

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is the drug most widely used by adolescents and most alcoholics establish their drinking habits during adolescence. Statistics illustrate that 45 percent of high-school girls drink alcohol and 26 percent admit to binge drinking according to reports from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse. The reason for initiating alcohol and drug use varies for adolescents. A recent research study found that adolescents reported initiating the use of alcohol and drugs primarily due to experimentation and peer influence. Reasons for continued use included enjoying the effects and using alcohol as a coping tool. Adolescents reported quitting because of negative reactions and effects (Titus, Godley, & White, 2007). Other research illustrates that adolescents who abuse alcohol and/or drugs often have friends who do so, as well (Jaccard, Blanton, & Dodge, 2005). There is evidence that shows that adolescents who start to use alcohol and/or drugs have a close friend who was already using and other evidence illustrates that adolescents who are influenced by peers' risky or negative behavior choose friends who drink or use drugs which then influences their use (Siegler, Deloache & Eisenberg, 2006). We also know that drinking often increases among friends (Siegler et al., 2006), and thus, can say that adolescents who hang out with other adolescents who use or do drugs are putting themselves at risk for the same behavior. However, peers are not the only influence on adolescents' substance use. The nature of the parent-child relationship also affects adolescents' risk for using alcohol and drugs. An adolescent will be more susceptible to his or her friends' negative influences if he or she has parents who are distant, cold, do not monitor and supervise their child's activities or are basically uninvolved parents. Parents who are involved in their child's life, who know their child's friends, who set limits and who are also warm and receptive to their adolescent's viewpoint will be more likely to have a child who resists peer pressure to use alcohol and/or drugs (Siegler et al., 2006). The latter description refers to parents who are authoritative in their parenting. Authoritative parents are also known as democratic parents and these types of parents usually have open communication with their children and talk to them about their thoughts about alcohol and drug use and the negative effects of substance use. Adolescents need parents and/or other close adults who can be honest and open about the danger of using alcohol and drugs as an adolescent

and also let them know that they don't want the adolescent to use alcohol or drugs. Adolescents need to hear strong, consistent and clear messages and rules from adults about substance use to combat the messages they are hearing from peers and the media. Contrary to what is shown in the movies and on television, alcohol and drug use have negative consequences. In addition to having adults who are available to listen and support them, adolescents need adults in their lives who can provide guidance and direction so that they are not tempted to use alcohol and drugs because they know the dangers, know that there are other ways to cope with problems, and know that there are other ways to have fun. The following e-mail messages from students show that adolescents need and want adults to listen to them and respond positively when they do.

so idk if u remember me but i am the girl that came who came up to after u talked with my high school. i am rhiannon christopherson and i am a freshman n just turned 15 in march....no one really knows this but i have been drinking since 3rd grade. to me i am an alcoholic. drinking on the weekends or on the weekdays before or after school. usually 3 or 2 times a week. its just became part of fun that i like to do n a noraml routine. if i dont drink at least once a week i feel that everything is going really slow n get really bitchy.me n my best friend at the time whitney glaza got alcohol posioning last June the day right after fathers day. i wont ever forget it...it was the day that i almost lost whitney! we chugged a fifth of vodka wit nothing to eat that whole day. the last thing i remember is sittin on this guys lap n lifting my head up 3 times n i guess me n whitney puked n whitney started shaking peed her pants n than foamed out of the mouth so the boys we were wit decided to rush us to the hospital. i guess when we got there i was refusing medication n punched a nurse so they gave me 2 shots to parallze me n one to make me go to sleep...they had to air lift us from the knox hospital to south bend memorial...i woke up wit a breathing tube in my throat n a tube in my nose to pump my stomach i tried to pull the tubes out cuz they were hurtin they had the one in my nose put in wrong but when i woke back up they had my hands n feet strapped to the bed.whitney ended up dying but the brought her back.that had to be the scarest feeling to loose whitney! but i am going out wit this boy who cares alot about me his name his brady.i was going to quit drinking till the summer for him n his friend mark but when u talked about that 13,14 girl who has been sober for a year i was like WHOA! if she can than i def am quitting.

Rhiannon

My name is Robin. You came to my school last Friday. I just wanted to thank you for talking to my friends and I after the convocation. I was one of the three girls that came to speak to you together. As a Junior in highschool I have made my own mistakes. But one thing I will never do is drugs. I see what it does to

my boyfriend every day. I like him alot, I don't love him. It's not love yet. But, I have managed to tell him just today that I would like him to stop. He said he would! I really hope he sticks to it. I used to be an alcoholic myself. Hanging out with an older crowd I got into drinking. But when I was a freshman in highschool I got really sick and had to be taken the hospital. My kidneys were failing. It was either die or quit. I choose to quit. But earlier this year I hit a rough patch and started up again. But I am proud to be sober for 2 months now. I don't plan on taking another sip any time soon either. I've been that girl that wore the mask as well I have a dad that drinks and smokes but lately has quit because of a disease he has in his legs. I'm really happy that he is trying to quit and I'm hoping it makes our family life a whole lot better. I also have made a few mistakes with guys. I thought I loved these guys but I mean I guess you are right not all guys really just want you to be around. My new boyfriend he makes me so happy. I just can't wait to find out all the new things about him. I would just like to thank you for making me realize that what I am doing is right no matter how many people think drinking and drugs are cool. I would also like to thank you for helping me out with my friend that me and my other friends talked to you about. After we talked to you we asked to call her out of class and we had a conversation and she said she was sorry for not letting us in and that she would tell us more and that she was glad we cared and worried about her. I love her to death fritz. If I lost her it would totally set me apart. Thanks so much for your help. I hope she finds a better path and that she follows God with her heart. Thanks again so Much!! Oh we also showed my friend that paper on date violence, I don't know if it will change anything. But if you could, maybe share a little more with the teens and kids you talk to about dating violence. I think some girls see it as it's okay. And it's truly not it'll tear you up inside. My ex used to yell at me and cuss at me and once he even threw me up against a wall. Please help these girls. Thanks so so so much. You have truly made an impact in my life. I'll try to keep you posted about my friend and anything new thats going. I'll write you, because I know you care, and I know you will write back!!!!

