



There Is More To Life

By Regina Pinnix

When I was just the age of four my father left me and my mother. We only had a little money with my mom's income. At the time we lived in Spearfish, but when he left we had to move. My siblings didn't adjust well to the move at all—in fact they were more rebellious to my mother when we moved into our new house. My brother and I are only 10 years apart and my sister are just 12 years apart. As the time went by and my siblings were going to school they got in with the wrong crowd. After they'd get home from school me and my mom would sit down and go through my sister's purse and every time we'd find new pills that she would get from her friends. Most of the time my brother wouldn't come home on time and we had to look for him. After the first year of living there they dropped out. My sister had only completed her freshman year of high school, my brother only went the first day.

Eventually my brother moved out and my sister's boyfriend moved in. When that happened I wasn't sure why. Later on I found out that my sister had been pregnant and that's why he was living with us. Since the age of five I've had to help raise my nieces and nephews because my sister doesn't care. Currently my sister has seven kids all under the age of 13. We've had some really hard times with that, all of the kids have been taken away from her at least twice and they've always live with me and my mom and step dad on and off. This year she served her first month in jail and that was it. She has been a meth addict for about 4 years now and before that she would try every drug she could get her hands on. Now it's a struggle because she still uses and when she does she tends to lash out at her kids and horrible things are said, it's very heartbreaking.

I remember one Christmas when my mom left and she was going to pick up my brother, but he didn't come back with her. That morning no one would tell me what was going on and then my aunt said he got arrested. When I was young he was my big brother that I looked up to and now that I know who he really is and what he has become, he's nothing but a big disappointment to me. He always finds a way to let me down. I lost count of how many times my brother has gone to jail or prison.

After all these years of visiting him in and out of jail it got irritating and the more I went the more it took a toll on me. He would always tell me "I'm sorry" or "I promise this time I'll be the big brother you need" and every time I would believe him but then the next day he'd be either drunk or high. I want him at my graduation only if he hasn't gone to jail before that and if he's sober.

I only see my dad maybe 2-3 times a year now and every time I do there's always a beer in his hand. The last time I went and saw him I drove up to his house and he was already drunk it was only 4:30pm in the afternoon. I'm not sure how long my dad's been an alcoholic but I do know that it just keeps getting worse. All of the 14 years of my life being introduced to drugs and alcohol it has shown me that there is more to life. It's a waste of money and time, a person could be spending time with their family rather than being high or drunk and wasting away brain cells and slowly killing yourself. All drugs and alcohol do is ruin your life. It's not worth it. All it does is destroy who you used to be as a person. My siblings are always complaining about how they have it so bad, but that was their own doing—it has shown me why I should never get involved. I am determined to do better and to be better and make my mom proud by going to college and accomplishing my goals. 🚫

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Regina Pinnix 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.