



A Weight Had Been Lifted

By Alicia Curry

I imagine losing your dad at 16 years old. That is the effect that alcohol can have on not only you but your family as well. My dad was one of the lucky ones though, and by lucky I mean that he only had to spend three weeks in the hospital—with one of those being unconscious and having a machine doing his breathing for him. But he lived. Unfortunately for some families their stories didn't have a happy ending like mine did.

Starting in grade school I remember my dad missing every Monday of work because he was "sick" (most likely due to his weekend drinking). I used to ask my mom why he was sick all the time because I was worried about him, and she would explain to me that sometimes his sugars would get messed up and that would make him sick. That made sense to me because I knew that with my dad having diabetes his sugars fluctuated all day. If they were too high or too low it could make him not feel good. His sugars were

constantly changing so him not feeling good due to them occurred often. What I didn't know was the true cause behind him being sick, other than the diabetes, was the drinking and the many health problems that it was creating.

In addition to causing stomach irritation, also known as gastritis, drinking can cause inflammation of the pancreas. The time my dad almost died wasn't the only time that he had been hospitalized due to drinking. He had been hospitalized many times due to pancreatitis caused by his drinking. Pancreatitis can be caused by a few things, but up to 60% of the cases stem from alcohol consumption. After my dad's drinking problem put him in the hospital a few times, my mom decided to have a talk with him. She tried to get him to see how it was affecting not only his health but his family as well and asked him to quit.

After my mom talked to my dad about drinking I thought that he would stop and that everything

would get better, but I didn't realize how much it had already consumed him. He turned to closet drinking and hiding everything from us. But no matter how hard he tried to hide the fact that he was still drinking we knew he hadn't stopped. Occasionally I would find a beer can under his computer desk at home when he would forget to throw it away, and my mom would try to talk to him about it, but nothing seemed to get through to him. It wasn't until this last time that he could finally see how much of a risk his drinking was causing that he agreed with us that his drinking had to stop. He almost didn't have the opportunity to make that decision though, and because of that I almost didn't get the chance to grow up with a father and have him around for the simple things such as walking me down the aisle at my wedding.

When he quit drinking it was like a weight had been lifted off of my shoulders. I didn't feel like I had to constantly worry about him anymore, and I could feel us growing back together because of that worry being gone. I knew that my dad would be around for many years to come. I felt sure of that because of his decision to stop drinking all together.

So, next time before you decide to drink, all that I ask is that you think about how that decision can have an impact on not only yourself, but on those around you as well. Because no child should have to grow up without their dad around. 🚫

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Alicia Curry is a recent high school graduate from Idaho. *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.