

“Words to be Heard” Scholarship

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"Be the Change You Want to See in the World"

An explanation of my school based alcohol prevention organization that I believe will truly inspire today's youth to pledge not to drink and drive through inspirational viewpoints, hands on activities, and a pledge and contract against drinking and driving and its life-threatening consequences.

Ghandi once said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Throughout my life, I have tried to be as exemplary as possible. I truly live by those words of Ghandi, and do my utmost to better the world in every way that I can. If there is one thing I can do to engender my enthusiasm toward education into my peers, I would love to start a program to educate students not to make poor decisions when it comes to underage drinking and driving.

On May 16th, 2009, tragedy struck our hometown. Our close friend's wife had been taken in a tragic accident caused by a drunk driver. Her name was Brittany Allenbaugh, and her husband Stephen Morgan was off serving our country in Iraq when he received this devastating and life changing news. I cannot imagine the mix of emotions and utter grief Stephen was feeling as he received the news. This could have all been avoided if someone had educated that drunk driver on the consequences of his actions.

On May 19th, Brittany Allenbaugh died. As traumatic as this experience may be, I would like to assemble an educational program in honor of Brittany and her life being tragically cut short by a drunk driver.

Along with the help of Edgar Snyder & Associates as well as the Pennsylvania State Police Department, I would be honored to organize the Families Against Drunk Driving (FADD) to use educational seminars, multimedia productions, and group oriented hands-on courses that show students the tragic consequences of drunk driving.

There are numerous organizations solely devoted to educate students on the effects of drunk driving. These organizations are usually based upon lectures and paper based projects. Students in this day and age do not respond to the norm when it comes to presentations in school. This organization would be different. To draw the attention of students today, you have to relate the information toward students by using means of popular culture, for example, music, videos, televisions, actors, community leaders, etc. We need to make an organization that jumps out and grabs the attention of young adults.

The presentation will consist of four key sections. First, the introduction, the agenda of the day, will let the students know what they're in for. When you have a large group of students and you tell them that what they are about to take part in will change their outlook, most will not believe you. But, in the end when their lives have been truly changed by an inspirational message, they will look back and think to themselves, "Wow, I would have never guessed, but that truly did change my outlook on life."

Part two – the hands-on, fun section: This section will consist of hands-on group activities such as seminars with diagrams, information booths, "beer goggles", driving simulators, etc. to give students a hands-on, in-depth perception of drunk driving. This also will excite students, giving a positive outlook on the events taking place, as opposed to the normal lecture seminars most schools hold.

Part three – catch the students' attention in an auditorium atmosphere. This is usually the downfall of attention when it comes to students. As soon as the lecture starts, the students stop paying attention. You have to relate to the students to keep them awake and attentive. Blast music, play attention grabbing video clips, and other means of multimedia presentations that relate to students. To sway a teenager's mind, you must

first think like a teenager. Teens react to things they are familiar with, to people they are familiar with. After you have their attention, shock them. Use scare tactics to revert their views to our goal; stop drinking and driving in teens as well as adults. After you have the teen's attention, this is when you have control of their minds and emotions. That is when you can have a direct impact on their views. Use shock tactics to improve their knowledge on the subject of the matter. To have the proper effect, our organization could use local people who have been directly impacted by the poor decisions made by drunk drivers, such as the death of young Brittany Allenbaugh. After this effect has been made, time should be set aside for an inspirational message. This message should be made by someone who has directly been affected by the tragedy of a drunk driving accident. The family and spouse of Brittany Allenbaugh would be stellar candidates for this section of the presentation.

Then, the fourth and final part of the presentation, the true mindset changing section, make the students pledge to change. After the standard procedures of the presentation, students should be asked to sign a document stating that they will have no part in underage drinking, nor drinking and driving, and understand its detrimental consequences. Then after the completion of this pledge, the students should be given a reminder of their pledge to not drink and drive. What better way to instill this into students but by means of an object. Something as simple as a key chain with a quote or an air freshener to some students can be, in a sense, life changing. No, these items alone will not change the students' lives, but the connotation of the object and their pledge to steer clear of drinking and driving could change, and save lives. These items are chosen because before students put the key in the ignition or stare into the rear view mirror, they will remember our presentation. They will remember their pledge. They will remember Brittany Allenbaugh and her family. They will remember what consequences come from poor decisions such as drinking and driving, and hopefully, this will stop them from doing so.

As I stated previously, you have to think like a young adult to persuade a young adult. You have to associate presentations directly toward what they know and enjoy. I know

what changes the lives of teenagers. Throughout my high school career, I have always been the "go to guy." I have been the person there for everyone. I lead countless clubs and organizations in our school, and as my gift to my high school and Brittany Allenbaugh and her family, I would love to make Families Against Drunk Driving (FADD) a reality. We must be the change we want to see in the world. I want to see that change, so I don't have to see the pain and devastation that drunk driving brings about. To change someone's views, you must first educate them so that they see the error in their ways. Most who have not been directly impacted by the effects of drunk driving will not truly know the consequences of it. Let us not have to suffer through another tragedy and loss of life. Let us educate students now so they will never have to make the mistake of drinking and driving. Let's start a FADD at our local high schools!