



# A Tough Road

By Karen Madrid

**M**Y PERSONAL encounter with substances has been a rough road. I first had my encounter with hallucinogens when I was 8 and that was by mistake... but that one mistake led to a curiosity and escape. The situation that I faced was getting over these highs and needing to get away from the negative substances. I wasn't able to pull myself away even after the numerous rehabs I went to, (my first was when I was 12). The hard thing is my parents had no idea but I had formed a secret pact with my two older brothers and kept our drugs a secret. It went from natural drugs to inhalants, to pills, to harder drugs, until I would mix and mix drugs to get a high and I could never get the high I wanted... I never thought I had a problem and I never had a reason to quit.

On August 20th of 2007, one of my best friends decided to speed race while under the influence of angel dust. She was in a car wreck and she didn't even stand a chance against the light pole. She was gone in an instant and I found out right before I was going to split the rest of her angel dust, thinking that she could join me after she got back from racing. I dropped my booze and my pipes, my pills, and everything I had in my pockets into a barrel and

burned them. I was at rock bottom and realized I didn't want to die. I stayed in a bathroom for hours crying and screaming at my meatless reflection in the mirror knowing that I wasn't going to go anywhere in life and wondering if my family was ever going to take me back, because after my first placement, (12 years old) I considered myself no longer a part of the family, I was a child on the run.

August 21st, the day after her death, I realized that I had been sober for 24 hours. I was in pain far more than I had ever been and wanted to resort to my drugs more than ever—all I could do was wait it out and freeze my body in cold water in the bathtub. Not knowing where to go from there I planned on running away forever and disappearing into nothing, I was going to go to California where I was born, and attempt to start fresh. On the 25th I planned on leaving with some friends, but by all means, we had to have one more race out of town to show that we were the "legends" (of what... I don't know). The other car ran into a truck and we pulled over to help out. When the police got there, they recognized who I was and took me to the group home again; from there I went to another placement.

From placement to placement I went sober. I was able to say I was sober one year, two months, and four days when I went to a level 14 lock down facility on October 25, 2008. I reached a point in sobriety where I wanted help and started attending meetings.

Since August of 2007 I have relapsed three times, each time getting help right afterward. Within the time of my sobriety I realized that my life was not in order at all. I thought that drugs helped with my emotions and blocking things that happened, especially the traumatic issues. I thought I was in control, but my life was gone from my hands. I lost who I was and who I could have become way back then.

Through this I have learned that drugs are the harder road, no matter how easy it seems with them. They've messed up my relationships in life and the dreams I wanted as a kid. I handled my problems with manipulation of myself, others, and anyone around me. This incident would have been better if I would have accepted help at a younger age and would have asked questions and been more aware of what I was getting into... but life taught me through a tough road.

Now I am 16, sober, and will be graduating and going to college this fall. The greatest thing I have learned throughout my negative days was finding who I was and being able to make my OWN choices in life to help me to a road of success without the false confidence of drugs. 🙏

## ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

*Karen Madrid recently graduated from school in Wyoming. 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.*