent Health

Whether you're looking for information on your mental, physical, sexual, or social health, if it's a part of your life, it's probably covered here. Alongside discussions of condoms and STIs, you'll get the scoop on sports, homework, and the teen social scene and how they affect your health.

childhelp.org

Childhelp

This resource is for young people who are being abused or know someone who is. With tips and articles, resources, a child abuse quiz, and the misconceptions and facts about what happens when someone reports an incident, you'll get important information to identify and prevent all kinds of abuse.

iliveup.com

Live Up: Love.Protect.Respect

Set to a calypso beat, this Caribbean media campaign hopes that youth action and activism will help stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in the region. The Play Safe area features games, quizzes, and animation, and Talk About It allows you to submit your own poems, artwork, videos, and personal story.

rainn.org

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network

The most comprehensive online resource for information about sexual assault, RAINN's online library highlights statistics, types of sexual assault and their effects, prevention, and the laws that can help you.

stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

Stop Bullying Now!

You may be getting bullied, or maybe you're the bully. Either way, the bullying needs to stop. With animated podcasts and games, this site has a lot of information about why kids bully and what to do about it if you see it, feel it, or do it.

No computer? Want to talk to someone now?

Whether you're in crisis, just want to talk, or have a question, getting help and advice is a phone call away. As scary as that call can be, it's important to get the information and help you need to stay safe and healthy.

1-888-988-TEEN

Break the Cycle

For twelve- to twenty-four-year-olds and the people who love them, this service provides legal advice, counsel, and referrals to teens and young adults who are wondering what to do about an abusive relationship.

1-800-4-A-CHILD

Child Abuse Hotline

Professionals answer calls twenty-four hours a day, offering counseling and resources and assisting youth who wish to report abuse. The hotline provides translations in 140 languages.

1-800-656-HOPE

National Sexual Assault Hotline

The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network's free and confidential hotline operates 24/7. The hotline has answered more than one million calls from sexual assault victims as well as their families, partners, and friends.

EL V.I.H. Y EL SIDA



**PREGUNTAS
Y
RESPUESTAS
PARA
ADOLESCENTES**



"Der"

WHAT'S THE REAL DEAL?

TEN MYTHS ABOUT HIV/AIDS

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1. You can tell if someone has HIV.

Truth: You cannot tell if someone has HIV by looking at them. No symptoms develop immediately after the initial infection, so most people with HIV are unaware that they have become infected. But it is

often right after initial infection that the person is most *infectious* and can transmit HIV to someone else, even though they look and feel healthy.

2. There is no need to get an HIV test.

Truth: Knowing your HIV status is your right and your obligation to yourself and others. If you know your HIV status, you can get early care treatment if you are positive, and if you are negative, keep practicing safe behavior to stay negative. The majority of people with HIV do not know that they have the virus, and that perpetuates the spread of the infection. Knowledge is power and prevention.

3. AIDS isn't a problem in the United States.

Truth: It is estimated that more than one million people are living with HIV in the United States. AIDS was first identified in the United States in 1981. In the late 1990s the rate of AIDS diagnoses slowed down, but between 2001 and 2005 the estimated number of diagnoses has been increasing a little each year.

4. Only homosexuals are affected by AIDS.

Truth: HIV/AIDS is a disease that affects humans. Both sexes are vulnerable to HIV infection.

Worldwide, the most common form of infection is through unprotected heterosexual sex. In fact, globally, there are about 17.7 million women living with HIV, and 2.3 million children (under age fifteen). Adolescent girls are at increased risk of HIV infection through sex for many reasons, including biological susceptibility, having sex with older men, not recognizing their partners' risk behaviors, or because of their vulnerability to violence, abuse, or rape.

5. There's a cure for AIDS.

Truth: There is no cure for HIV/AIDS, but AIDS does not equal death. You can live a long time with HIV before developing AIDS, especially if you have access to ARVs (antiretroviral drugs). There has been a lot of progress in the development of these drugs, but ARVs are not a cure. Many people claim to have cures, but the sad fact is that the cure does not yet exist.