Robin Joy Clark Age 17. Junior, Indiana

Terrible new Fritz! I woke up Saturday Morning to what felt to be the worst news of all. My friend Simone was killed in a car wreck at 4am Saturday morning at the age of 15. Her and her older sister stella who was 17, were comin home form a party and flipped the car, stella was lifelined to the hospital and released with a broken leg, but also with the memory of killing her little sister simone. I was told they were drinking, I'm not 100% sure. But it's just so ironic to me that right after you came, one of the sweetest girls was killed because of drunk driving. How awful could this be. I can't even imagine. That's my third friend this year.

God Bless You,
Robin Clark

Dear Fritz,

hello my name is olivia fischels and im in 8th grade im writing this message to tell you that my whole family thinks im some little angel that im not your speech really helped me today when everyone thought it was 1 big joke i thought it was great im not into drugs but i have done stuff that i totally regret and i just hate to keep doing it im getting drunk on weekends and my parents dont know its so crazy and now that you have entered my world it has all changed and i want to express myself i love everything you work hard at you rock and i sure hope we can stay in touch your one of the biggest influences in my life and i feel horrible that you had to go through all of your hard times well i just wanna thank you for everything hope to hear from you soon!!!

sincerely,
Olivia Fischels

Hello *Fritz*,

You just recently my high school. I was one of the girl that told you about that one girl taking drugs. I kinda felt horrible for telling on her when I have problems like that myself.

Well I should tell you about myself I am 15 years old. I have two older siblings. My mother & father are divorced. I live with my mom. I also just moved to this school, at the begining of this year.

I have been having problems with alcohol & I use to have a problems with pills but I made my new years revolution to not do pills anymore, & I haven't. But my alcohol problem is getting worse. I go to parties about every weekend. I tell my mother that I am going to go do something else. She has no idea. Until just the other weekend I came home with hickies all over my neck from 3 boys that used me. I got drunk & I wasn't using my head & I had unprotcted sex with 2 boys. The other boy didn't really do anything with me. But that's not really where my problems started.

About 4 months before that I had know this boy & he told me he loved me & I really liked him, I thought I loved him. So one night we had sex. It was protected. He took my virginity. Well he broke up with me. So I got depressed because I felt so used & he wouldn't pay any attention to me so I had to look for it else where. So I started going to lots of parties & getting trashed. It just got my mind off of him.

One night my bestfriend & her boyfriend wanted me to go to this guys house. To get drunk. So of course I went. The boys house that I went to I have had a crush on for a while. So I got drunk & stupid & I had sex with him. It was safe. Well somehow everyone was finding out about it. It was crazy.

Well I felt horrible for doing that so I said I would never get drunk again. That didn't last very long. Once again I went to his house. But it was on a school night & I snuck out with a girl that I knew from school. The boys house that I

went to had another guy over that I didn't know. My friend liked the boy I had sex with so they went off & did what ever they were going to go do. It was just me & that guy. I was drunk once again. He said he thought I was really cute. That was the attention I wanted. So he talked me into having sex with him. It was not protected.

Well that upset me horribly. Then I said those famous words I am never going to get drunk again. That lasted for 3 weeks then off to another party & the story about those 3 guys is what happened that night.

I have no one to talk to. My mother won't listen to me. Even if I did tll her she would never talk to me again or trust me again. I just feel so alone. I just don't know what to do. You are my only hope. So I hope you will email me back.

I need your help,
Makayla Rose

Dear Fritz--

You came to my high school today and i just wanted to tell you that this was the first assembly that i accuatly didnt text anyone or talk the whole time. The stories really touched me. Some of which i can relate to. My sister just on Friday night.. which she is a senior... almost had alcohol poisoning.. her friends called me and said hey your sister's really drunk help us get her down stairs.. i go outside and she is passed out puking.. i was so scared i just went and got my mom and we took her to the er.. the next day she didnt even know what happened and i had to inform her... she made me so mad becuz she didnt even seem to care.. she was like laughing about it.. i was so hurt becuz i stayed at the hospital till 3 in the morning for her... she could of died but yet she found it funny... then later that day i went "driving" with my friends so they could drink.. which wat happened to my sister could of happened to them... but i ended up hitting a patch of ice and going through a fence.. we were lucky thats all that happened...

