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Grade 11

Drug Free Clubs of America is an amazing organization that helps middle and high school students know what it is like to live in a safe, drug free environment. Drug Free Clubs of America is an easy and straightforward reason for kids to have a reason to “say no to drugs”. It gives students, who may be easily exposed to drugs and alcohol, a way out and a way to earn rewards for being and staying drug free. Personally, as a member of Drug Free Clubs of America, I can say it has opened my eyes to how serious drug use among students is and how taking measures such as Drug Free Clubs is a great way to stop early use and addictions. I have seen that by just encouraging a drug free environment, much can change. The first step is to set high expectations and standards for myself. Setting the standard of a drug free high school experience for myself not only impacts me directly, but can also impact others around me in my school and community.

As a member of Drug Free Clubs of America, I have learned much about the current drug environment and the many things that are considered drugs. Currently, vaping is a drug that is incredibly popular and increasingly problematic. Vaping can do immediate and lasting harm to people. The human brain isn't finished developing until the age of 25, so teens are at a particularly high risk of harm. The nicotine in vaping can impair cognitive function like focus, concentration and memory. The higher the nicotine levels, the greater the impairment. It is eye opening and alarming to know that the choice to vape today, may affect your brain today, tomorrow and possibly 20 years down the road. The same can be said for other popular drugs like marijuana, prescription drugs and alcohol. They all can lead to serious and lasting health issues and in some cases death.

As a member of Drug Free Clubs of America, I have learned how drugs can not only impact a student, but their entire family. Drugs can be incredibly disruptive and destroy many lives along the way. I have seen how drug use can destroy relationships; relationships with parents, between parents, between siblings, between friends. Drug use can rob you of your potential and take away the future you may have had. Often students start off with “safer” drugs such as vaping and drinking. As they get used to these “safer” drugs, they look for riskier drugs that will have a stronger effect. The more they get addicted, the more they risk serious harm and even death. They find themselves in a race to chase that higher high. It can become a race that never ends and a race that can never be won.

Drug Free Clubs of America has taught me all these things -how and why drug use is bad, how and why I should “say no to drugs”, and how and why I should encourage a drug free environment at my school and among my friends. Drug Free Clubs of America has given me the tools to help myself and help others. Ultimately, being drug free is a choice, but the Drug Free Clubs of America make this choice easier to understand and easier to make.