

"The dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and/ or drugs."

It is quite obvious that driving under the influence of mind-altering substances would be a dangerous idea. We have been told this all throughout our teenage lives, the dangers of mixing alcohol and drugs with driving. However this message can be lost in the confusion of fitting in socially with friends at parties and other events. Peer pressure can lead to unwise decisions that result in a catastrophe. Driving under the influence of mind-altering substances is never a good idea and rarely results in anything other than negative consequences.

I can relate to those who have lost a loved one to misuse of alcohol and drugs. When I was in 8th grade my cousin Bobby died from a gunshot wound to his head. He was at a party with a bunch of friends and there was a lot of drinking. Most of the kids at the party were drunk and the host decided to pull out his revolver and play a game of Russian roulette. My cousin was very intoxicated and not thinking clearly he decided to join in the game. As fate would have it he pulled the trigger and the single bullet flew out, killing him on the spot.

It is hard for me to think about what happened that night, it still scares me. I wonder what would have happened if alcohol and drugs had not been present, if he had been sober and thinking clearly. I wonder how alcohol can be so devastating when we know what it is capable of doing. I lost my cousin to an alcohol-related accident and it is clear to me the dangers of alcohol and drugs. I can relate to those who have lost a loved one due to alcohol. It hurts. The time to heal is long and difficult.

Alcohol is a dangerous substance, especially when mixed with driving and other poor decisions. I think the best thing we can do to curb this problem is educate people. Not just through television ads and magazine pages but through live talks and meetings within this age group. Those who have lost a loved one should speak, as they know firsthand the devastation alcohol can bring. By educating the youth and young adults of our community to alternatives to alcohol we can reduce such accidents as those the Kato family and my family experienced. Education is key to prevention.

I think that it should also be the duty of our community to provide a designated driver service to ensure that those under the influence of alcohol are not on the road. By providing such a service both the intoxicated driver and others on the road would be safe. This could prevent many alcohol-related accidents and save lives. The dangers of alcohol cannot be ignored or downplayed. As a community, it is our responsibility to do all that we can to prevent drunk driving and stop the hurt that arises from such decisions.

I know what it is like to lose someone to alcohol. The dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and / or drugs are numerous, but the thing that I believe to be the most devastating is losing someone you love. I will never forget what happened that night; hearing the news of the accident with Matt only brought those feelings to the surface again. I rarely cry but I did when I had heard what happened. The loss of life is never easy to accept, especially when those involved are so young. The dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs are clear; we must work to reduce such occurrences in the future and save lives.