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Grade 12

I've been in the Drug Free Club of America since it came to my school. I'm active in sports and my community.

Especially this year as a senior, I've noticed the kids who have chosen to not be members. To me, that says a lot about a person, especially as an athlete. I wear my drug free club of America shirt to my wrestling tournaments. I don't want anyone to ever second guess my strength as they do other wrestlers. I'm proud to represent the Drug Free Club of America.

Since I am a senior, the underclassmen look up to me and I try to be an example to my school and community to make good decisions. Drug free club of America helps me to help my community because I want to be a contributing citizen to my town. When I observe leaders in my community they look people in the eye and they have self control. When people use drugs and alcohol they are not in control of themselves. At school we had a speaker whose son died from a drug overdose. The pain that he had was sad. And I never want my parents to have that kind of pain.

This year I was invited to an overnight football recruiting visit. At the time it was my first choice school. Everything was good until they took me to a night gathering. Then I was offered drugs and alcohol. But right there is where DFCA helped me. I knew what to say -I said that I wasn't interested and that I'm in the drug free club and I'm accountable to testing. No one bothered me any more. And when I declined another recruit who felt the same as me left with me. I texted my mom and she came and picked me up. Looking back, I'm thankful that I had the experience. I would have never fit in or liked the environment. I feel confident after having that real life test.

Being in DFCA has also helped me to have both empathy for my family and inner strength to not be like some of them. There is alcoholism in my family. And I've been taught that it can be hereditary. Some of my family members have passed away from their addiction and I know the toll it takes on a family. It tears it apart. I made a decision long ago to not go near that lifestyle. I wanted a different path than my dad and grandma. They struggle and I've learned so much from their experiences and from DFCA how to deal with situations. Alcohol and drugs can take a hold of anyone and change who they are meant to be. DFCA have given me tools to be strong. They are survival tools.

The testing I take with DFCA validates my successes. When I win a wrestling match or tournament I know and my opponents know what I stand for and that I do nothing to enhance my performance except work hard.

I am the oldest of 4 kids and my youngest brother Vince is in fourth grade. He imitates me. I have a responsibility to be a good leader for him to emulate. With the tools I've learned in DFCA I know different ways to stay safe and deal with situations that come my way. I can also teach my brother to handle things too. As I get older that motivates me to be better. I understand the responsibility I have to Vince and to myself to be the best leader and role model that I can be. And drugs and alcohol are not welcome in my life.