



# Do Not Allow the Lights to Go Out Forever

By Maria Fernanda Pineda

**D**rugs. Some people think of drugs as one of the easiest ways to escape problems they do not want to confront. They believe that doing drugs or drinking alcohol will make them forget all of the things they do not want to remember, at least for a little while. Situations that have made their lives complicated, memories that cause them pain and suffering, having low self-esteem, being depressed, feeling worthless, mourning relationships that did not work out the way they were supposed to, and even grieving the loss of a family member are some factors that often lead to the consumption of drugs and alcohol. Others just do it for fun, for curiosity, or simply because they want to be accepted by those who believe that drugs are good. My Uncle Oscar is one who was trapped in the fatal abuse of drugs and alcohol; one who said that he would control drugs and drugs would never control him. He never stopped until drugs took from him what life had given him, his sight.

It was December 2009, when my grandmother received a call from the

hospital informing her of the horrible accident that my uncle had been involved in. My uncle Oscar drank a substance that left him in a coma. This substance was something that most of us have at home; it was the type of alcohol that we normally use to cure and disinfect cuts. My uncle drank this thinking it would have the same effect on him as drinking regular alcohol. The day of the incident he came home already drunk and drugged and he wanted even more, but when he could not find any, he went into the bathroom looking for the ethyl alcohol to satisfy his addiction. After he drank all of the alcohol in the bottle, he started feeling something burning inside of him like heartburn, but even worse. Suddenly, he fainted on the floor and foam started coming out of his mouth. A couple of hours later my grandfather found him on the floor unconscious, with the empty bottle still in his hands. My grandfather called an ambulance and they took Oscar to the hospital as fast as possible hoping that they could still save his life. Once in the hospital, the doctors told my grandfa-

ther that the alcohol had traveled through Oscar's body extremely rapidly. It was almost everywhere in his body but most of it soaked in his brain. My grandfather was terrified and after a few minutes he fainted and that was the moment the doctor grabbed the phone and called my grandmother.

It was almost Christmas and my grandmother was already decorating her house when the phone rang, she heard the news, and everything turned to darkness. She came crying to my house looking for my mother so they could go to the hospital to see my uncle. My mom and my grandparents stayed at the hospital all night waiting for some kind of miracle to happen but Oscar would not wake up. The next morning the doctor came to talk to my family about the results of the tests they had performed on my uncle. He told them that there were two possible things that could happen to my uncle, he would either stay in a coma for the rest of his life or wake up after four months unable to walk and see. Three days after the accident, the doctors were trying to figure out why there was still alcohol in Oscar's blood. That same day, in the afternoon, my uncle finally woke up and the doctors were really surprised because that was not what they were expecting to happen. I remember that day well and it is still fresh in my mind because that was the day when he asked us to turn on the lights. Oscar was now blind and could not move well due to his idiotic addiction to drugs. Once he was told why they could not turn on the lights anymore, he realized that drugs had control over his life and he did not. He lost control and was now paying the consequences of his actions.

Drugs will never take one anywhere but to the hospital or to the grave. What my uncle did taught me that drugs are our greatest enemies, they will never solve our problems, and they not only destroy one's life but the lives surrounding a person as well. My uncle refused to face his addiction and seek help, and now it's too late to turn on the lights. ☹️

## ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Maria Pineda is a recent high school graduate from Washington. *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.