Listening to your stories also made me think of of how i let my friends pick on me and talk me into doing things i dont want to do... like getting drunk becuz they want to see how i act... or driving places i shouldnt... sometimes i say no but they just say im a pansie or a pussy and that life's short what are u waiting on?.. so i finally give in and do it... thats waht happened on saturday... I dont know how to say no... and im just realizing it... My best friend and i dont hardly ever talk anymore becuz im to busy listening to my other friends and making bad decision... so how do i say no and not give in to the pressure? I dont want to drink or be around it... but i do and i am almost everyweekend now... and i want it to stop. thanks for you time

---*Madeline Ann*---

Fritz,

Hey my name is Abigail Fink , but you can call me Abby. I'm 17 years old and, sadly, I can relate to a lot of things you talked about. I drank for the first time when I was 13 and it was by far the worst mistake of my life. I would give anything to go back and change what I did. I think the worst part about it was that the person who told me to try it was my older sister. I looked up to her so much and I didn't want her to look down at me for being too scared to try it so I took a drink and another and another. I felt so cool that I had gotten drunk with my sister that I wanted to do it all the time. It didn't get really bad till this past summer. I drank on a regular basis and it got to the point where I wanted to quit but I couldn't. Every time I would drink, which would be almost every night, I would get so drunk that I would vomit and pass out. Nothing scared me more than that cause there's no telling what happened while I was out. The worst part about all of this is that my mother knew about all of it and she didn't care. She actually let me have parties and offered me pot and everything. My parents divorced when I was 2 and things have always been ok but just within these past few years everything's been horrible. I don't really have anyone to talk to about this because every time I mention anything to my boyfriend about anything in the past it upsets him because he doesn't know why I used to do those things and I can't explain it to him. I just need someone to talk to. By the way I really liked your presentation today at school.

Abby May

hi I'm Addison Marlow, you came to my school the other day. Well, I'm 15, a freshman and i have a pretty good like -- or thats what everyone thinks. i play soccer, i was the captain as a freshman, I'm involved with alot of things in school, and i have great parents. My dad owns his own business and so does my mom. I have a sister, and we are both adopted. I have a boyfriend, hes a junior we've been dating for about a year and a half now. he plays soccer to, so according to everyone we are "perfect". Like i said, im adopted, and everyone i know knows i am, probably people i dont even know know it. But, no one knows why, except for my family, i havent even told my boyfriend yet. My birth mom had me when she was 17 i was a FAS baby. She was a alcoholic, but played soccer and was involved with things in school, my dad was captain of the football team and also, drank alot, he wasnt to the point of being a alcoholic, but im sure if he still drinks like he did when i was little he is now. When i was born my birth mom had the choice of putting me up for adoption--she decided against it. i lived with my birth mom and dad till i was 5. Then her mom (my grandma) told her, she was not allowed to keep me anymore because she didnt want me to get hurt, thats when i was put in a foster home. The parents i have now i are great, we take trips all the time, i even went to rome italy paris and france last summer. I'm apart of the "popular" group in my class. But, im on probation. i drink. i go to parties. im not all hardcore like the other people in my class. but i

do drink. ive smoked and done lots of drugs before, been hospitalized. ive done alot of bad things in my life. after i was adopted i stayed in touch with my real parents. but as of last year, i do not talk to them anymore. they talked about how they had quit drinking and how much they miss me and how much they want me back, so i decided to visit. when i show up, they are wasted. i havent talked to them since. i dont want to be a alcoholic. my boyfriend has been making me stop drinking, he doesnt want me to get hurt anymore. i dont say i love you to anyone anymore. because im afraid to. i dont want to get hurt again. i play soccer so i dont get in trouble, its not like i love playing soccer like everyone else on the team; i just do it so i wont do drugs and i wont get in trouble. ive had to do many many many hours of community service. ive never cut before, the thought of cutting gives me chills, i cry when i cut myself shaving! so i could never purposely cut myself. my boyfriends friends dont like me, because ive done drugs, but i quit those. just not the drinking--yet. im working on it. because even though i dont want to "love" anyone. i really think i am starting to love him.

write back :]
addison.



hey fritz.

You came to my high school yesterday. Although I'm only a freshmen. and dont do drugs or anything sick like that. It doesn't mean that i dont know a lot about them. I too write short storys, when i get in a mood where i feel no one will listen. I loved what you had to say, it really did hit home to me. You told us about us doing drugs, and our friends and the reaction it has on us. But what you never said anything about is what if, an adult has a problem with drinking? Called abusive alcoholics? i know a lot about them. Drinking effects me a lot, and i dont even do it. My dad lives by himself, and i go there every other weekend. I have to hear him complain about child support and complain about me being there. I know that what i go through is NOOO where near as stressful as others go through, but i dont know. I have a friend who knows about my dad, but the only reason i told him was because his dad is the same as mine. we have similar lives. So i do talk to someone about what i go through and he talks to me. So if your wondering why i emailed you, the answer is i dont really know. I felt I needed to. I got called into the office a few times, they thought i have a problem. Only think is, that i know i dont. Yeah my dads an Alcoholic. Yeah ive cried to sleep. Yeah ive hurt myself. But one day i relized that this doesnt have to effect me if i dont want it to. Im stronger then that. Its hard sometimes. But every time someone calls me weak, or worthless. I just think of how every other weekend, i go there with a smile, and leave with one. And no its not a mask, but a real smile. Because i know i can make it though anything. Just thought id let you know, and let you smile to think that heres one teen who's been told shes

not worth anything by her own parents, and still love life, every single minute of it.

- Anonymous

Im from Ohio. and fyi:: since i emailed you the first time i havent drank since :)] my boyfriend told me i really shouldnt be doing that since i want to play soccer in college and major in business. So instead of going to parties on the weekend. i hang out with him and his best friend and his girlfriend on the weekends more. I'm off probabtion now. i got off early. but i was on it because of drinking.

