



Drugs Will Destroy Your Future

By Marcus Jessen

DRUGS WILL destroy your future. Naked in a jail cell cold and scared he is on suicide watch again. You see when you are a drug addict you really only have 3 choices—recovery, jail, or death. My cousin Matt is currently in jail awaiting sentencing for a heart-breaking crime against his own family.

He started out a regular kid just like you or I. He was blonde-haired and blue-eyed and handsome. He played baseball, rode bikes, skateboarded, and hung out with his friends. In High School his life started to take a turn. He quit baseball and traded it for a life of partying. First alcohol then pot and up the ladder of drug choices to meth. It started out a fun way to spend the night with friends. Then his body needed it, craved it, and couldn't live without it. The drugs started to affect his thinking and his brain, experiencing things from paranoia to hallucinations.

His mom was always there for him and worked hard to get him help, from countless rehab programs that he walked away from, to counseling and therapy. But for Matt nothing matched the feeling of a good high. It became so important that he stole from his family to pay for the habit. At Christmas no one could give him anything of value because he would trade it or sell it for

drugs. His 10 year old brother watched his idol turn into someone he despised; with his irrational behavior, countless episodes with the law, and the final straw when he stole his Xbox and games and sold them to get high. He caused great hurt and embarrassment to the whole family. It was distressing to watch someone you love destroy their life.

Slowly the drugs ate away at his brain making it necessary to be on medication to stop the voices and faces of destruction from penetrating Matt's mind. He started having seizures and went from a person with lots of promise to a germ that everyone wanted to stay away from. He went from handsome to hard—covered in tattoos with crazy eyes. He went from someone who took beautiful girls out, to dating someone who looked like him and dated him for the drugs. His skin looked gray, dull, and unhealthy. He paced and rocked back and forth, uncomfortable in his own skin.

On this day his mom had him at the doctors for the seizures. He couldn't take his medication for the CAT scan. Later that day he met up with friends, partying with whatever they had and never taking his meds. Later that night he came home and something snapped in his head. His mom—the one person

who stood by him no matter what—became his prey. Wheeling a knife in the air he wanted to kill her. His dad rushed in and was stabbed numerous times across the chest and hand, nearly severing off his pinky finger. His dad had to wrestle him to the ground, almost passing out from the loss of blood. That night his mom was forced to call the police on her own son. His father has had several major surgeries to repair the damage from severed arteries to the loss of the use of part of his hand. The damage to his family structure is heartbreaking.

He has been in prison for six months now awaiting sentencing. The mental illness is so bad from the drug use that he can't be in the general population and has been on suicide watch several times for thoughts of killing himself and others. I know in my heart he never wanted it like this. Matt thought he was in control of the drugs but the drugs were in control of him. Having lived through this nightmare I watched how drugs can change a person not only mentally but physically. Seeing the struggles and anguish it has brought has made me (and would make anyone) reevaluate the worth of a good high. My cousin is the poster child for not doing drugs. He is 27 years old looking at a life in a mental institution or prison. I hope that this story can help even one person who may be on the same path as Matt to stop before it is too late. Or maybe it will make someone think twice before they even start the use of alcohol or drugs. They say that alcohol and drugs actually shrink the frontal cortex of the brain. The frontal cortex is the place for critical thinking and reasoning. When Matt's CAT scan came back this was the case, including places where holes were actually eaten in the brain. Drugs will destroy not only your brain but your future! ☹

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Marcus Jessen is a high school senior from Colorado. **Alert Magazine** congratulates him for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage him in the pursuit of his academic goals. We also encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.