



Vandals Deface AIDS Monument

The Wall Las Memorias in Los Angeles has over 1,600 names.

March 24, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

Vandals defaced The Wall Las Memorias (TWLM) AIDS Monument in Los Angeles's Lincoln Park in January, just weeks after its 20th anniversary.

"It is a sacred place to so many people who've lost their friends, lovers, partners, sons, daughters to AIDS," TWLM executive director Richard Zaldivar tells POZ. "It felt like the space was violated."

TWLM is committed to repairing the damage, Zaldivar stresses, while continuing to provide HIV services amid the chaos and destruction wrought by the Los Angeles wildfires and the changes in HIV and AIDS funding called for by the Trump administration.

TWLM, the nonprofit responsible for the monument, is a community health and wellness organization dedicated to supporting Latinos, LGBTQ people and other underserved populations throughout Los Angeles.

In 2004, after much community input, the organization unveiled The Wall Las Memorias AIDS Monument, which consists of a park and eight wall panels. Six panels depict life with AIDS among Latinos, while two others are etched with the names of community members lost to AIDS. Today, it features over 1,600 names.

On January 13, a visitor noticed that one of the monument wall panels had been destroyed. A police report was filed.

The act of vandalism shocked and concerned the community, according to Zaldivar, who reassures that the monument will be restored.

TWLM has worked for more than 30 years to reduce stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS and provide

a safe space for members of the community to support one another and share resources.

“I’m very grateful that we’ve had so many years of acceptance and respect from community,” Zaldivar says.

“The monument means so much to me personally for a number of reasons,” he adds. “It is the representation of hard work for so many years.”

The organization offers various specialized services, including HIV testing and prevention, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) access, substance use prevention and mental health services. TWLM programs and services are free to all.

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