-Joslyn

Dear Fritz,

My name is Hallie Oleson! You came to my school the other day and spoke to us! Its sad to say but all the stuff you said is true! I can relate to almost all of the stuff that you said! I am a straight A student and work very hard in school! Remember the story about the girl that puts on a mask?? Yea thats me! My mom drinks she wakes up at 9am goes to the bar and doesn't get home until about 11 pm! My dad he disowned me when I told him that I wanted to move in with my mom so that I could try to help her! So now I live with my grandma and don't get me wrong she is an amazing lady but I still feel that something is missing! My grandma lives in a trailer park cause my mom takes all of her money to gets drunk! I hope that by telling you all of this that you don't think any less of me cause I really am working hard in school so that I can make something of myself! But its hard to do when nobody knows the real me! Thanks and please write back!!!

Hallie

Hello fritz, you came to my school last week and you were amazing! I decided to tell you my story, I think it is important to tell people, and to as many as need it. Especially to the people in my school, you wouldn't believe how many people do drugs and the people that drink every weekend! It is ridiculous! Well here is my story, you can share if you would like. It was about a little over a year ago, it was on a Saturday, I was suppose to go partying with my friend D, but something came up so we didn't go, and that night my mom had a talk with me about drinking and driving. The next day me and my friend D, and one of her friends Jen decided to go out and I would stay with her (D) because we had volleyball conditioning, well she had Vodka in the back. So we were driving around deciding where we would go to drink. Well we decided on this Dean

guys house, so we take Jens car and leave D's car at Jens. So we started out on a night that would be a VERY long one.

So we get to Dean's house and we start to drink. By the end of the night D had about 15 shots of Vodka, i had about 1/4 of the bottle, but im a small person, and Jen didnt have very much. Well D was getting on peoples nerves so Jen made us leave, so she takes me and D to D's car, and she lets D drive off with me. So i am pretty much sober at this point and i have to tell D how to drive. I tell her to stop at the stop sign, when she could turn and at one point i had to tell her to stop swerving. So i finally told her to stop the car, and so she did. I told her that i wanted to drive. She said that i could as soon as she pulled on to the next road. And stupidly i said ok. So as she pulls on the next road i black out, and all of a sudden i hear a horrible noise and i look up and there is a telephone pole in front of us, so i jerk the wheel and start screaming stop the car. So finally she did, and well i had to go to the bathroom badly, so i just went on the side of the road, and as i was standing up i see something on the ground. I was like are u laying on the ground and i hear her crying she said that she was trying to get out of the car and fell. So i went next to her and her mouth is just gushing out blood amd luckily she had paper towels in her car. So i grab her cell and call the guys at Deans house they came by and just left us there and then Jen came by and she drove us to D's house and we told D's parents that we hit a deer. Well they beilived for a lil bit. So i call my mom tell her we hit a deer, but then i couldnt do it so i just told her the truth. I didnt go to bed untill 3 in the morning, well when i had to get up in the morning D's mouth was still bleeding so she couldnt go to volleyball, so i went by myself. I only ran one lap and i threw up.Hang Over!!.

Well in July i had my 1 year anniversary, of the wreck. I was pretty much ok with it untill the night time, i cried very hard. I was so grateful that i lived, even though sometimes i wish i didnt. My friend D has a scar on her lip from hitting the ground.

I tell my friends my story because I know they drink all the time, that I try to tell them what could happen, and now that I am so mych against drinking and driving, that if I find out if they drink and drive, I wont be there friend.

Well Fritz, thank you for listening to my story, I appreciate it.

Raegan Schott
10th grade

Today I can honestly say that I walked into the school today thinking Yes, I get an extra hour to sleep... But when i actually listen to you it changed I'm not like most the people at my school, i don't drink i don't smoke and i don't do drugs but i am like one of the people you talked about to day I'm like that girl.. "the mother hen.." that's me and not to the people at my school i know that i should

try to help them but i don't understand why they act and make the choices they do but the ones that I do help from school don't want the help. I am very active in my church president of our youth group but yet I don't think that's enough I'm writing this because I need help, help with one of the kids that i.. I don't know watch over. He has been my best friend for as long as I can remember but up until 4 years ago he was been the one watching me well our roles have changed and I am now scared for him and its almost like he does not care about his life anymore. The part that scares me the most is that he is going to turn 18 in about 3 months .. he was an alcoholic at 12 went to AA for 30 days and now... back to drinking and the since he was 12 he would smoke too yet another thing he has started up I have gone to parties with him just to take his keys and drinks away but its not enough anymore.... If you could PLEASE help me understand what i can do to help him further then i am now because its not working what im doing anymore.

Thanks so much for your talk to day and Thanks for takeing your time to read this.. I cant go to my parents they trust him and if they knew he did this i wouldnt be able to help him anymore

Thanks again

Samantha Kinseth



Hello Fritz,

I am Monica Evanson, I go to the high school you visited today. I just wanted to say thank you for coming to our school and talk to us about drugs, alcohol, etc. I was amazed about what you had to say. I'm not a kid who drinks and does drugs. I'm not like that. I have drank before and I smoked once. its not the best thing in the world. Its gross. If you have some time can you listen to the story I have to tell you? its good on my side but not on my friends. I just want to tell someone about how I feel and I cant tell my friends because they're the ones I'm going to talk about. Ok here it goes, this is from the new years eve, this past year. Me and like 15 friends got together and went over to our other friends house. His parents weren't home. they weren't coming home until the next day. any ways the party was going good until we found out that their was alcohol there. my brother stole it from mi grandparents. I didn't know that or I would have stopped him. but back to the story. they brought it out and we got ready to do a couple shots. I watched because I know that if I start drinking then I wont stop until there is no more. that the kind of family I come from. so I told them that I want going to do any then. maybe later. they continued to do shots. they all started to got tipsy. I tried cutting them off but that didn't work. they still continued later when one thing of alcohol was done I said that they all needed to stop because they were drunk

