

# My Brother Lost

by Keeley Moses



Today would have been my brother Michael's 24th birthday, but because underage drinking and driving is a big problem in my community; he is with me in spirit only, helping me recall this sad story.

My name is Keeley Moses and I lived in Gillette, WY at the time this story begins. Michael was working in Rock Springs, Wyoming and was getting off work, looking forward to visiting his girlfriend and relaxing for the evening. He received a call from a friend who was at a party and being threatened by someone. Ryan wanted Michael to come to the party and provide some backup in case a fight broke out. My brother could tell that his friend had been drinking and that he would not stop bothering him until he agreed to come to the party. Everyone continued to drink and by the time Michael arrived the police were also there, trying to break up the party.

It is alarming to me that even though almost every person at the party was drunk the cops didn't hand out one drinking ticket. Instead the underage drinkers were allowed to drive away and ended up forming another party.

At the new party, my brother's friend, Ryan, drank some more alcohol and soon the other guy, Matt, arrived. They started to yell at each other and throw punches. Matt decided to leave and got into his truck, far too drunk to be driving. Suddenly, the people in the yard looked up to see Matt's truck driving through two or three yards and coming towards them. Matt was trying to run over Ryan, but my brother was in the wrong place and he was the person who was run over by the truck.

Matt knew he had hit someone and what he had done but he left my brother lifeless in the yard and drove off. The police were called and by the time they got to Matt's house, he was packed and ready to run knowing full well that he had killed Michael. Matt has had a criminal record since he was 15 and had been in and out of jail. Matt had spent his evening at a local restaurant where he had been served alcohol. When the restaurant realized he was drunk, they refused to serve him anymore alcohol, but they let him leave and he drove drunk to the party.

The lives of my brother, his friend and the driver are changed forever. Ryan, who we thought was my brother's friend, and who caused Michael to go to the party didn't even get one ticket, or even a couple of hours in jail, even though he was drunk and provoking the fight. The cops just gave him a "slap on the hand" and let him go home, still drunk. He had received previous tickets for driving under the influence. I think the police should have done more to ensure that he did not continue to drive drunk and put other's lives in danger.

Matt, who hit and killed my brother with his truck, is in prison for 5-10

years. He only has to serve one-third of that to be eligible for parole. Every six months, if he has been on good behavior, he will be considered for the honor farm. I think it is unfair that my family and I have to relive this tragedy every six months, contacting the parole board, trying to make sure that justice is served and Matt is held responsible for the life he took. My family and I will continue to fight for my brother because his life was cut so short.

My parents go to the local MADD meetings, and talk to people that are court ordered to attend because they have received tickets for drunk driving. Many families who have lost a child to alcohol tell their story to try and impact these people's lives. My family is also helping to care for my brother's daughter, Lexi. She looks just like him and helps keep our memories of Michael bright. Spending time with her brings joy to our lives.

In addition to trying to help prevent these types of tragedies and helping to raise Lexi, I am planning to attend Western Wyoming College the fall of 2009. My career goals include working to help others, possibly as an elementary teacher, nurse or other medical related field.

My brother was my best friend, role model, and just a great person that was torn from me one night. He inspires me to live an alcohol-free life and work to be a positive influence on others. This scholarship would help me achieve this dream.

*The editors and staff of Alert Magazine wish to congratulate Keeley on winning the essay contest and encourage her to pursue her academic goals.*

*We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.*

*Sincerely,  
Alert Magazine, LLC*