



Be There for Your Friends

By Nate Hague

Throughout my high school years, I had a few encounters with people around me, who chose to be doing drugs and drinking alcohol. I understand that there are specific medical benefits to drugs. Yet, when they are mishandled and abused, this is when it gets to be a scary situation. One example of this was when I had a friend named Tony. He had started smoking marijuana during our football season. Before that time though, Tony and I were great friends as well as teammates for years. Tony started smoking marijuana and stopped playing sports with me, then sadly he and I grew distant. Eventually, he started doing heavier drugs, such as codeine and ecstasy. I was busy playing football and Tony was not around much. After not seeing him for a few months, I saw Tony again and he was not the same.

Tony seemed more short tempered, not as happy about things unless he was high. I did not realize how bad his situation had gotten. His parent's didn't even have a clue about what was happening with him. Tony and I talked a bit, He told me that

he'd tell his parents that he was going to a friend's house, but then he would walk to the park down our street. He would take pills of ecstasy and/or smoke marijuana. I felt the urgency to help him somehow and get him away from those negative addictions. Tony was not happy and his drug habits were getting worse.

I talked to him one on one and asked why he does it all and how he keeps it a secret from his parents. Tony told me about his stresses and how he felt he wasn't good enough to make the teams anymore for sports or do well on the teams. His girlfriend had broken up with him and started dating someone else the next day. He also said he was falling behind in school, and just experiencing all of the other normal teenage feelings but all coming to him at the same time, putting a lot of weight on his chest.

I asked for Tony to honestly admit to his parents what was going on and tell them what he had been doing all these months. In return, I would help study with him, train with him for the next upcoming season, and be there to help out whenever he needed. I

told him that I would be there for him as a friend and to guide him to stay on track. It took about a week or so for him to decide, but finally he came around and Tony told his parents. They were supportive and helped Tony get the help he needed.

Fast forward a few years to today, he has moved out of state to Wyoming, because his dad is military so they got relocated. He is now graduating from high school, already taking a few college classes as a senior at his local college. He is one of my closest friends and like a brother to me. I have known him for more than half my life now. He continued to play football throughout high school after moving out of Anchorage, Alaska. He is going to school to become a firefighter.

Through my high school years, I had a few bad encounters with people around me doing drugs and drinking alcohol. The addictive habit can be like a leech on someone's life. The addiction just consumes almost everything about a person to lead the person down a dark, sketchy path. After helping Tony get back on track, I had finally gotten my friend and teammate back and was glad he started making better choices to improve his life. I am happy to say he has drifted away from that path, now being successful in school again and back on track to his normal self. Thankfully, Tony had parents who were supportive enough to help their son, rather than criticize him. Whenever the opportunity rose to help their son, they jumped on it in any and every way they could. ❌

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

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