at this time. and I just sat in the basement most of the night to stay away from it all but then I couldn't help myself. I went upstairs and everyone was falling down the steps they couldn't walk in strait lines and everything. about 20 minutes later I was sitting down stairs with most of them so that I could watch them and so they wouldn't drink or go outside or get hurt. I fed them all bread to that it might get them sobered up a little bit and wouldn't make them sick. I didn't know what to do I was in panic mode. Then one kid got up and threw up every where and then everyone else scattered and went every where the could go. outside, upstairs and everywhere. I cleaned up the throw up and sat him on the couch with a garbage can. then I got everyone in side and sat down then I started handling one kid at a time. I had 3 on couches one went and sat in the bath tub and took a dry shower (acted like he was taking a shower but the water wasn't on and his clothes were still on). He didn't know anything. so I just let him go cause he was calm and wasn't doing anything bad. I put a couple of kids in the beds and other ones on the floor. then some of them started throwing up so I moved all the people who weren't throwing up upstairs and the ones who were downstairs and I felt like a mother and sat there with them while they were throwing up and I gave them buckets and cool towels for the back of their necks, water to drink, and I just sat there and patted their backs. when they were done I went upstairs and got them all handled. by that time a couple of the guys were sobered up and helped me. until the guys brother came home and kicked me and my friend out at 1:30 because at that time we were the only girls there and it started getting out of hand. she was still drunk. We had to walk home. to the other side of the park. we walked until she sobered up then I called my mom to pick us up. I couldn't take her home to mi house like that. then everything was fine after that. the next day I caught them all up on what happened the night before and they thought it was funny. I didn't think so but that's ok. I just hid mi anger and sadness. I still do. Thank you for listening to my story. I had to tell someone and when you came to our school I listened to everything you said and I took one of your cards and I didn't want to email you first then I decided to. I'm glad I did. I know you probably cant help me. I don't really want help. I just wanted to tell someone. THANK YOU again for listening and coming to our school today. Hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you and I love you,
Monica Evanson

Dear Mr. Dunbar,

You came in and spoke to my class at UNI last month. I can relate to a lot of what your letters and stories told. I use drugs. My brother who is in high school uses drugs. I drink, and so does my brother. He drank so much the Saturday after Thanksgiving that he spent the entirety of the next day hungover and puking. I drank so much one night in high school that i woke up one morning and had no clue how I got back to my friend's place, or who's clothes I was wearing, or where the ones I wore that day before were. When my close friend

died our sr. year of high school, had to keep away from the liquor, because I knew I couldn't pull myself out. But, after about 6 months I was binge drinking again. Then when my uncle died about 10 months after my friend, I was drinking by 10 AM everyday, juse because I couldn't handle losing him and just dealing with life. My sister is depressed and suicidal,. My parents know this about her, but were unwilling to hear her problems and help her. They sat her down and kept telling her that "they're good parents, so this is not their {my parents} fault". Mom and Dad yelled at her and she just told them what they wanted to hear to make them stop yelling. My sister did try and talk to the school counselor, but the counselor told her that she needs to 'cowboy up' and just handle whatever she has to deal with and sent my sister beck to class. Two days later she tried to commit suicide. She tied a rope around her neck, but the rope broke when she kicked the chair out. She did write a suicide note, and it was addressed to a former friend she didn't speak to anymore. The note reads,"Dear Heather, I'm sorry i let you down. I'm sorry that we haven't talked in a while. I'm sorry I let you down as a friend, when you were ALWAYS there for me to talk to. Now, I see how much I needed that. it was the only thing to keep my head above water, the rope away from my neck. This wasn't your fault, or anyone else's fault. Maybe it was my parents who pushed me over the edge, because they knew and told me they were good parents, even though that was an out right lie. No, I'm not going to put blames on people. I am leaving, Tying the rope, and kicking the chair. This is a goodbye to you, my one true friend. " I wrote this originally the day you spoke to me in class, but let it sit in my draft box because it didn't seem right to send. Now, I have another chapter of my story to tell, and I hope you'll let me tell it. Last weekend, I was caught with alcohol on campus. A friend and I had been sitting in my car drinking for about an hour, when the campus police discovered us. I blew a .07, while my friend blew a .068. There were seven different charges I should have been charged with, from littering and smoking on campus, to OWI (operating while intoxicated) and possession (for the marijuana I had in my pocket), and I am fortunate that all they did was make us pour out the rest of our alcohol and go home, while also referring us to the judicial board on campus. I went to bed that night, listening to my roommate snore accross the room, and realized how lucky I was. No jail, no hand cuffs, nothng. From that moment, I am a changed person. No more drugs, no more alcohol, none of it. I am very fortunate, and I was given a second chance and I plan on taking it. I'm gong to set a model example for my brother and try to get him to clean up his act, and be there for my sister, because I'm not a strong enough person right now to lose her, or anyone else in my life. Thank you for lettimg my tell this story.

Nikki Henning

Hello.

My name is Naomi Lee, a junior at the school you visited today. I wanted to tell you thank you. Many things today got to me. Cause every little thing you talked about is just like me. I want to tell you the story of my life.

