

## **Drinking can Kill**

I remember the morning like it was yesterday. I rolled over in bed, and my eyes got wide when I realized that the clock said 3:34 am. I was only eight at the time so the thought of getting up at this time seemed crazy. When I looked up from the clock, I saw my mom, and with tear filled eyes. She leaned over and kissed my cheek. My dad stood to her left and held tightly onto her hand. The next few words that came out of her mouth were some that I will never forget. She stuttered a little as she tried to find the words to use to make it easy for an eight years old to understand. "Ashley, Lukie was in a bad accident this morning, and he has passed away." She reached for my hand, and just as she did I pulled the covers up over my head hoping it had all been a dream.

Well it's been nine years now, and I still wish I could put those covers over my head and pretend it was all just a dream. On February 28, 2004 my cousin was killed in a snowmobile accident. Cause of death, blunt force trauma to the head, cause of accident, inability to properly function from alcohol consumption of a minor and no use of proper prescribed eye wear. He died instantly the paramedics said. He hit a tree head on and was thrown back 25 feet off his sled. My cousin went down a drive way that night, trying to beat his friends in a race down the drive way and back up. Well unlike the others went down and never came back up.

Teen drinking has been a serious topic in my family ever since my cousin's accident. We have done a lot of informational groups, and we are a part of many organizations that raise awareness for what can happens to teens when they are under the influence of drugs and alcohol at a young age.

Alcohol consumption by a minor has increased by a lot over the years. Kids are starting to drink at much younger ages than the legal limit. Teens are finding it easier and easier to buy

and find alcohol, to supply them. Drinking has become something fun for kids to do, whether they are partying or just hanging out with friends. Teens don't realize how much alcohol hurts and affects their bodies. Teens bodies aren't fully developed yet, which means their bodies aren't sure how to react when substances like that are put into them. Alcohol effects the central nervous system directly, and the central nervous system is the whole control center for the body. So when teens consume alcohol, it impairs their whole body, and most kids' bodies aren't ready to handle what they might do when drunk.

I think that teen drinking has become a huge problem not only in the state of Maine but in the country. Approximately 5000 teens under the age of 21 die from under age drinking each year. The average age for alcohol consumption is fourteen years old, which is seven years younger than the legal age(alcohol alert). I believe that schools need to start being more informative with students about how serious teen drinking is. I don't believe that a lot of kids understand the long term, and even short term effects of alcohol. We need to start stepping up and taking care of the problem, because if we don't start taking care of it now, soon we will have more and more accidents like my cousins. And no kid, no family, and no friends should have to deal with what my family had to deal with over the loss of a loved one. Life is so valuable to end it on one mistake.

Alcohol alert- "Underage Drinking." *Underage Drinking-Why Do Adolescents Drink, What Are the Risks, and How Can Underage Drinking Be Prevented?* Web. 02 Apr. 2012. <<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AA67/AA67.htm>>.

