

## How Drug Free Clubs of America Affects my School

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As a four year member of the Drug Free Club, I have seen first-hand the contribution it makes to my school and community. My school is the center of a small, tight-knit community. Everyone knows everyone, and there are no secrets. During the school year, rumors spread like wildfire, and that is not a positive. As with nearly every high school in our current day and age, alcohol and drugs are extremely prevalent, and have become a prominent component of the persona of many high school students. As we get older, the peer pressure increases, and it becomes nearly impossible to completely avoid alcohol and drugs. It is readily available everywhere. How are we supposed to avoid it?

The truth is, we can't completely avoid it. Unfortunately, unless I want to sit in my house all day and never socialize with my friends and new people, it is impossible to avoid alcohol and drugs. At my school, being as small as it is, I have to be very careful about what I allow people to see. At the same time, if someone hears that I or another student has refused alcohol or drugs, which is the right thing to do, I may get made fun of. This has become a huge issue in school systems all across the country. Students are making fun of other students who refuse to go down a path of no return.

For me and many of my friends, Drug Free Clubs gives us an "out". Sometimes, we may say something like, "I appreciate the offer, but I am a member of the Drug Free Club." This allows us to refuse drugs and alcohol and have a solid reason for it, not just that we don't want to. The importance of having an extremely well known club backing your decision makes it acceptable and gets many students, including myself, out of uncomfortable situations.

Every sport in my school empowers their players to be a member of the Drug Free Club. When players are recognized at senior nights and events, Drug Free Club is part of their extensive resume. Other schools notice that every player is a member, and that stands out. It is something we brag about year after year. During club picture day, without a doubt, Drug Free Clubs is the biggest club by a long shot, with upwards of half of our student body participating. As a K-12 building, we share the halls with students as young as 6th grade. They participate in events and are always present and listening. Year after year, I notice the incoming freshman class bringing more and more members to Drug Free Clubs, and it is amazing to see.

In the end, the Drug Free Club is so much more than just a club. In my school, it continues to build confident and successful students by keeping them away from substances that can ruin lives, careers, and families. Drugs and alcohol in high school are the gateway to a hard life. Drug Free Clubs provide a straight and narrow pathway to success by keeping students away from drugs.