

September • 2003

CELEBRATING POSITIVE CHOICES

# listen<sup>®</sup>



**LONNIE  
FULLER**  
Next-door Hero

The First One • Rock Bottom • The Man • Volleyball





Terry Crews



# The First One Was Free

As told to Cody Chapman

Mike was smoking a joint when I entered the ramshackle house that was now my home. That guy was always high on something. He held out an envelope to me.

"Your mom came by," he said with slurred speech. "Left this for you."

"Like I care," I replied. But I took the envelope anyway and headed for the bathroom.

The fact was that I did care. I couldn't wait to read Mom's letter, and the bathroom was the only place in the house that offered any privacy.

"Dear Jared," it began. "I just wanted to let you know that I love you and miss you. I'm inviting you to your sister's birthday party this Sunday. Please call. Love, Mom."

I had forgotten all about Caitlin's birthday. She was probably going to be 7, or was it 8? I loved my little sister and my brother, too. I missed them a lot.

Actually I missed living at home a whole lot more than I would admit even to myself. I didn't realize how nice my home was until I moved in with Mike and his mom. This place was a pigsty.

My mom had kicked me out when I turned 18.

"Either give up drugs or get out," she'd told me on my eighteenth birthday. "I mean it, Jared. This is a drug-free home, and I won't let you be a bad influence on your brother and sister. They look up to you; you're their role model."

I didn't want to be anybody's role model. I just wanted to be me, and if that meant doing drugs, that was my business. So I left.

Two years earlier this guy named Corey had come up to me at school one day and asked, "Hey, you wanna smoke some weed?"

I looked at him like he was crazy. "Weed? What are you talking about?"

He had shown me this funny-looking cigarette. "It's marijuana, man. You gotta try it!"

"Forget it," I told him, and walked away.

But he kept after me, like every day. "Don't tell me you aren't curious, Jared. You have no idea how cool one of these makes everything feel!"

"I'm not wasting my money on junk like that," I'd told him.

"Who said anything about money? It's free!"

And the next thing that I knew, I was behind the gym, smoking a joint with Corey.



Just one, that's all I was going to smoke, just to see what it was like.

But I liked it. I liked it a lot. I liked the way it made me feel—like everything was perfect, and I had no problems. What I didn't like was how I felt when the effect had worn off and I was back to normal.

I told myself that I wasn't going to smoke another one, but I did. And that one wasn't free, but I had some money from my lawn-mowing job, so that was OK. *I'm not getting hooked on this stuff, though*, I told myself.

Eventually my grades started to drop. I was into cocaine by then, and it was hard to concentrate on such things as studying for a test, and when I was high I didn't really care about tests or anything else.

"Jared, what's going on?" Mom asked when I brought home a really bad report card. "You were making A's and B's. Now you're barely passing."

"I'm taking harder classes," I told her. "And the teachers don't like me."

She didn't buy that, not the last part anyway. "I'd better go by the school and—"

"I'm getting help already," I told her quickly. "Sort of like a tutor."

She bought it. "Well, good!"

Of course, that was a lie, and my grades got worse. The truth is that some days I didn't even go to school. Corey introduced me to Mike, and we would get high at his place.

Eventually Mom went to school and found out that I was ditching classes, not turning in homework, and doing lousy on tests when I did show up. I had never seen her so mad.

"How can you mess up your life like this?" she demanded. "You're too smart to let this happen! Straighten yourself out now, while you still can. And in the meantime you're grounded."

Of course I sneaked out and kept on doing drugs. The weird thing is that part of me wanted to quit. I didn't like using something I couldn't control or quit.

It was worse after I started living at Mike's place. Regular meals were nonexistent, so I lost weight and began to look like a zombie. I felt like one a lot of the time too. I did manage to get a job at a fast-food place, so I had some money coming in, but most of it went to sup-

port my habit.

The last time I saw my mom—I'd gone by to pick up some clothes—she told me that she had talked to a treatment center that helps teen addicts. It was about an hour's drive, and you actually lived there while you were in the program. I had heard of it; it was pretty rigid. Absolutely no drugs were allowed, of course.

"Forget it," I told her. "I can quit anytime I want to. I just don't want to right now. Just leave me alone, OK? I'm 18 now. It's my business, not yours."

And she had, up until this letter about Caitlin's birthday. What I had told her wasn't true, however. I couldn't quit anytime I wanted to. I had tried. Again and again and again I had promised myself that I was going to stay clean. But it was like I couldn't stop myself.

I read Mom's letter a couple more times. She still loved me. For some reason I started to cry. I loved her, too. I loved my brother and sister. I wanted to be a part of the family again.

