



## No Positive Outcomes

By Sierra Garcia

**T**here are no positive outcomes while using drugs or abusing alcohol. While in the use of these substances, the outcomes could be incarceration, the loss of family and friends, jobs and possibly the loss of your life. People don't take into consideration the long-term effects that drug and alcohol abuse can cause. Long-term affects, meaning the outcomes of the abuse and addiction, will and can cause you to have health problems. In some cases they can affect you the rest of your life. Situations like this will and can also affect family members and people who truly care for that person. There are many different reasons why people use and abuse these substances, one being they are trying to fit in or "be cool". Then there are others who use to escape from problems that they are dealing with. Yet another reason could be that person grew up in a household where drugs and alcohol were an acceptable behavior, leading them to think that it is okay.

My personal experience with substance abuse is about my older sister, Samantha, who is now 25. She started experimenting with alcohol when she had her first drink at the age of 12, and that wasn't the end.

The relationship between our mother and her was not the best which is why she moved in with our father at the age of 15. My younger brother and I were at a young age when Samantha had left our home. While she was living at our father's house, he had supplied the addicting drink. Her drinking had become more excessive while still being a minor. She had experienced marijuana for the first time and had attended parties with minors and adults as well. Samantha started experimenting with stronger narcotics; from marijuana she went to pills then leading to methamphetamine. Samantha has been drinking alcohol and using drugs for over 11 years now and is about to turn the age of 26. She became sexually active around the same

time she began experimenting with alcohol and has had unprotected sex on too many occasions to count, which has resulted in the birth of my two beautiful nieces, each born to a different father. The drugs she has chosen to use and the lifestyle she is in made her lose her jobs, her car, her home, incarceration and her children. Her oldest daughter Sophia is living with her father, and her youngest Destinee, is currently living with us here in Alaska, where my parents are in the process of applying for legal guardianship of her. The use of these substances has caused her health to diminish. The pills and alcohol have caused many ulcers which have led her to need several blood transfusions.

Presently, Samantha does not have a stable living situation and bounces from house to house, while being unemployed at the same time. My family has tried on numerous occasions to help her get out of that lifestyle, which she refuses to let go of.

Just recently one of her close friends, living in the same environment, passed away. The path my sister has chosen to take has put a huge wedge between my family and her. Samantha's immediate family are not the only people in her life who are involved. Her close aunts also have had enough from Samantha. They also care deeply for Samantha and wish the best for her, but have a hard time doing, given the pain and distrust she has caused. We are all concerned about what may happen to her if she continues to keep using.

Being Samantha's younger sister I see the situation my sister is in, and it hurts me deeply. I care for my sister very much and I am scared for what might come in the future for her. The life my sister is living, and what she is going through, has made me realize how destructive drugs and alcohol can be to the life of oneself and their loved ones. I wouldn't have known the severity of the use of drugs and alcohol, had I not experienced this with someone close to me. 🚫

### ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Sierra Garcia is a recent high school graduate from Alaska. *Alert Magazine* congratulates her for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage her in the pursuit of her academic goals. We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.