6. Condoms don't protect you from HIV.

Truth: If you are sexually active, then condoms are the *best* way to protect yourself from HIV infection. When used correctly and consistently, condoms can provide an effective barrier, blocking the pathway of HIV during sexual activities. If you are on "the pill,"

DepoProvera, or Norplant, you still need to use condoms to prevent getting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections. If you are having oral sex, you also need to use condoms. You can use male condoms and female condoms. Both need to be latex to have the maximum protection. Remember, HIV infection is preventable!

7. You can get HIV from kissing.

Truth: HIV does exist in saliva, but there is no evidence that the virus is spread through saliva and there are no confirmed cases of infection by kissing. You can't get HIV from hugging, having meals and drinks, or sharing a bathroom with someone who is living with HIV. The body fluids that have high concentrations of HIV are primarily blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk.

8. You can't get HIV from someone on ARVs.

Truth: ARVs can help keep down the viral load in an HIV-positive person, and this will help keep them much healthier, but these drugs won't keep someone living with HIV from infecting someone else with HIV.

9. Two HIV-positive people don't need to use a condom if they're having sex together.

Truth: Practicing safer sex is important for HIV-positive partners too. Reinfection can happen, and this could impair the impact of the ARV medicines if drug-resistant strains of HIV are passed on from one partner to another.

10. HIV-positive women can't have children.

Truth: Women living with HIV can have children, and can have children who are not HIV-positive, thanks to medicines and special treatment that can be implemented to prevent HIV infection passing from the mother to the child. Without any interventions, though, between 25 and 30 percent of mothers will pass the virus to their newborn because HIV can be transmitted to an infant during the mother's pregnancy, labor, or delivery and through breast-feeding.

DO YOU KNOW THE WHOLE STORY?

TEN MYTHS ABOUT ABUSE

CLARA SOMMARIN

Child Protection Specialist

UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office

1. Children are rarely abused sexually.

Truth: Unfortunately, child sexual abuse is more common than you think. It happens every day. Exact statistics are impossible to track because many cases are not reported.

2. If somebody abuses you, it's *your* fault.

Truth: It is *never* your fault if you are abused. The abuser is responsible for his/her own behavior. It doesn't matter what you wear, what you say, or what you do, no one has the right to abuse you verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually.

3. Touching or fondling is not sexual abuse.

Truth: Sexual abuse is defined as the forcing of sexual acts by one person onto another. It may be in the form of fondling, touching, intercourse, or exposing sexual parts of the body.

4. Children are only sexually abused by strangers.

Truth: Statistics show that most sexual abuse is committed by someone the victim knows and trusts—a family member, family friend, or someone else close to the child.

5. Bullying is part of growing up. It's not abuse and can't hurt you.

Truth: Bullying is one of the most common forms of violence in our society. According to the National Education Association, an estimated 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation by other students. Bullying = abuse.

6. It is a parent's right to discipline a child however they want.

Truth: No one—not even your parents—has the right to abuse you in any way. If you face any abuse at home, talk to a trusted adult and get help!

7. Abuse only occurs in poor and dysfunctional families.

Truth: Abuse can happen in families of all ethnicities and socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Money, education, and appearances don't necessarily protect anyone from abuse.

8. If you don't talk about the abuse, it will go away.

Truth: Not talking about the abuse won't make it go away. Memories may be temporarily blocked, but the effects will often surface later in life. Telling a trusted adult or a good friend will help you confront the situation, put a stop to the abuse, and begin the healing process.

9. You can always tell when a person has been abused.

Truth: Signs of sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse are less visible than those of physical abuse. Every individual

has a unique reaction to abuse. Some withdraw, some become angry and aggressive, and many just want to forget about it so they pretend it never happened. That's why talking about it is so important.

