



The Effects of Drugs on My Family

By
Nathan Chenoweth

the two girls who entered our house. Our parents may have explained their situation to us and tried to prepare us for their arrival, but seeing the effects first hand is another thing entirely. The older of the two, the one who had to undergo the traumatic experience, was very shy in our home. It didn't take long for her, however, to see that we all would help take care of her and that she wouldn't have to worry about waking up with no one home anymore. The baby on the other hand had no real grasp on the situation and bonded to my birth parents quickly. Fast forward to today and they are my adopted sisters who I fight with and love just as much as my birth sisters. But it wasn't always this way. Drugs and the addiction of drugs nearly broke their life in a way that could not be duplicated in many circumstances. I may have not lived through their experience but I got to see firsthand the aftermath of it. To say everything is better now and that there are no problems due to their past experiences would be a lie.

So when I hear about drugs being legalized and increased usage of drugs I can't help but get a little angry. Saying that the only person getting hurt doing drugs is the person who is actually doing the drugs is as far from the truth as they could get. Being with my adopted sisters and the knowledge of their parents' illegal use of drugs has heavily impacted my view on drugs. I no longer have even a slight sympathy for people who lose their lives due to drug usage because I can almost guarantee that they are not the only ones being harmed because of their drug addiction. In the end, my adopted sisters have been through a lot and while I cannot erase the memory that drugs has engraved in their minds, I can do my best to make sure that their future remains bright. 🙏

I HAVE a total of five younger sisters. Yet, if you were to look at us all in a line, you could make the inference that we are not all blood siblings. In truth, two of my sisters have different parents. Yet, in the end, we are as close as if we were born in the same moment. But they had a rough time getting to where we are now due to something as simple as a substance.

The story of us begins in a house that was torn apart by drugs with parents who were barely home or were too busy arguing, fighting, and as you can guess, making and using a plethora of drugs. One of my sisters, the second youngest, was left alone for days on end. She had to fend for herself in every way including food, warmth, and entertainment. And at the age of two, this was a very difficult task. Yet, while she was able to do many things that would be beyond a two year olds capacity she was never able to do it all. Hygiene was beyond her capacity and she would sit there in her dirty diaper unable to even mask the stench yet alone solve it. The scars that were imprinted due to this still remain today. She also didn't have basic funda-

mental teachings instilled yet such as potty training. This would last for days before her parents would finally come home and give her the changing and possibly shower that she so desperately needed. Yet, one day, she was no longer alone in this suffering. Her parents had another child who was born addicted to methamphetamine and opiates. Yet, with what seemed to be another liability and another victim came an opportunity to end it all.

The doctors who delivered to the child learned about this addiction and reported it to the authorities. On that day, the two little girls were taken from their parents and put in the foster care system, with the baby in P.I.C.S., or pediatrics intensive care system. The baby remained in PICS until she could safely go through withdrawal. This is where my birth family came in. Six months before, my parents obtained their foster care license. So, hearing about these two girls, one not even a week old, my parents jumped on the opportunity to have them stay at our house until their parents could re-obtain custody. My three birth sisters and I were completely shocked at

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Nathan Chenoweth 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.