



Second Chances

By Sonia Torres

Statistics claim that 18 million American adults (about 1 out of every 12 adults) are alcoholics or have alcohol problems. Alcohol had destroyed my family. It had taken over my uncle's life, destroyed a relationship between mother and son, and now controls my grandma's life. Though there are many people who aren't able to overcome, my uncle has.

I had been around alcohol since birth. Not understanding the grip it had on my family, I failed to acknowledge it. It wasn't until I was eight that I saw the consequences alcohol has. My uncle had been at a party and was drinking heavily. He and his friends were so drunk, they couldn't do anything other than drink. It was then that one of my uncle's enemies showed up at the party. My uncle, being as drunk as he was, tried to start a fight with this guy, not knowing he had a gun on him. The guy threatened to shoot my uncle and a large crowd was forming. The air was tense and the pressure to fight for my uncle's life was on. My

uncle's friends pulled out their guns and what was a party soon turned to be a standoff. The two rival groups got into a fist fight, and though no one was killed, my uncle came home majorly injured, and had to tell his family that he lost their car because it had been destroyed in the fight. It was then that my family sat my uncle down and had a serious talk with him, encouraging him to stop drinking. My uncle, glad to have walked away with his life, agreed to never drink again. That was four years ago and he hasn't picked up the bottle since.

At that time my uncle was going through a divorce, which is part of the reason he was drinking so much. He stopped his drinking suddenly and he fell into a deep depression. If it wasn't for the support of his family he might have picked up the bottle again. The withdrawals were hard on his body, but with determination and support my uncle was able to overcome. Since he has stopped drinking he has lost almost a hundred pounds, his health has

increased, and he had the strength to overcome a problem without the help of alcohol. Due to my uncle's experience, my entire family decided to reduce their drinking. Stopping was hard too for them, but reducing their intake of alcohol is a great start. My grandma has a lot of stress, and she turns to wine when she is struggling. One can see her addiction when they see her drink a glass before lunch. But through my uncle's lesson, she too has been inspired to cut down in drinking. My father, shocked by almost losing his brother, decided to support my uncle by cutting down on drinking, and he now only drinks for a special occasion. My aunt, happy to have both of her brothers, has stopped drinking with my uncle, and they have been going strong for four years.

Through my eyes as a little girl, I was able to see the damage and heartache alcohol can bring upon a family, and with my uncle's late experience, I too have decided to never pick up the bottle. I am proud of my family's strength, for they are resisting their minds and bodies in order to escape the grasp drinking has on them. One cannot stop drinking suddenly, it is a painful process one must be determined to finish, but the outcome is freedom of one's life. Though alcohol has brought many pains upon my family, I am glad for them. For they are lessons that we learn from and mistakes we can amend as long as we work to never drink again. Drinking may numb pain, but it causes so much more pain to those who are around it. ☹️

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Sonia Torres is a recent high school graduate from 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.