

In writing this, many memories come back to me of that day in July of 2004 when I heard the news of Matt Kato's death. Matt had always been a good friend of mine, so when I heard this, I was obviously devastated. So I feel a very close personal connection to the topic of drunk driving.

Everyone and anyone who has passed 6th grade knows that there are severe risks involved in driving while intoxicated, and that it is illegal. But the true mystery comes with that fact so many people do it anyway. Every kid is taught all throughout school that alcohol causes a delayed reaction time and distorts your vision, both of which are factors that greatly affect one's driving ability. It also can make a person irritable, and therefore more likely to have road rage. And yet many of them will one day drink four beers and step into their car. Teachers can tell kids all they want about the nearly 300,00 people that injured in alcohol related accidents a year, and the over 17,000 killed, yet many of them will become, or cause someone else to become one of the 317,000. Overall, preaching statistics to students just seems ineffective.

The solution? Well it's hard to say if there is one, or at least one that hasn't already been tried. Granted, the number of alcohol related accidents has been on the decline, but it is still too high. A many people and lawmakers have been pushing for new legislation regarding DWI in New York many of which were initiated by the Kato family, however the law doesn't stop everyone. Overall people just seem to think they are invincible, until it happens to them or someone close to them. Ironically, one benefit that came out of Matthew's death; I don't know that any time I or any of my peers thinks about driving when we've had too much to drink, we'll think of Matt, and it will hopefully allow us to make a better choice.