I was born with a speech impediment. Every day before preschool I had to go to speech class. No one could understand me. For a year (when I was 4-5) I wouldn't even talk. Plus my parents got so frustrated cause they didn't understand me they just blew up. I got teased so much. I remember when a boy stole my doll, my only friend, and chopped its head off. Then it got worse, they started to push me and call me names. It got better after that though no one really knew about that no one saw, but a few years after that a girl moved and became my friend. She was popular and pretty, I was fat and ugly. But the kids started to talk to me (my speech was getting so much better) I felt cool. They actually started to like me but some still teased me. Then my grades weren't good enough for my parents. They weren't like my sisters. I need to work harder. I was in 7th grade when all this started to happen, I stopped my speech classes, you barely could tell but some people still can. I still felt fat and ugly, so I just didn't eat. I could do that for long. I love food and it is just impossible not to eat. But all this was getting to me. I started to cut. No one really knew for the longest time. Some of my friends found out but didn't really do anything about it, wasn't a big deal. I started to drink a lot that year. I also started popping pills, anything just as long as the pain goes away. 8th grade year my friends started to get really worried. One night I took too many pills, my parents were home they were on vacation. They usually aren't home they are either at the bar or golfing or working. But anyway I took too many pills and didn't wake up for 2 days.. I got really scared and told one of my friends. They were worried and said if I didn't do anything about it then they would. Well, no one did anything. And I ended up trying to slit my wrist. Then that's when I broke down in the middle of my History class and told the teacher I needed help and showed him my cut. That was the worst day ever. I had to tell my dad in person what I had done to myself. Seeing him cry. I started therapy. I ended it in a year. "It was just a phase, she is just stressed about schooling." That is what my therapist said to my parents. It was my fault though, I always lied about things when I went there. It is just that when I was a little girl who could talk right I always just said I don't know know or I don't care. I always lied, and when I was really depressed I always lied. It's like I have become a compulsive liar cause of the things that happened in my past. Well, after that my parents thought I was all good, they never really admitted what happened with me. They just said that I was at the doctor. Like I had some sort of dentist appointment, not therapy, it's like they were ashamed of it. It wasn't better. I knew I wasn't I don't know why I didn't say anything, well never mind I knew why. My parents and I well we aren't close. We are but we aren't We get along and everything it is just we don't talk about things. My mom didn't even know gotten my period till a year later. Well after that I went to a water park and a guy made me do sexual things with him. I said no but he wouldn't stop, after that the story got changed. they said it was so easy. I was a slut. , I still drank a lot. and one night I snuck out, and my older sister knew about it , the only thing she said is if you come home not a virgin I will never trust you again. Well, I got drunk majorly I don't remember any of it, I lost my virginity that night. To my biggest crush at the time. It ruined our friendship, it ruined my sister and my relationship. You'd think I learn right? well I

didn't. Well, it got better, sorta. I had my first serious boyfriend. He did pot, he drank alot, I didn't know he did some stuff. I knew he got drunk but who didn't? I found out he did pot. I tried it a couple times but it was so o eww. Well, we were awesome together. Then he started to cheat. I started to cheat, we fought alot, he hit me, i hit him, He started partying more. It got so bad, that right in front of him i was trying to slit my wrist and i still have a scar its little but yeah. but we loved eachother soo much. You probably think how can we love eachother when we did that to eachother well i dont know but we did. We lasted for two years. Till I realized he was having an affair with one of my friends. But before I really knew he was, I kind of figured but had no proof, me and my bf and some friends keyed are car, got caught put on probation. . But I started drink even more. My parents were so clueless about all of this.. They never NEVER knew I even drank. They had no clue how serious my cutting was.(I stopped doing it alot for awhile) Untill my juinor year. Yes, that is right. this year.. has changed my life. Well when iw as on probation I got drunk on homecoming. My parents caught me and put me back on house lock down. Saying thank god they caught me and not the cops it would ruin things. (which it would have, but i am soo stupid guess what idid still drank.) Then the biggest night that changed everything. New years eve. Big party, me lying again. and i went out there with some girls. had a blast. Guys were all over me. and well. my parents found out. me and my friends snuck back to her house cause thats where iw as suppose to be . Parents came and got me and blew up.. i i was soo wasted i dotn even remember any of this. i gues s i told them i hated them and eveyrhting and they said i need to get my car keys and then tomorrow i would leave. I was soo upset that I guess i got in the car and left. I didnt get to far, my parents let me go, my dad said f*** her let her leave, but then they heard a huge boom. I ran into a tree in the neighbors yard. I only remember waking up in pain. The seat belt saved my life, fritz. If it wasn't there I would have flew out the windshield of the car. After that I havent took a single drink , I am planning on to never drinking for a very long time, if ever. I totaled my car. I have to pay to get a new one. My dad wouldnt talk to me fore weeks. I was grounded for along time. and yet i still was on probation. I got off of it 8 days after the accidented. Thank god he didnt find out. I had to pretend nothing happened. I hurt soo badly my back hurt my head hurt I had bruises. but i had to fake it like nothing happened. people knew about it. but we had to keep it on the downlow for my probation. when i got off every one knew. Now. well now. I stopped drinking and everything I am in Get a grip. Its our schools thing for no drugs and stuff. But yet I am still very depressed. After the car thing i asked my mom to go back to therapy. She just ignored it. Nothing happened. None of my firends know i still hurt my self. I have a boyfriend now he knows i did it again after the time my friends thought i stopped. but he doesnt know about any needle pricks or little cuts"opps i cut myslef shaving" or anything. YOur might not understand why people cut. You think it just realives us. But no one willll understand a cutters mind unless they are one. once a cutter always cutter. If my friends find out i still do this they will leave me. If i tell my parents, they will be disappointed. I lie to the guidance counsler. I asked my mom for birth control one week. she said shed make a n

