



Everyone Has a Story

By Madison Schoenberg

Little do many know my life has not always been as perfect as I make it seem. My mom is an alcoholic. When I was in elementary school my grandma died of breast cancer. Her death took a major toll on us, especially my mother. She turned to alcohol for support. It started off as a few shots at night and quickly escalated to drinking during all times of the day till she could barely function. She could not just have one drink, once she started there was no stopping. I was young when this all began so I did not truly understand what was happening. When my mother would be drunk at night, I would call it her "nighttime talk." As I started to get older, I started to understand what was really going on with her. My mom had a real problem.

By the time I was in sixth grade my mom's drinking had gotten out of hand. It was to the point that as soon as I got home from school, she was already drunk beyond comprehension. I was embarrassed to have friends over. As it got worse, I slowly stopped having my friends over to my house. I wanted to stay at friend's house, so I didn't have to deal with what was going on at home. My mother is my best friend and my favorite person on this

entire planet, but I couldn't stand to see her like that. She was not herself. I would try to make sure I was home to talk to her right after school because at that point she was still sober. As her drinking began to escalate my family could not handle it anymore, we decided my mother needed help. She started off going to meetings locally and those seemed to help for a little bit. Until one day she just couldn't control herself any longer and hit her breaking point.

My dad had gotten a call saying that my mother came to work, and she was not herself and not in a proper state to drive. She decided to leave anyway. She came back to my house and drank to the point where you could not understand her, and she could not comprehend her own actions. At this point my dad decided we need to take greater action than we had. He found her a treatment facility in Florida and my mom left my family for about a month. I have never experienced anything harder in my life than when I had to pack my own mother's bags because she was not capable to do it herself. I had to pack her bags as she cried and cried just repeating, I'm sorry and begging to stay and correct

her actions. I had to watch her cry and barley be able to move as I packed her bags to leave me for the next month. My best friend was leaving me.

This event changed my outlook on life. I saw my dad and brother cry for the first time. I realized that you never truly know what anyone is going through. From the outside I looked like I had everything I could ever want. I was popular, had a solid group of friends, good grades, was good at sports, and had a family that loved me. Underneath all that I had an internal struggle that was holding me down. I was hurting and most would never have guessed it. This experience taught me that you must always be kind to others because you don't know what is going on in their life. It could be the jock with tons of friends or the quiet kid in your math class. It doesn't matter who it is, everyone has a story behind what you see. Therefore, it is key to be nice to everyone you see and listen when someone needs a person to talk to.

Through all this I have become a much stronger and empathetic person. As for my mom she has beat her addiction. She still faces struggles with it every day, but she completed treatment, came home, made a few mistakes here and there, and has since been six years clean. This proves that even though it may be hard you can and will get through it, you just have to work for it. In today's world it is important to not only think about yourself but also how others are feeling because you never know what someone else is going through. If I could change one thing about this whole experience, I would have my mother go to treatment earlier. Treatment saved my mother. 🙏

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Madison Schoenberg is a recent high school graduate 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.