

Drunk driving is a choice, one that has an impact beyond the individual who makes the fateful decision to drink and drive. That impact is one that far too many people know all too well- especially the RushHenrietta community. The death of Matt Kato this past summer brought the issue to the forefront of the community's attention.

So often we can empathize with tragedy, but fail to personally identify with the tragedy. Matt Kato's sudden death brought the tragedy of drunk driving to a personal level. There was profound grief for Matt, his family, close mends, and the community. Kristian Kemp's decision to drink and drive robbed Matt, family, and mends of a life that was lived with joy and to the fullest. Drunk driving was no longer a crime that you saw on the 6 0' clock local news. It had a name, a face- and had left a void.

In the irony of life, tragedy often prevents its own repetition. Preventing drunk driving becomes a matter of sharing Matt's story, or any drunk driving victim's story. When people see victims' mends and family's grief, when they see a community's profound loss, they can begin to personally empathize with the tragedy of drunk driving. That empathy becomes a powerful deterrent to drunk driving- it's most important lesson. Seeing the grief and sorrow drunk driving has caused, the awesome responsibility of driving sober is magnified. While it will not bring back anyone that has been lost, the senseless tragedy of drunk driving can begin to have some value if it prevents the pain and suffering of another tragedy.