

How do you view the club differently from the beginning to now?

Drug Free Clubs was beginning to grow when I came into high school my freshman year. Posters exclaiming "join drug free club" and "be drug free" were hung all over the hallways every where you looked. I joined the club because I had seen all my friends joining even though I wasn't truly understanding of what it was all about. We had the first drug test, and I was confused as to why everyone was talking about this club like they were, I didn't quite understand the premise, but I stuck with it. We then went to our first rally where the music and crowd were amazing, and it was such an empowering atmosphere. I thought to my 15-year-old self that this was what this club is all about.

Fast forward a year and it was coming time to join again. I thought to myself about the fun times from the previous year with the rally and dodgeball tournament that I was eager to sign up. Everything was the same as the year before and we were getting ready to head to the rally again. All I had known was that my school was known for showing up and representing great pride within our chapter. This rally was different for me though, all the same fun activities happened but a couple girls from my school went up on stage to speak and everything changed. These girls who I had seen everyday roaming the halls were now up in front of every ross county school sharing very personal stories. As they began to describe how drugs not only affected them but their siblings, friends, relationships, and households I began to cry. I realized that even though this club is fun that's not what it is all about. This day changed my view on the club forever as I realized that it is a safe space and a caring community for those who have faced life issues due to drugs.

After my sophomore year was coming to an end, we were not only hit with the drug epidemic, but COVID-19 had began spreading. Sure enough my last memory of "normalcy" was the drug free dodgeball tournament that year which happened days before we all got shut down. Not only did I spend my sophomore and most of my junior year online I was never late on signing up for drug free club. I had a larger desire my junior year for the club though, I didn't just want to be a member, but I wanted to join as an ambassador. I had always looked up to the ambassadors in my school's chapter of drug free club and wanted to make that impact on other students. With me being online though, it made it very difficult, and I didn't get the chance to be an ambassador that year but still was there for any child who needed someone to talk to about the club.

Finally, this year approached fast, and I am a senior four-year member of drug free club. I wouldn't change my memories or experiences a bit because this club has truly helped me grow into the person I am. This year I was proudly awarded with being a drug free ambassador and was selected to talk at the rally. Freshman me wouldn't have even known where to start but now I was proud to stand in front of thousands of students and staff to represent my school. Drug free has made such a large impact in my life and the way I view different situations. I now have helped a couple students who are struggling with drug addictions in their family and have made an impact for others due to this club. I am so thankful for this opportunity throughout my four high school years, and my freshman year view of this just being a fun club turned into a completely different view today of inspiration, impact and above all committing to a drug free lifestyle for not only myself but for everyone else who surrounds me.