

Sydney R  
Huntington HS  
Grade 12

I started out my high school career at Waverly High School and transferred to Huntington for my sophomore year. I was then introduced to Drug Free Clubs of America. I first joined Drug Free Clubs of America because all of my friends were a part of it, but it quickly became more to me than just a club that my friends wanted me to join.

In my family, drug use had been a problem for many years. There was a time when I couldn't see some of my closest family members because they were so caught up in drugs and dealing. It wasn't safe for me to be around them because we never knew if they were going to be dealing drugs that day, or if they were going to be on a drug trip. Drug use and smoking caught up with my grandpa, and he died of a heart attack from the effects that the drugs had on his body.

At Waverly, it was never stressed as much that drugs were bad for students. We were always told "don't do drugs" and heard some stories about students that did drugs, but I was never taught how to properly abstain from using drugs. I had friends in middle school that got caught up with drug use and alcohol and they changed so quickly that I had to say goodbye. I had to protect myself so that I wouldn't fall in with their habits. I never knew how much drug use could affect friendships until then.

When I joined Drug Free, I was taught so many ways to say "no" to drugs and how to avoid drug use. Looking back to then, I know that the strategies and tactics that were taught to me did help me in situations when drugs and/or alcohol have been offered to me. The strategies that they taught me made it so much easier for me to avoid drugs.

During my first year in Drug Free Clubs of America, I participated in the Drug Free Rally and I got to hear stories about how drugs and alcohol affected people's families. I was able to compare the experiences of others to my own experiences and was able to see how members of Drug Free Clubs of America could support each other. I found comfort in the fact that there were others like me that knew how to help me.

As I continued through high school, Drug Free Clubs of America became a safe haven for me. I was always so welcomed by the Ambassadors and looked up to them for guidance and leadership. Our Ambassadors were always helpful when it came to ideas and suggestions for ways to improve Drug Free Clubs. They were also very accommodating and listened to suggestions from other students.

This year, my final year of Drug Free Clubs of America, I applied to be an Ambassador so that everyone would know what I stand for. I became an Ambassador and now I am one of the leaders that I looked up to. I am so happy that I can be someone that other members of Drug Free Clubs of America can come to for guidance and comfort.

My view on Drug Free Clubs of America changed so much over the past three years that I have been a member. Being a member of Drug Free Clubs of America is so much more than just being a member of a club. It is being a member of a family that understands you and will help you with anything, whether it be drug related or not. Being a member of Drug Free Clubs of America to me has been so comforting and reassuring. I can't wait to see how Drug Free Clubs of America expands in the future.