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DFCA Scholarship Essay Contest

Growing up as the child and sibling of addicts I understand that it is of great privilege to be a member of Drug Free Clubs of America. When I was younger my dad died of an overdose, and my mom and sister are still addicts to this day. Being in Drug Free Clubs I have learned that your family doesn't define who you are or become. I looked up to my sister and I thought that this could never happen to her. I have learned that it is the people that you surround yourself with is who you will become. Making certain choices is what will shape your whole life. The biggest influencers in my life haven't been my parents or social media, it has been the successful people that I see around me. People like my grandparents, teachers and coaches. Those people are the ones who encourage me to make the right choices. Making the choice to be a club member has been the best thing I have ever done, and has made a huge impact on my life. The main reason I joined this club was to find acceptance. I felt like an outcast being the kid with the "drug addicted family", and being the kid who "is just like them", or "won't become anything as an adult". My experience during my first year has taught me that no matter what I have not only a whole community and school behind me, but I also have the greatest support and encouragement I could ask for. This year I have learned that if you share so will others. Telling my story to other people, I have learned that people aren't as villainous as I thought but, that they are the most accepting people that I have ever met. When I went to my first rally I met so many amazing people and teens. Kids who have been through the same things I have and understand what it's like to struggle and they understand my pain as I do theirs. This experience has taught me that there are more of my peers that have someone close to them that they lost or are battling addiction. What I have learned about myself is that I am a very strong willed and eager person and that I have the power to say no. I have the power to not be like my parents and sister. What I see for my future is success, with this club it will take me all the way. Being in this club I have never used "sorry i'm a member" or "I take drug test" as an excuse to say no. I have found that this club has made me want to be truly happy and to be able to say drugs are not cool. This club has taught me to know when something is not right and that I shouldn't be hanging out with bad influences. I have met kids who were already addicted and they are the ones who didn't have that power and good encouragement. The most important thing that this has taught me is that those are the people who need love and to be treated normal. We are the ones that they need to help them and that is what this club is about. Encouraging others to keep it positive and being happy to be drug free. Self acceptance is important to me and is a big part of my life and being drug free I have found that this has helped me and I have found the good people that I needed. This club has taught me to take in the good things and getting high all the time doesn't take away the bad. This is why I am forever thankful to have joined DFCA. This club has truly impacted my life and has forever changed my point of view on so many things. I want to change lives the way mine was.