



## Addicted In One Try

By Brianna Dean

**M**OST PEOPLE in the world might experience the use of drugs once in their lifetime—whether they are forced, persuaded, or it is a choice they've decided to be around due to the cause of friends. Millions of Americans, (about six percent of the household population 12 years and up) use illegal drugs on a daily basis. My second cousin, Amanda, was found on the floor of a hotel room, in the month of April of 2011, almost dead. The police and medics found bought and personally owned needles, (for the insertion of the drugs) lying next to Amanda on the floor. The medics stated that the reason she was even partly alive today was because she had turned on the air conditioning before taking the drugs which lowered her body temperature and kept her pulse going.

She was always treated well as a child, never was abused by her parents and grew up healthy. She had no reason to become addicted to the drugs but was just curious one day (at age 16) as to what it was like to smoke pot and to do drugs; in one try she became addicted. When she did not stop doing the drugs, her mother kicked her out of the house in hopes of having her see how hard it was to live on her own while being addicted.

Amanda had been shoplifting multiple times starting at age 18. She was continually caught and arrested for shoplifting and, when arrested, they always found drugs on her. She was put on probation and was constantly in and out of jail multiple times over the years. At the hotel, (age 21) the medics found her on the floor and brought her to the St. Anthony's Hospital in Denver where she was immediately put onto life support for a week. When she woke up on her own, after being on life support, she vaguely knew who she was and who her parents were. She could not perform her daily routines like eating, drinking, or walking. She did not remember how to function correctly due to the effect of the drugs on her brain. The doctors said she will permanently have brain damage for the rest of her life because of how many drugs she took and the effect they had on her body systems. The night she was found in the hotel, she had been celebrating her 21st birthday because she had just turned 21 years old while in jail (for shoplifting) and had just gotten out that day. So, her first night out of jail in six months and she decided to overdose on drugs and almost killed herself. Once she was conscious, she stayed in ICU for three weeks and was

placed on a feeding tube. Once she was able to move her arms, she was taught for a month how to feed herself again. The most depressing part of the whole situation was that once she was able to function and think again, she asked for her friends, who sold her the illegal drugs, to come to the hospital and give her more drugs through the IV that was giving her the medicine that was keeping her alive. She was so hooked on them that she would rather take the drugs than live.

When she was able to talk again, she asked her dad why he loved her or cared about her. She seemed to wonder why people cared about her and why they would care if she even lived through this tragedy that had occurred. Amanda took the worst drugs a person can take. She consistently took heroin, cocaine, and pot along with drinking alcohol. As far as I know, she is still being taken care of in the hospital where everyone is continually praying for a safe recovery from the incident and hopes she will soon be free of the drugs. The way the incident was handled on the medic's side was done correctly because they did not give up on her. They saved her life and hopefully she will realize how fragile her life is and how serious the situation was; how close she came to death. I have always been taught God does things for a reason... "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. God kept Amanda alive for a reason and she needs to realize that in order to continue on in her recovery she will need to start over and create a new healthy life for herself. ☒

### ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

*Brianna Dean is a recent high school graduate from Colorado. **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.*