



How Dangerous Alcohol Can Be

By Ciera Botzheim

PEOPLE SAY that every choice you make defines you. I have made many choices, and I have made my fair share of mistakes. When I think back on my past, it seems that none of the choices I made had a greater impact on me than one mistake of another. My friend Dallas's choice to drink and drive is probably the one choice that has shaped me and changed who I am forever.

Last year, prom was quickly approaching, so a few seniors decided it would be helpful to put on a mock car crash to help make the consequences of drinking and driving a reality. I had been asked to be the victim of the crash. In the months preparing for this, I could not tell anyone, my parents had to present a eulogy and be present for the day of the mock crash. The day quickly approached. My friends were very worried when I hadn't showed up for any of my classes. The student body was then called outside. When the students arrived to the scene of the crash, they saw my bloody body. I had to be cut out of a car, and then I was carried on a backboard to the hearth. Nothing was more terrifying than hearing my mother scream-

ing and holding on to me as I lay there limp. Although this was only a mock car crash it had great impact on most of my friends so I thought that if the mock car crash influenced my friends the way it should have, maybe they would have thought twice before consuming alcohol.

Unfortunately, my male friends didn't take this message to heart. They continued their habits of drinking and still drove. After the mock crash, my friend Dallas had talked about how sad it was, how he hoped he would have many people at his funeral, and what he didn't want. His perspective of life seemed to change. He wanted a future, to be a father, and he talked about everything he wanted to do. Unfortunately, this still didn't stop his craving for alcohol.

On November 22, 2009 Dallas died in a rollover car crash. He wasn't wearing his seat belt and was ejected from the vehicle. Dallas had been drinking that evening, and even after a few hours the toxicology report concluded that Dallas had a blood-alcohol content of .14 percent. He was found at 4:25 in the morning. Many believed that Dallas

would have been alive if he would have simply worn his seat belt. But that wasn't the point. So many mistakes had been made. Dallas had just turned seventeen, he did not have his license, he wasn't wearing his seat belt, and worst of all, he had been drinking.

It seemed as if the world had stopped the moment I found out. This person I had known my whole life was suddenly gone. Dallas had over 500 people at his funeral. He was very much loved. Months after, everyone is still grieving his death. Dallas was the kind of person that everyone loved and could instantly light up a room. And the hardest truth of all is that his death was completely preventable.

What was the lesson in this? Many teenagers believe that they are invincible, but they aren't. The only thing that stopped Dallas's alcohol abuse was his death. It took the death of a very close friend to make people realize the consequences of alcohol. Dallas didn't have to die, and without alcohol he would still be alive now. I wonder how many more deaths it is going to take for people to realize that this does happen. Are a few hours of fun really worth a lifetime without seeing a loved one again? I know people can't truly feel the same effect as someone who actually has lost someone, but trust me it is real. I really hope the people do not have to encounter a tragedy such as I did in order to realize how dangerous alcohol can be. 🚫

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Ciera Botzheim recently graduated from high school in Washington. 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.