app. she never did. she always does that. Well I just cant go to many people and talk about this. and if i d o i have to write it down. Fritz, I am just so scared, I have no clue about collage or what i want to be, I have no talent I am still chubby and ugly , and my eyes arent like every one elses and i just hate me. I hate the thoughts in my head. Every day i take 2-10 pain killers, Dont think I am gonna comment suicide. I am not. Just three weeks ago one of my friends from wisconsin did. and I know the effect on people around me would feel if i did. Its just i want to have peace in my mind fritz. Every day I try to be happy. But every day there is the let downs. I ride my bike alot just so i wont cut, just so it can clear my head. But ialways end up with a pin in my skin just alittle something. Its an addiction Its a hobby Its like painting. My needle or blade is like the paint brush and my skin is the canvas the blood is the paint, its a master peice of cut me pretty. I always looks at my scars they are every where on me. Thats why I wore long sleeves just by anychance you would see me or my scars. TOday I wanted to talk to you. Say Hi and thank you but I just couldnt I felt like you wuold have seen right threw me. I didnt want to make a fool of my self and started balling my head off. I just cant do hardly anything right.

Well Thats the story of my so called life but not really. cause a storry cant sum it all up. I dont know what else to say. Thank you for everything, good luck with more, you're a great human being, and let your dreams sore.

Always,
Naomi Lee



Hello, my name is Mariah and I'm 15 years old. You recently visited my school. I'm not so sure what I'm aiming to accomplish by e-mailing you, and I'm not so sure what I'm even going to say, so just bare with me, I guess. I admire you so much for doing what you do. I'm sure you realize that probably 9/10 kids don't pay attention or even comprehend the points you're trying to get across. But I know that 1 kid that does...that's what makes your mission, your job, worth it. I've decided to share my story with you... since no one else seems to want to listen. I'm not even sure where to begin.

I have an older brother, and an older sister. We're all 4 1/2 years apart, I'm the youngest, my sister, Jasmine, is the middle, and my brother, Josh, is the oldest. The first 8 years of my life, I can remember my parents always fighting. I didn't realize it at the time, but my father had a drinking problem. One day about half way through my 3rd grade year, my mother pulled me out of school. I remember her sitting with me out in the court yard and telling me that she was leaving my father. She hadn't discussed it with him, or even warned him. While he was away at work, she packed up all our belongings, and we moved into my Grandparent's house across town. All she left him was a note. It had been about 2 weeks since it had happened when I finally got to talk to him, and we had

arranged out that I would stay with him every other weekend. About 3 months later, my mother remarried.

Throughout the next 2 or 3 years, the level of my father's drinking problem increased incredibly. He had been in numerous car wrecks, skipped work days, and lost his license. He ended up in the hospital and rehab more than once, from what I can remember. My sister neglected my dad, and my brother rarely came to see him. (Josh is my half brother, so we don't share the same dad.) His family had ultimately given up hope, and I believe I was the only one he had left. I never really developed a relationship with my mother because I was so close to my dad. My sister was the one who my mom was close to, not me. One day in November, 2002, my mother was bringing me out to my dad's house. When we got there, his car was gone. We waited there for a few minutes and his truck finally pulled up. He reeked of alcohol, and it was obvious he had been drinking. My mom told him that this was his last chance, and he wasn't going to get to see me again if he couldn't control himself. I looked out the back window and watched my dad cry and watch my mom take me away from him. That was the last time I saw my dad.

December 3, 2002, my father passed away. The stomach acid from the vomit caused by the excessive drinking had worn away his esophagus, and he suffocated. My Uncle Dan, 2 years older than my dad, found him. Two days later, at my dad's viewing, my uncle never showed up. December 5, 2002, my uncle overdosed on morphine. I never knew my uncle had a drug problem. In February of 2003, my grandmother committed suicide.

Since my mother has remarried, I have NEVER gotten along with my stepdad. He has OCD, and I get in a lot of trouble for the smallest things. I get called stupid, irresponsible, worthless, moronic, and the list goes on and on. On more than one occasion, the fights have gotten physical and I've been harmed. Sometimes I wish my mom would just leave him... However, I know that if that were to happen my mom would be alone. I could never forgive myself if I caused my mother to be unhappy. So, this is why I put up with all of this crap from my stepdad.

In addition, I have been a cutter since I was 10 years old. All of the things I was going through was too much for me, and I didn't know how to handle it. I don't even remember how I started. Eventually, it got to the point that *that* was how I dealt with my problems. It makes me feel like I'm in control. I've never attempted, nor even thought of killing myself. That's a very common misconception. It's more of a way to keep me alive, if that makes sense. My mother does know, but I think she's more concerned about being embarrassed about the shame of having a suicidal daughter. She never asked me why, or offered help. In a way, I like that. On the positive side, I haven't done it as much lately. The scars are starting to annoy me.

My friends know about the things I've experience, but they don't know anything remotely close to the pain I have to go through day to day. That mask you talked about? Sure... I wear it. But I don't take my anger out on other people, or go drinking or do drugs. I'm a smart student, I've never *not* been on the honor roll. I plan on becoming a bio medical enginner. I talk about my problems from time to time, but I preferr to not rant about it to everybody. I have friends, but not a large amount. I like it that way. I don't trust many. It's better to have a few great friends than a lot of mediocre ones, right?

