



Imprisoned by Alcohol

By Madison Inches

“PPROMISE me you will never start drinking!” These were the words that my oldest brother, trapped in the grip of alcohol addiction, directed to my sixteen year old brother. He had tried desperately to escape, but alcohol has a way of taking its victims and sucking the life out of them; it makes them so dependent that they can never be free from its clutches, no matter how much they want to be rid of the destructive habit.

It all started when he was only twelve. He and our cousins would find almost empty beer cans and compile the liquid remaining in the bottoms of the cans and drink it. It was seemingly harmless at the time, but would grow into an irrepressible addiction with time. When he moved out of the house and to a different city located six hundred miles away, his drinking problem became considerably worse.

My brother had a gift; he was incredibly gifted in making things with his hands and had his own construction business. However, his new life away from home proved to be damaging to him. He got mixed up with the wrong things and the wrong friends and before long his life started to spiral wildly. He fathered a little girl whom he loved very much, but after he was pulled over for a DUI, her moth-

er limited how much he could see his precious daughter.

My brother began to display a fierce determination to conquer his addiction for his daughter’s sake, and attended recovery programs regularly. One day her mother informed him that she was getting married; and because her future husband was in the military they would be moving two thousand miles away to where he was assigned.

The news shattered my brother’s life and he got back into the party scene with his less than stellar friends. This was about the time he made my younger brother promise to never start drinking; he wanted to be free of its grip but he couldn’t escape. He thought life was no longer worth living. One night he and his friends had been drinking and had a very high BAC. They were out in a boat and he dove out of the boat into shallow water and broke his neck.

He was in the hospital for weeks, and had surgeries that could have potentially killed him. His life was spared, but he will be a quadriplegic for the rest of his life. In the blink of an eye, his life was drastically changed. He can never again be totally independent, hold his daughter’s hand, or create beautiful woodwork with his hands. The hands that once served

him so well and created a living for him refuse to work.

My brother has had to completely start over. He decided that he wouldn’t let this stop him and has gone back to school for a degree that will make him eligible for a job for which he doesn’t need to use his hands. He has spoken at schools against the dangers of alcohol abuse and how it can swallow up your life and spit it back out as a jumbled mess.

My brother taught me that no matter how harmless I may think a questionable activity is, it has the potential to take me captive and not let me go until it has changed my life. He has also taught me courage; not too many people would have the courage and strength to completely start their life over.

I believe that everyone can benefit from my brother’s, in one way tragic, in another way inspiring, story. Addictions are watching and waiting in the shadows; they can’t wait for you to stick your foot in the door so that they can grab your leg and pull you all the way in. They have the potential to ruin a person’s life.

In my brother’s case, I think that his accident actually saved him. If he hadn’t been stopped and driven away from his destructive lifestyle, then he might not be with us today. The awareness of how dangerous alcohol can be needs to be spread throughout this country and especially to younger people. If you know anyone trapped in addiction, reach out to them and make them aware of how it could affect their life. You may be scared to confront them or argue that they won’t listen, but in reality, by trying to save someone from their addiction, you could be saving their life. 🙏

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Madison Inches is a high school senior from South Dakota. *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.