

11th Grade

Wheeling Park High School

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I remember being woken up one night when I was ten-years-old and my dad said we were going on a trip. He told me to go back to bed. As a kid I obviously... went back to bed. When I woke up I saw we were at a hospital. My parents were fighting with a man, who looked familiar. Was it Jimmy? Scott? Steve? I couldn't remember, I never was good with names. However, I knew that I knew him somehow. The realization came to me that he was my parents' friend and he has been to my house before. I went to go say hello, until my mom rushed me back into the car. My dad said I was too young to see this. I was confused. All I saw was his friend, but his eyes looked different. He was acting strange. I later found out he was on drugs. My parents were helping him get to the hospital. He fought for a while, but eventually accepted their help. They saved his life. This experience was my first encounter with someone who was on drugs. Ten-year-old me hoped it would be the last.

Drug Free Clubs of America has only strengthened my attitude and decisions regarding drugs. I decided to join my freshman year of high school. I never attended a public school before, so I was blown away by all the choices of extracurricular activities and clubs. When I was looking through them during the summer I knew I wanted to join the Drug Free Clubs of America. My mom was so happy I decided to join, and she told me my dad would be proud.

My dad passed away in 2017 due to lung cancer. He was an advocate to help people going through addiction. He saved so many lives. I joined the drug free club to honor him in a way. I know I will most likely never be as involved as he was, but I want to do my part. I want to make just a little bit of difference in the drug community.

Joining this club has only helped me grow closer with my family. My grandparents, who I live with my mom and aunt, were so excited that I decided to join. I will admit it does get slightly annoying when they ask everyday if I peed in a cup. However, it made me feel closer to them, because their parents went through drug problems. It makes me feel like they are proud of me, because I got to join when they couldn't.

I am stricken with sadness when I hear about a teenage overdose. However, it helps remind me to be grateful. Grateful that I chose everyday not to do any drugs, or drink any alcohol. It makes me happy that I am clean. Even though I have gone through and still am going through hard times that make other people resort to drugs, I chose not too. I chose more healthy coping mechanisms. I go to therapy. I went on antidepressants through my doctor. I talk to my school counselors. I vent to my mom and friends.

I will say I am obviously not perfect, and I make mistakes. I have ups and downs with my depression. I get mood swings. I say some things I regret. However, every time I am in a dark place, I choose to talk to someone. I choose to not pick up some pill bottles. I choose my own happiness and future. I choose to live. I choose not to do drugs.

Overall, the Drug Free Clubs of America has changed my life in ways I would have never expected. The club is very different from how I imagined it. It's not like a regular club where you all meet up. You literally pee in a cup. But, when I decided to join it wasn't just so it would look good on my college application. I will admit, that was a huge bonus. However, I joined the club because I wanted my family, friends, and my dad to know I was clean and I am taking charge of my future. Today, I think the same way. I am clean. I am drug free. I want to live.