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### The Change We Didn't Expect

The Drugs Free Clubs of America was introduced to my school this year. At first, no one seemed to be interested, including me. This was mostly because we did not know what this club was other than we had to take a drug test, which is not considered enjoyable, therefore, no one wanted to join. Although, when the first applications were handed out a handful of kids decided to join anyway. Since there were only a few kids that joined, our school decided to hand out more applications. However, this time our student body was informed on what the Drugs Free Clubs of America stood for. They explained to us that being a part of this club came with a lot of incentives. Upon passing the initial drug test, you would be provided with a goodie bag. Also, each month we would get something extra, like go bowling or get food. Who wouldn't want an incentive once a month? Another benefit, the one that really got us interested, was on every Friday we would get to be on our phones during lunch. After we all understood what being in this club meant, a lot of us decided to join. I remember sitting at my lunch table when we heard this information and all my friends, as well as me, were all excited to join so we could experience these fun activities.

Looking back on it now, we were all joining for the wrong reasons. Obviously, the goal of this club is to keep kids away from drugs, but for us, we didn't see it that way. For my friend group, taking a drug test wasn't a big deal because we have never touched a drug a day in our lives. So, for us we were only joining for the rewards we would receive. Although this was also another goal of the club, keeping kids away from drugs and providing them a reason to say no to them. Again, saying no to drugs was not a problem for us. However, if we wouldn't have joined for the "fun things", we wouldn't have realized what we do now. As we all sat together at lunch on Friday, to be on our phones, I realized something special. One of the kids walked into the gym and shouted, "Hello fellow drug free members". Although we laughed at this, it meant something more than a joke. I had recognized that, even though we were allowed, no one was on their phones. We were all talking, laughing, and getting to know each other. We had come together as a student body and became friends because we all had this club in common. I am speaking on behalf of the student body, who are in the Drugs Free Club of America, when I say we all take pride in being a part of something so meaningful to us and our fellow peers. It is now more than fun activities and having the privilege of being on our phones. This club has brought us together as one and now we get to create memories together, drug-free of course. Another personal encounter I had that made me realize what being in this club has changed was when I was talking to my brother. He was joking with me about taking drugs and it sparked my mind. Even though he was joking and I knew it, I immediately responded with, "I can't, I'm in the Drug Free Club". My brother was completely clueless and began asking what this club was. I explained to him what the Drugs Free Club of America was and its purpose. He was then impressed that our school had something like this, considering it was never heard of when he went to school. Talking to him about being in this club allowed me to express myself to him since I don't get to talk to him that much. So, another advantage upon being a member is we all have the responsibility to say no to drugs and keep our bodies healthy! I admire that my school decided to introduce us to this club because it has impacted us so much!