

My Story

By Sheriann Lemke



When I began my freshman year of high school, I was bound and determined to be popular and part of the older in-crowd. I was soon able to accomplish my goal. Due to my athletic ability, I was put on the varsity volleyball, basketball, and golf teams.

I was raised very sheltered and protected, and I was a good girl who always did things the right way. Also, my mom is a teacher at the high school, so she knows everybody and everything that is going on.

For the first time, the FFA organization decided to have a Winter Formal. The Winter Formal was scheduled in between volleyball/football and basketball seasons. This was perfectly bad timing for everyone, as we had no training rules.

I was so excited about the dance, and I already had a date with a senior boy. We started making our plans for the dance. I had never drank before, my parents made sure of that. One of the senior girls in our group, who had connections to a buyer,

obtained the alcohol. She chose vodka because it reacts quickly without much drinking, and it can be mixed easily. We had it all planned that we would have a couple of hours before the dance to drink; but my mom thought something might be going on, so she changed our plans. My mom made us get ready at my house, instead of getting ready for the dance at my date's house. Consequently, the only time we had to drink was when we went to get pizza, and also from the time it took to get from my house to the dance at the Elementary Gymnasium, which is only two blocks away. The drinks were, therefore, mixed very strongly, and some of us drank right from the bottle. Before ever going into the dance, I knew I didn't feel very well.

My mom arrived at the formal about five minutes after we had arrived. She was supposed to take pictures of all of the couples at the formal for their memory packets. I met her at the door with two very upset FFA advisors. I was extremely drunk and almost unable to stand up, let alone walk. My mom, who was in total shock, was crying and screaming at me as we immediately left the dance. She loaded me into the car, and we headed to my house. When we pulled into the driveway at my house, I fell back against the seat of the car, unconscious, and barely breathing. My mom called 911; the ambulance, county health nurse, and EMT's arrived soon after they received the call. I was rushed to our local medical clinic, stabilized, and then taken to the hospital in a town about 80 miles away. I was on oxygen because I could not breathe on my own for a while. When we were about 15 miles from the hospital, my breathing became very shallow. My mom and the EMT's started counting the mile markers into town, praying that I would not give up the fight to stay alive. Once I was in the hospital and the nurses came and started working with me, I was breathing fairly regularly again and was finally able to somewhat comprehend where I was at. They asked me, it seemed, like a thousand questions, which I was unable to answer because I quickly passed out again.

The next morning when I woke up, I wanted to die. That was the worst day I

have ever had in my life. My sister had driven 200 miles just to make sure that she could yell at me. I looked up to her, idolized her, and it made me feel great remorse that I could hurt her that way. I also found out that I had been only two breaths away from becoming a vegetable for the rest of my life, which really scared me. I love my life and I know that there are people around me that love me very much. I would never want them to go through that again. It changed me forever, and I was only 15 years old.

Everything that I thought would be a lot of fun, turned into a total nightmare and I almost lost my life. I had to go to court to receive my minor in possession charge and was fined \$350.00, not including the hospital and ambulance bills. The whole incident ended up costing about \$5,000.00. I had to pay for half of the amount, which took most of my summer's earnings. I also had to complete 20 hours of community service, which I was glad to do because I deserved all the punishment that I got and I like to serve my community.

Since then I have been a totally different person. I have been a member of SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), I am a leader in the sports I play, I am eight in my class of thirty-five, and I made National Honor Society. Since this happening, I have been trying to make my community a better place by having an active involvement in 4-H and doing anything for the community that I can. I am sorry for hurting the people that I love the most, which is my biggest regret of all. It is now my senior year and I have not had a drop of alcohol since that horrible night; and I never plan to again. I am very proud of myself for the things I have achieved since that time, and I hope that younger children will follow my example; for now I am a good citizen, leader, role model, and student.

The editors and staff of Alert Magazine wish to congratulate Sheriann 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.

Sincerely, Alert Magazine, LLC