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Written Document

I have been to many places around the United States and I have seen and experienced teens indulging in underage drinking. One major reason I chose to do this topic is because I had known someone who had partaken in this activity and lost her life. She was gregarious and full of life. One night this girl was with a group of people; they all were consuming alcohol and made a thoughtless decision to go for a ride. As her friend was driving, he tried to turn a quick corner and rolled the car. Two teens were badly injured and one heart shocking death. Her death had a big impact on many lives, including my own. It changed my view on drinking at an early age. I wanted to learn how to persuade more teens not to participate in underage drinking.

The Centers for Disease Control recorded a survey in 2009 on drinking levels among teens who have drunk in the last thirty days. Their results were that forty-two percent drank some amount of alcohol, twenty-four percent binge drank, which is drinking an excessive amount of alcohol in a short period of time, ten percent drove after drinking and twenty-eight percent rode with a driver who had been drinking. CDC also reported that 12,479 males and 6,597 females have died in alcohol related crashes which comes to a total of 19,076! (data gathered between 2000-2006.)

Drinking at an early age has an effect on a person's personal and physical life. People may not think that consuming a little alcohol will not have an effect on their body. What they do not know is that there are many bodily damages due to drinking alcohol. These effects can be either long term or short term. Depending on how much alcohol is taken in, the effects may differ. Short term effects include: slurred speech, drowsiness, vomiting, headaches, distorted

hearing and vision, impaired judgement, unconsciousness, and many more. Long term effects include: unintentional injuries such as a car crash, falls, burns, etc, alcohol poisoning, high blood pressure, stroke, liver disease, nerve damage, and many more (Drug Free World, 2006).

The human body is constantly growing, especially during the young adolescent years. There are many significant changes a teen's body goes through. Examples include hormonal alterations and brain development. Being a teen also causes one person to want to "fit in" with others, doing what is "cool," like drinking alcohol. What they do not know is that it interrupts their brains process of development. Alcohol is a liquid that rapidly spreads throughout the bloodstream, not only damaging the brain but also the stomach, liver, kidneys and muscles. When the damage is done to the body, it is irreversible. Therefore, alcohol at a young age will affect the body for the rest of one's life (Winter, 2012).

Early drinking not only effects one's physical life, but also one's personal life. Consuming alcohol can actually cause more problems. Drinking can effect one's personal connection between family and friends. It can cause broken relationships between two people. It can get in the way of school, and schoolwork. It could also be the other way around, having many problems may lead a person to drink alcohol.

An interview with the Mt. Abram High School nurse provided more personalized information about underage drinking. I learned a lot of information on teens and how they tend to drink alcohol because other teens are doing it, or simply because that is one way to "escape their problems." What they do not seem to think about is that there are many ways to get rid of their personal problems, like participating other other drug-free activities, such as: sports, after school activities and clubs, etc. How can more teens be persuaded not to participate in underage

drinking? One way is to teach them the effects of underage drinking and all the problems it can bring. Another way is to inform them about how many lives have been lost from alcohol related crashes, injuries, etc (Winter, 2012).

Some teens could be ignorant and not care about all the effects of alcohol and sometimes it does not stop a teen from drinking. What would stop a teen from drinking? A life threatening experience? Possibly, sometimes that is not enough. A huge situation that put a big impact on one's life could still not bring one to stop drinking. The choice to drink at a young age is up to the person, but we could give the teens information on what it could do to them and how it could harm many things about their life. Teens should be informed that alcohol is more than just a liquid that makes you feel "good," it is a drug that is very harmful to the body and can cause many problems.

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