I have a boyfriend, too. Or rather.. I *had* one. I'm debating on whether to talk about him or not becuase I know that adults just tend to roll their eyes and think "You're young, you'll get over it." His names Tyler, and he's the most amazing person I've ever met. He helped bring out a happiness in me I didn't even know I had. For the first time, I felt like I could trust somebody. It was an amazing feeling. I'm not going to claim I'm in love or anything, but my feelings for him are stronger than anything I've ever felt. But a few days ago I was broken up with. Not by him, but by his mother. He's 18, and I haven't turned 16 yet. I can understand why she doesn't want us to be together. But it's so hard to try to understand something you have absolutely no control over. He wants to be together just as much as I do, but I highly respect his mother and I don't want him disobeying her. I don't even know what to say about this situation. It's s*****, and I hate it. I feel like I've just been slapped in the face repetitively. I just wish I knew what to to, and what to say.

Yanno, you'd like to think that I was done, but I have one last subject to cover. When I was in the 6th grade, my sister had a party at our home when our parents when out of town. This was the first time I'd ever drank, and I now know I had drank far too much. One of the guys who is now the senior star quarterback of our football team, Seth, took me upstairs and tried to rape me. If it hadn't been for one of his friends walking in, I believe he would have accomplished it. But his friend being the moron he is, went downstairs and told my sister that I was coming onto Seth. Ironic, right?

There are so many issues that not only teens, but just people in general, have to deal with. I could relate to almost everything you talked about. I think it's so wonderful that you do this, and you care about so many people that you don't even know. I can't even imagine the number of lives you've saved. You're a wonderful person with a beautiful heart. Thank you so much for listening to my story, and for doing what you do.

Sincerely,
Mariah Pratt



Dear Fritz, You had visited our school today. When you talked about the people and their problems; you reminded me of my past. My past would probably be

one of the worst. My moms ex husband was an achohalic. I would come home from school and all he would do is yell. He would threaten me, saying that he would kill me and my family. I finally realized what he was doing to my family. He had molested 2 of my cousins and tried to do the same to my sister and her friend. I went through h*** for 5 and 1/2 years. Every time I said I was going to tell my mother, he would put a knife to my throat or slam my back into open nails. One day I said enough was enough. I called my mom and she came home from work early. He did not know about it. She caught him in the act. My mother filed a devorce. Before he left he told me to watch my back. He lives in my home town; and he still taunts me in my dreams. I have tried talking to friends but they don't believe me. I have nothing left to do. Please type me back with any possible suggestions.

Brooke P.

dear fritz,

my name is melissa hood (my friends call me mel) i go to the school you just spoke at today. i hope to not take to much of your time but i need to talk to some one. as my luck would have it the day you come to talk to us about drugs and drinking problems. my dad who is a alcoholic has come home drunk again for the third time this month. he's been an alcoholic for as long as i can remember he would come and beat my mother to black eyes and broken bones when i was little he stopped hitting her after his license got taken away from him in 2000. since then he has as far as i know hit her once in the eye giving her a barely noticeable bruise on her upper chek and eye. my mother has talked to him far to many times to count about stopping his problem for us and her. he has promised just about as many times that he will stop and gain control over his life again it lasts for two weeks then he is back at it again. since i am older and have the muscle power stronger than him when he is drunk i have stopped him from hitting some one else in my family or just flat out knocked him on his butt a few times. about four months ago. he came home and had been out for ten hours drinking by that time he was barely walking or talking. he punched me until we were out on the back porch of me house. the back porch has steps leddin down to the basement. about 20 steps all together. he hit me to hard and i pushed him really hard and told him to stop hitting me and get out if he cant stop he's drinking him being drunk tripped on the rug and flew down the stairs he lay there for ten minutes motionless and hardly breathing my mom called the neighbor and Bill came down to see if he was still alive or if i had done him in my dad ended up being okay besides a bruised rib and a headache i had test the next day that i didn't get a chance to study for because i was up all night thinking if i had pushed harder my dad would be dead, i cried all night. i got an F on my test and slept threw my classes that day i will never forget that night and others. i have been offered drinks before and never taken one of them my boyfriend and guy friend drink some of my friends do too but luckily my boyfriend hasn't taken a drink with me with him because he knows i hate

alcohol with all the passion in my body i will never have the urge to take even a sip from a alcohol beverage i believe even as an adult my friends laugh at me and say I'm crazy for thinking that way but alcohol has destoried my life and my brothers. you are doing a good thing telling kids to never do that to their children as adults my father will never make up for time lost with me and Kyle (my brother) and forgiveness is hard for me to let him in as a dad and to say that is my dad will never come for me i will never forget the day you came to our school and talked to us. i don't know how to thank you for your time to listen to me all i can say is thanks a lot!!!!!! hope to hear form you soon I'm sure I'm not the only one talking to tonight a lot of kids at our school have problems. keep up the good work to let you in on a little secret you are the only speaker i have actually listened to! believe it

THANK YOU

sincerely
mel

Paul's Thoughts

From my experience speaking and listening to adolescents, alcohol has ruined more lives than any other drug. Alcohol is too readily available to adolescents. It does not seem too hard for these young teens to find individuals older than 21 to buy alcohol for them. The most upsetting thing I hear is that parents are actually buying alcohol for their underage adolescent. Many of these adolescents tell me that they can remember when they said they would never drink or do drugs, and now they do one or both on a regular basis. I think that parents need more education on the prevalence of alcohol use by adolescents as well as the consequences of alcohol use by adolescents.