

### Reflecting on My High School Journey: The Impact of the Drug Free Club

"I can't; I'm in the Drug Free Club," has become a common phrase that I have relied on for the past four years during high school events. Many changes have occurred between my freshman and senior years, but my reliance on this simple phrase remains a constant.

As a freshman, I chose not to attend the parties my peers frequented because I was scared and still felt very young. Surprisingly, my attendance at a party wasn't a requirement to encounter drugs or similar situations. The first time I relied on this phrase was at a friend's house. Her older sister and her friend were hanging out with us when her friend asked, "Want to hit my vape?" I had never met this friend before, and I was taken aback by her question. I was in shock. I was still a kid, and I didn't want to try any harmful substances. Fortunately, I responded, "I can't; I'm in the Drug Free Club," explaining that I didn't want to jeopardize any upcoming drug tests. I realized that even outside of parties, I could still be pressured to do something I didn't want to do.

Moving through sophomore year and into junior year brought significant changes. Now considered an "upperclassman," I felt it was time to start going to parties. These gatherings became a weekend ritual, and the activities occurring there were far from innocent. The parties I attended were mostly filled with juniors and seniors, and they were very different from what I had expected. At every party, I was consistently asked to drink or smoke weed. I didn't want to engage in either of those activities. People my age can be very persistent when it comes to peer pressure. Thankfully, I found strength in that simple phrase: "I can't; I'm in the Drug Free Club." It felt as though the moment I said this, everyone stopped asking me to do things I wasn't comfortable with. I realized the power of this statement, and as my junior year progressed, I used it more often. This phrase became a reliable backup when I faced pressure at parties.

Now, as a senior in high school, I can confidently speak about the Drug Free Club with nothing but positivity. Throughout my high school years, the club and my go-to phrase have helped shape me into the strong person I am today. The Drug Free Club has not only equipped me with a positive mindset when attending parties, but it has also empowered me to be true to myself, without succumbing to my peers' actions. I have relied on the statement, "I can't; I'm in the Drug Free Club," countless times. It has supported me throughout my high school journey and encouraged me to strive for personal growth.