

A Friend In Need

By Taylor Whitby



ONE OF MY BROTHER'S BEST FRIENDS had a big problem with prescription drugs. He had several knee surgeries during his high school years and became addicted to Oxycodone. His need for the drug caused him to break into people's homes and steal their prescription drugs.

Everyone who knew him really liked him and he was highly involved in church and school activities like sports and plays. His actions were totally against the type of person he was before taking the drug. No one really noticed that he even had this problem until he started losing a lot of weight. Then, he started fighting with his family and moved in with my brother for a short time.

During my sophomore year in high school, I had to have knee surgery and received the same drug that he had been given. I was lying on the couch when he came to my house. My brother wasn't home, so I thought it was very odd that he was there. He asked to borrow a movie, and then stood by the counter where I had placed my pills. He seemed very nervous and three trips to the sink

for water. Later, after he was gone, I noticed my bottle of pain pills was missing. My brother went after him because we were worried that he might take the whole bottle and overdose. Luckily, he only took three and gave the rest back. My family didn't want to cause any trouble so we didn't make anybody aware of it, not even his family.

The summer after graduation he attended college in Pocatello. He was later kicked out of his apartment and had to come home. Evidently, his problem had intensified, and he started breaking into people's homes. He had lived here all his life and was aware of everyone's schedules and usually entered the homes when he thought no one would be there. He broke into over seven homes. People started to buy guns to protect themselves in their own homes.

One day he came into my grandma's home thinking that she wasn't home. When he saw my grandma, he asked if my brother was home, but he really knew that he was away to college at the time. I told my grandma that she should call the police, but she

said that he would never try to take anything from her. This same thing happened to several other people living in the community. Most people still didn't want to believe that he was the one responsible and didn't want to get involved even though they had their suspicions.

It was hard to imagine that the person I knew would be so desperate for drugs that he would scare the whole town and threaten their safety. It wasn't until one person stepped forward and was responsible enough to sign a complaint that he was arrested and these actions were stopped. It later allowed him to get the help he needed for his drug problems.

Prescription drug problems not only rest with the patient, but also the doctors who prescribe the drugs. They have a huge responsibility to not prescribe long term use of these addictive drugs. It makes it too easy for kids or people to continue using them. This is the reason my brother's friend got addicted to the drug in the first place.

The situation was finally handled right when he got arrested and went to court. He was given the option of an extended jail sentence or attending rehab. He decided to attend a rehab center in Utah and seems to be doing much better. His problem wouldn't have gotten so out of control if my community would have been more alert and taken action at the start to enable him to get help sooner.

I am glad he turned his life around and went to rehab. I hope my community and I remember this lesson and reach out to others. Everyone can make a difference. 🙏

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Taylor Whitby is a senior in high school. *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.