



# Fight

By Evan Davis Green

The fight began before I could stop it. It started generations before I was born, in fact. In years prior to high school it had little to no effect on me, but with each passing year the fight hit closer to home. September 21st, 2013, the final day of summer and of his life, my cousin was found dead in his room resulting from a heroin overdose. He had lost the battle. Now, daily, I witness teens turning to the substances my extended family has struggled to escape from for years. These students laugh and ignore warnings, but to me drug and alcohol abuse is far from humorous or harmless.

The pressure put on high school students to conform and use drugs like the majority of students is grossly understated. Teenagers believe that drugs and everything they do is entirely innocuous. Coming from a family prone to addiction, I am aware of how easily I could find myself trapped, a prisoner of war being held captive by drug dependence. Growing up alongside close friends always acted as a safe haven. There was a day in eighth grade during which three of my friends and I, beaming and optimistic, pledged to

stay away from harmful substances. That was before I knew the influence drugs could have on someone. Needless to say, that vow has been broken by those friends a multitude of times since.

Last year, I lost my best friend to substance abuse. I was blindsided by it; a slap in the face is a tender kiss compared to what I felt. While he was not actually killed, a night partying without me and getting high continued to overrule any activity I might have had planned for us to do. I felt alone. It seemed like I had to choose between my friends and my morals.

As the sanctuary I had found in my friends was destroyed, I found refuge in music. I found myself writing songs on my guitar, weaving in lyrics with poetry I had written regarding the events I had experienced. Dejected and questioning if I was truly making the right decision to avoid what everyone else thought to be so great, I remembered my family, cousin, and father. My dad's exact words still echo in my head from when I was eleven, "If you ever want to completely destroy me and throw away everything your

mother and I have worked so hard to provide for you, getting yourself addicted to drugs would do the trick."

I have learned by living as a high school student that staying true to who you are is more arduous than any schoolwork, project, presentation or exam. The dilemma I face is whether I should adapt and fit in, or stay myself and not lose what distinguishes me. Listening to friends break down and tell me they wish they had never started using drugs is a scarring experience. For me, staying away from harmful substances is not just about avoiding the health risks they pose. It is about keeping a promise I made to my friends, family, and self, and putting my self-discipline to the test. Looking back, my choice to refrain from drug and alcohol use shows me what I value and reveals more about me than any other decision I've made. I value my family and being the one who was able to say no, and I value the few who have not changed who they are to "fit in" with the rest.

I have learned to never sit back and allow somebody to do something that could seriously hurt them in the future. Looking back, I wish I had been more on my friend's case about using drugs, and I hope others will learn from my mistake and not allow their friends to get sucked in too.

At this moment I am concentrated on avoiding drug use, but my efforts will easily translate to my success in the future. I am a rational thinker with unshakeable self-determination. Evading drug use while remaining well-liked in school and staying friends with those who turned to drugs has been a rewarding challenge to take on. The fight is far from over, but I will never surrender. 🚫

## ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Evan Davis Green is a recent high school graduate from Washington. *Alert Magazine* congratulates him for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage him in the pursuit of his academic goals. We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.