

Kenzie L

Senior at River Valley High School

Today I chose to write about how Drug Free Club has affected me as a person since joining my sophomore year of high school. As I am a senior in high school, 17 years old, I have seen a lot, and I have heard a lot involving drugs. One thing I have noticed was how many people have become involved with drugs, and how much they affect them in such a short amount of time. At three months old, my grandmother got legal guardianship of me due to how things were going at "home". Both of my parents were still able to visit me, but with supervision only and I never really understood why that was the case until I was old enough to sit down and have the conversation with my grandma. In 2018, my father came to live with us and I was beyond excited but also very scared because I knew what went on when I was little. On March 6, 2023 I lost my father due to addiction, and it was by far one of the hardest things to overcome. Addiction is not just a problem, but also an illness. An illness that is extremely hard to overcome, especially when the individual doesn't see a reason to seek help for themselves. There were countless days I begged him to receive the help he needed, as me and my grandmother watched him struggle day by day. You begin to realize there is only so much you can do to help an individual get help and focus on things in the right direction. Ever since I was old enough to really understand how drugs can affect children, parents, families and a community as a whole, I told myself I would never allow myself to go down that path. I feel as if I have my head on straight and I am focused on doing my best whether that be throughout high school, college, work after college, raising a family once I am ready, etc. Drug addiction has played a big role in my life considering both of my parents struggled with this illness up until 2023. Drug Free Clubs of America has shown me not only how effective drug addiction is, but how it has made me feel outstanding as a person to be able to say "I am sober and I can prove it." When the Drug Free Club became known at our school there were many people who avoided it, and I am so glad I joined because I want to make a difference. I want to show people how good it feels to be able to say those words, and mean it with everything in your body. I hate seeing people struggle with addiction, because nobody should have to see, let alone go through such a thing especially when you see so much potential in the individual. The main reason I wanted to become a part of this club is because I get asked frequently "Are you in a Drug Free Club?", and when I say yes they then say "Oh, I thought you did them, how do you pass your tests?" These people also inform me that they believe I do them because I live in a town where there are addicts all over, and I have been around addicts basically my whole life. With that being said, I want to be the one that encourages other people that it is okay to say no to others who encourage, it is okay to be sober, and it is okay to overcome this struggle. Even if it is just once, or it is just a "little bit", it could turn into so much more, and completely turn your life around. I want to show people that just because you have been around drugs and just because you know people that are involved with drugs, you do not need to involve yourself with the substances. That is how Drug Free Clubs of America has helped me as an individual.