



My Life as an Alcoholic Teenager

By Justine Simonson

WHEN I started high school, I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. After starting medication, I became more social, and that led to me wanting to make up for lost time with the friends I never had. I started drinking; drinking led to partying, and partying led to drugs and sex. Soon, I lost all regard for myself and others—I attempted suicide. But in the end, with a lot of help and willpower, I made a new me. I'm not seeking sympathy; I just want other kids out there to know there is hope. This is my story: my life as an alcoholic teenager.

High school was everything I was hoping for, and everything I was afraid of. I wasn't hated, I got good grades, and I started getting involved in a lot of extracurricular activities. I was popular and pretty, and started dating the boy I'd liked for the longest time. Life was great. I never realized that adding that extra spice of "fun" into it all could tear it all away from me. I liked who I was, but I wanted more thrill. I wanted to prove I could be a "bad girl". So I started drinking with some other friends. Soon enough, I'd found my new hobby.

A couple of times out with friends led to a couple nights a week getting wasted because we thought we were the coolest. I never even noticed when

my voice started drying out and my skin got pale. I lost a whole bunch of weight, and my taste buds became fairly desensitized. My parents knew something was different, but after my shut-in childhood, they thought this was normal.

But it doesn't get worse once you're hooked. Wrong! Among this crowd of new people, I met a guy who could drink anyone under the table. I thought he was cute and charming. Even though I was dating the love of my life, the mind-poison of beer after beer left me careless, and I wanted this guy. So I dumped my boyfriend and began dating this new person. That, however, didn't last long. Boys liked me. And I loved it. I couldn't get enough male attention. I dumped this guy too, and after a little while, everything was so messed up and in ruin that all I could do to ease the pain was swallow one more drink. Then another. When I got to a point where I stopped taking my medication, I took a bottle of Ibuprofen. Help got to me before it was too late, but that didn't fix my problem. I was sent to the children's psych ward in Grand Forks. There, they helped me help myself, but not once did they address alcohol abuse.

As soon as I was out, I was back on the party scene. And then, one night

when I least expected it, I ended up at a friend's house warming party. It was he and I, and a couple more of his friends. This guy asked me what I wanted to drink, and I told him. I should've watched him mix it, but I didn't care. The next thing I knew, my dad was shaking me awake saying I was late for work. I had no idea how I got home or why my eyes and groin hurt so much. That's when I started throwing up. When I looked in the mirror, I had no idea why my eyes were so swollen and red. Then, I went to the bathroom and I was bleeding, but it wasn't my time for that.

After the rape, it was time to wake up and realize that things needed to change. Through all of this vice and promiscuity, I had lost a great deal of REAL friends, along with my reputation. After everything I'd lost, those were the two things I intended to get back. I made as many amends as I could, and I kept my hands to myself from that day on. I joined SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), and met a group of people who were there to support me. It wasn't the life I imagined when I was little, but I learned a lot and found a great group of people dedicated to a great cause.

It was a long and hard road that I somehow managed to stumble down. Even with the premature jump into drinking in high school, and the psychological and physical damage from the overdose, I found a support group and overcame my obstacles. But there are many kids with the same problems who may not even live to see their high school diplomas. Alcohol and drug awareness are a big deal, and I hope to see more kids taking a stand against destructive decisions. 🙋

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

*Justine Simonson is a high school senior from North Dakota. **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.*