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Drug Free Club Scholarship Essay
How do you view the club differently from the beginning to now?

When I chose to join the Drug Free Club during my freshman year of high school, it was only to add another club to my resume. It didn't have any meaning to me then. My friends didn't drink or get involved with any kinds of drugs and I had no personal experiences with drug or alcohol problems. It wasn't hard for me to stay away from that stuff because I was 14 years old with no temptations. However, since then, that has changed.

In April of my freshman year of high school, my aunt's fiance and the father of my cousins passed away from a heroin overdose. Nobody this close to me has ever done anything like this. This tragedy affected my entire family and left us all with a new mindset about how dangerous illegal drugs are and how detrimental they can be to families. My cousins, ages 4 and 6, are now growing up without a father because of their dad's heroin addiction.

Upon joining this club, I had never even sipped alcohol and neither had my friends. I was never exposed to these things, so it wasn't difficult for me to stay away from them. However, when my friends and I were juniors we started hanging out with new groups of people and these temptations were beginning to appear. Before I knew it, all my friends were drinking every single weekend and I was left being the only sober person.

I had no intentions of drinking or dabbling in anything in high school and I still stick by that. But when everyone in my circle was drinking every weekend, this vow of sobriety got more and more difficult. The main things that kept me from being involved in these activities were my morals and my membership in this club. I chose to stick to sobriety because I always wanted to make sure my friends were safe and always had a reliable ride home. When my best friend got alcohol poisoning, I was there to take care of her and call her parents in the middle of the night. If one of my friends was too drunk to drive, it was me that they called on to take them home. This promise to myself was hard to keep and it was so tempting to join my friends in their seemingly fun activities, rather than being the boring, reliable one. But I knew that my health and my friends' safety were my priority. Although it felt isolating to be the only non-drinker, these experiences helped me grow as a person and it showed me how important it is to me to stay sober and care for others, despite some of their bad decisions.

Furthermore, I never wanted to forgo my good standing in the club. I was one of only a few people in my grade level as an active member of the club and that status was important to me. I liked being able to set a good example for the younger members and show them that it is possible to stay away from drugs and alcohol as an upperclassman.

My view of the Drug Free Club has drastically changed over the last 4 years. Its meaning to me grew more and more as I began to experience drugs and alcohol first-hand in my family and my close friend circle. Through my membership in the club, I've learned so much about the prevalence and the dangers of drugs and alcohol and how much they can hurt our bodies, our friendships, and tear apart families. It was never as easy as just choosing to say "no". It is a mindset that I have to constantly be in to be true to myself and be loyal to my membership in this club. The Drug Free Club makes the choice to say "no" easier and I take a lot of pride in my membership and being able to tell my peers that I am proud to be drug free.