



Giving Up Drugs

By Camille Triolo

I F THE LAST two years had never passed and I was faced with such an essay as this, I would not be proud enough to submit it. In the beginning of my high school career, like most, I was so eager to meet friends, go to parties, and most of all get a boyfriend. As I surpassed the struggles of adjusting to the new school environment I began to succeed in just that too. I had many groups of friends and a boyfriend who was three years older than I, who would soon take me to my first, and only prom. My social life was thriving and my educational values began to sink into the shadows. As typical high schoolers my new friends were into experimenting—mostly with marijuana and cigarettes. As that crept into my life my school responsibilities became completely transparent. I attended at most one class a day (if any) and my grades and life potential were suffering tremendously. My grades were not the only ones being mistreated; my parents were getting the full wrath of the mood my new drugs put me in. As you can expect, things started to unravel for me. My parents, who were once so close, became distant and afraid. I didn't speak a word to my father for months. My friends would come and go, as they were never true friends. I let my boyfriend take control of me and everything I was worth; I

was digging a hole far too deep to get myself out of.

At about the fourth month of my sophomore year I had hit rock bottom. My parents were receiving letters about my frequent absences, I had completely lost any friends I had made, my boyfriend was gone, and I was almost completely dependent on marijuana for any kind of solitude. I finally decided it was time to move on. Even though my parents were abused and hurt, they took me to help. I dropped out of the public school I was attending and got enrolled in a private school my father found called Questar. Questar's system completely erased my grade history and started me fresh in a more flexible schooling system. I got to take lots of work home and finish things on my own time. Now I'd like to say I turned my life around quickly. But, as in most cases, it took time. I reluctantly made new friends, who also smoked marijuana, and I abused the flexible school hours. But the teachers and principle never seemed to give up on me. Praise after praise I started to become more confident in my work, and I started to discover a brain I forgot was there.

It wasn't until mid-February when a longtime friend of mine fell pregnant that my eyes started to really open. It was her very first time, with a boy she

had been dating for a month. I began to see how foolish my actions had been, and how suddenly they could have ruined my whole life. I began to appreciate my parents for never giving up on me, I began to appreciate my education and educators, and I began to hate myself. After lots of hard work I got rid of the negative people in my life, I got rid of the drugs, and I got rid of the irresponsibility's. I focused on my education, and I focused on supporting my friend, the one who stood by me despite all my wrongdoings. After several months I was deep into my studies; I had completed my sophomore and junior year by July. My parents and I grew close again and I thrived in my part time job.

Now comes February 2012, I am successful in school and I cannot wait to further my education in college. I have been sober for 12 months, and I have more ambition than I've ever experienced before. I would like to say I'm completely over my past and have turned over a brand new leaf. But like all skeletons in the closet I have hovering regrets and pathetic nights. As much as I try to forget everything I've done my heart still aches for all those who I've hurt and all those who have lifted me up to success. Although I'm remorseful I've grown to accept most of it and use it as motivation to become the best I can be; motivation to show all my past demons that I am better than that, and I will make a difference. I have wonderful parents who are, despite everything, still standing by my side and still loving me with all of their hearts. I have an amazing best friend that (although my heart aches for her troubles and for her child) is still strong and independent. Although it took a long time to figure out, giving up drugs was the right thing to do. I now believe that I do in fact have a lot to offer. 🍀

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Camille Triolo is a recent high school graduate from Arvada, CO. 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.