10. Children who are abused will abuse others when they grow up.

Truth: Many children and young people who have been victims of abuse heal and go on to lead normal lives like everyone else. Abuse in childhood does not automatically lead to aggressive behavior. However, being abused is not an excuse for becoming an abuser.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR

Ana's Story

Now that you have read about ways that you can make a difference, use these questions to discuss the important themes in the book while or after you read it. Bring them to literature circles or book clubs and start a dialogue about

Ana's Story.

1. Ana's prized possession is the photocopy of her mother's photograph. Why is this so important to Ana? Do you have an item that you cherish? Why is it important to you?
2. In chapter five, Ana's barrio (neighborhood) and her country are described. How is Ana's community similar to yours? How is it different?
3. Her grandmother warns Ana not to tell anyone she has HIV. Do you feel this was for Ana's own good or for another reason? What might her grandmother's motives have been?
4. In chapter eight, Abuela tells Ana that boys and girls are sometimes asked to leave school because they are infected with HIV. In what ways do their teachers violate their rights? Have you ever witnessed discrimination, and how did it make you feel?
5. Those boys and girls are excluded from their right to an education. In what ways do you see exclusion in your school? How has exclusion affected you? How can you help those who are being excluded in your community?

6. Why do you think Ana is worried about telling anyone that she's HIV-positive? Which events in the book create the feeling of fear of disclosing her secret? If you were Ana, would you tell? Why or why not?

7. After Abuela and Ernesto fight, Ana plays a game she calls Orphan. Why do you think Ana does this? In what other ways does Ana use her imagination to cope?

8. How do you feel about Abuela's response when Ana tells her that Ernesto has inappropriately touched her and Isabel? Do you think she really didn't believe her? How do you think Abuela should have responded? Why?

9. Ana decides to keep the sexual abuse she suffered a secret. Why do you think she keeps it to herself? What are some other things she could have done?

10. At Papá's funeral, Ana was angry with God. How do you think Papá's death changed Ana?

11. Ana's decision to write about her abuse in the letter caused some unexpected results. Did it lead to a better outcome for Ana, or worse, and how?

12. Ana goes through a spiritual journey with God throughout her childhood. At what points in her life does her spirituality undergo changes?

13. Ana's teacher, Señor García, tries to help her move into Yolanda's house. What are the roles that other adults play in her life? Why is this important? Who in your life supports you? List the five people who give you the most support.

14. Pilar tells Ana she had no choice but to sell sex in order to survive. Before reading *Ana's Story*, had you heard or read about other children who are sexually exploited? Do you think there is enough help available for children like Pilar? How can they be better protected? What can you do?

15. How do you feel about Ana's decision to break up with Berto? Was she being fair to him? What do you think Berto's rights as Beatriz's dad might be?

16. Ana is shocked to find out that her grandmother saved her life when she was a toddler. What do you think caused the change in Ana's relationship with her grandmother at the beginning and then again at the end of the book?

17. Do you think Ana has forgiven her grandmother? Would you be able to forgive someone who treated you badly? What would it take? Is forgiveness important?

18. Ana says that she wants to respect her father's dying words and protect Isabel. Why do you think the sisters are so close? What struggles does Isabel have that Ana may not have had? What struggles does Ana have that Isabel does not?

19. Of all the places that Ana has lived, where do you think she felt most at home? Where do you feel the safest, and the happiest? How is this place different from Ana's safe place?

20. Ana is only seventeen years old, but she has endured many hardships. In what ways does Ana seem like a teenager? In what ways does she seem older and more mature than her age?

21. In chapter sixty-six, Ana learns about HIV/AIDS from a local organization. What role does education play in Ana's story, both in school and out of school? How does education play a role in her future?

22. How much did you know about HIV/AIDS

before you read *Ana's Story*? Did you discover anything you did not already know about it? Do you think there is enough education and awareness about HIV and other sexually transmitted infections?

23. How did this book affect you? How can you help kids like Ana? What else can you do to help children break free from the cycles of abuse, illness, poverty, and silence?