

12th Grade
Ludlow High School
Camden C██████

“Drugs take you to hell, disguised as heaven.” - Donald Lyn Frost

Entering Ludlow High School for the first time as a freshman and not being from the community made me feel like an outsider. Add in the fact that I have Tourette Syndrome, and the likelihood of kids from a small school having interacted with someone who verbally and physically tics was not likely. This combination already gave me anxiety about starting a new school.

My parents are educators and encouraged me to join clubs and activities to meet people and make a connection with Ludlow. When my father strongly suggested joining the Drug Free Club of America, I wasn't enthusiastic about it. My initial thought was that kids would think, “Oh, here's the new guy who tics, his daddy's the principal, and he doesn't vape or smoke pot. He sounds like a goody goody.” One of those was plenty, but all three of those combined really made me feel like I stood out, and put me on the radar.

However, I've now been a member of the Drug Free Club for four years, and not only has my view changed about the club, I'm proud to be a member. It has actually kept me safe in situations where another peer has asked if I'd like to try something. Thankfully, I have been able to say, “I can't, I might get tested.” Who would have thought one sentence could keep a person from going down the wrong path? What was most surprising is how many athletes like myself are members of this club. In actuality, I wasn't on the radar because of being a member due to the large number of kids who have joined. Another positive of this club is knowing that if I or one of my classmates were to test positive for drugs, that the results are just communicated to the parents. That moms and dads can focus on getting us help rather than us worrying about being punished by our school is definitely a bonus of being a member.

Furthermore, I am well aware that the majority of adults with substance addiction more than likely began using drugs before they were 18. I am blessed that I won't be a part of ANY STATISTIC for drug use. I strongly feel that my parents and coaches constantly talking to me about the risks of drugs and how it would not only impact my future goals, but also letting down teammates and people who love me have also led me to make smart choices.

In closing, I'm appreciative that Ludlow High School has offered the Drug Free Club of America to all its students. My attitude has completely changed from how I initially thought it was going to make me look to my classmates. It has given me a safe plan for four years on how to handle myself in possibly a life altering situation. As I enter my first year in college in the fall, even though there won't be a Drug Free Club of America on campus, I feel confident in my ability to handle myself and reject making unsafe and unhealthy decisions. Thankfully, I won't let drugs take me to hell because I know there's only one real path to heaven.