



I'm Aaron Pham. I'm 16 years old and a Junior at Reeths-Puffer High School in Muskegon, MI. I'm on the wrestling team.

That is how I would have described myself if I hadn't been killed. I had been drinking and I rode with a friend who had been drinking too. I trusted my friends. I thought they would never let me down but they did. Nobody at that party stopped us. I wish that I had that night to do over again. I wish that I hadn't lied to my mom to get her to let me go out. I was trying to turn my life around by joining the wrestling team. I quit smoking weed. I had cut back on the drinking. I just wish that I had stopped. Maybe I wouldn't have been at that party or maybe I would have been but I would have been sober. Then Terry and Shawn would still be alive and Chad wouldn't be in prison... well not for killing us he wouldn't.

I felt my life slip away but it didn't hurt much. The truck crushed me and I died fast. I'm glad that I didn't suffer. That would have made things harder on my family. My Mom, Grandma, Grandpa and Sister would have hated that.

I wonder what I'd be doing right now. Would I still be partying or would I have succeeded in turning my life around? Would I be working out for the wrestling season? Would I be pickin' on my little sister? I'll never know.

I'll never know what's like to turn 17. I will never know what it's like to go to prom or to graduate high school. I will never be married or have kids? I'll never know any of this all because of alcohol and a couple of bad decisions.

How could this happen to me? I was ONLY 16! I sure hope this never happens to my sister. In fact, I hope that this never happens to anyone ever again.

Please don't let my death be in vain. I would gladly give my life to save others, so IF you choose to not drink, to not drink & drive or ride with a drunk then my life and death will have meaning.

I hope that my family is okay. I know that they loved me even when I screwed up. I guess that I should have counted on them and not my friends. I'm sure that my friends love me but they just don't always know what's best for me like my Mom did. They don't always look out for me like my Mom did either. I guess that she really did know what was best for me. I sure wish that I could tell her that she was RIGHT. It's too late now because I'M DEAD.

Aaron Lee Pham
10/3/91-12/12/07

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DID YOU KNOW?

PARENT & TEEN CONTRACT

A study of 2,000 middle-school students concluded that adolescents who owned alcohol-branded t-shirts and other items were more likely to drink than those who didn't own such merchandise.

Every day in the United States, over 5,400 kids under age 16 have their first full drink of alcohol. (PLCB)

TEENS WHO BEGIN DRINKING BEFORE AGE 15 ARE FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY TO DEVELOP ALCOHOLISM THAN THOSE WHO BEGIN AT AGE 21.

First you take a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes YOU. - F. Scott Fitzgerald

One drink can make you fail a breath test. In some states, people under the age of 21 who are found to have any amount of alcohol in their systems, can lose their driver's license, be subject to a heavy fine, or have their car permanently taken away.

TEEN:

I do know that the legal drinking age is 21 and that using or having alcohol in my possession is illegal. You and I have spoken about the concerns you have regarding this issue. I understand that I NEVER have your permission to use alcohol underage. Because I love you and you want me to be safe, I make the following promise:

I promise that I will not abuse alcohol either at home or away from home. If I am in a situation where I have used alcohol or my friends have used alcohol, I promise that I will call you, my parents, for a ride home. I promise to talk with you, openly and honestly, about alcohol. I know that because you love me, you always want me to be safe.

_____ Date: _____

PARENT:

As your parent, I agree that I will never drive a vehicle after I have been drinking or be a passenger of someone who has been drinking. If I am in a situation where I have been drinking, I WILL call someone for a safe ride home.

As your parent, if you call me for a ride home because you or your friends have used alcohol, I agree to come and get you at any hour, from any place, no questions asked and no argument at that time. I will arrange transportation to bring you home safely. Expect there to be a discussion of such an incident at a later time when we both can communicate in a calm and sober manner.

Because we are a family, I want us all to be safe.

_____ Date _____