I studied my reflection in the mirror. Man, I looked awful! Maybe right then I finally admitted to myself that I needed help and couldn't stop on my own.

I washed my face and called home. "Hi, Mom," I began.

"Oh, Jared, I was so hoping that you'd call!" she exclaimed. "It's wonderful to hear your voice. Can you make it this Sunday?"

"Will you pick me up?" I asked.

"Of course I'll pick you up," she replied. "Caitlin will be so excited!"

I didn't tell her the rest, that I'd decided to go to that drug treatment center. That could wait till Sunday.

You know something? As I look back, I've finally figured out that the first joint I smoked wasn't really free at all. 🦋

## FACT ATTACK

- \* What is the most widespread illegal drug used among America's adolescents? Answer: Marijuana
- \* Teens who often eat the main meal of the day with their parents are less likely to abuse substances. [www.mediacampaign.org/index.html](http://www.mediacampaign.org/index.html).



# Marijuana and Driving

**Can marijuana affect driving skills? Toni**

Marijuana can have a substantial effect on the skills needed to drive a vehicle safely. Coordination, alertness, and ability to concentrate and react quickly are just a few areas affected when one is under the influence of marijuana. Studies have proved that marijuana can play a significant role in highway accidents (D. Brookoff et al., "Testing Reckless Drivers for Cocaine and Marijuana," *New England Journal of Medicine* 331 [1994]: 518-522). People who drive when stoned place not only themselves at risk but others as well.

**Some kids at my school are bragging about how safe LSD is. I've heard otherwise. Who's right? Martin**

You are. LSD (or acid) is classified as a hallucinogen. This class of drugs is known to distort senses of direction, distance, and time. It can produce unpredictable, erratic, and violent behavior that may lead to serious injuries and death. Inform these kids at your school that they are wrong. LSD is

about as safe as standing in the middle of traffic. The outcome from this wicked drug can be catastrophic.

**My best friend smokes a couple packs of cigarettes a day, and I'm worried for her. Her reasoning is that smoking is safer than being hooked on other drugs. What's your view? Danelle**

My view is straightforward and to the point. I believe that a drug is a drug is a drug. Simply put, all drugs, regardless of what they are, how much they are used, or where they are obtained, should be considered potentially dangerous. Too many people attempt to sort out harmful substances and rate them on the damage that they cause. It's impossible to put a price on physical, emotional, or spiritual losses. Being a little bit harmed from drugs can be as devastating as being harmed a lot. Also, let's not forget the facts about tobacco. Each year it is responsible for killing more Americans than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, fires, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined. I hope your friend

gets some sense and leaves this nasty habit behind. As for you, be smart and don't start. Your future can depend on the decisions you make today.

**Some of the kids at my school are stealing prescription drugs from home and selling them. Can't they be harmful? Ben**

Not only harmful but deadly. Prescription medications can be just as dangerous as illicit street drugs. No one should ever take a prescription drug unless it is specifically prescribed for them by a licensed physician. The risks are too great, and anything could happen. Those who ignore the risks could suffer a severe allergic reaction, negative interaction with other drugs, addiction, overdose, or death. Play it safe, and stay as far away as you can from those who peddle drugs. You'll be glad you did. ☞

**G**o ahead, ask Gary his advice on some of those big questions. Gary Somdahl is a dad who puts his skills as a licensed youth chemical dependency counselor to the real-world test all the time. His latest book is *Drugs and Kids*.

Send your questions to:

**ASK GARY**

Listen magazine  
55 West Oak Ridge Drive  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.



# Problems Don't Get Smoked Away, but Dreams Do

by Joannell Serra

Alison has decided she wants to talk to me about her past, even though she knows it will be painful. She is well dressed, her hair and makeup perfect. She doesn't look like a drug addict. I ask her what she would like to say to a young teenager who is about to smoke marijuana for the first time.

"Why do you want to smoke that?" I would ask them. "If you think it will help your problems, it won't. If you're just feeling bad, find another way to feel better. Weed is not the answer. No drug is. I smoked a lot of weed, and my problems just got worse."

Alison tried smoking for the first time when she was 13. A month later she had become a daily smoker.

"People may say it is not addictive, but it is!" Alison attends meetings every day with kids who have had to conquer their addiction to marijuana and other drugs.

When Alison smoked marijuana frequently, she became lethargic and easily angered, and made many mistakes, including trying other drugs.

"Once you're around pot smokers, you're bound to be offered drugs. And if you're smoking a lot, you'll start wanting something more."

Now Alison is 17 and wants to tell other kids about her past so that they'll want to make different choices. She spent 12 months in and out of the state rehab center, beating her addiction to marijuana and other drugs.

Many kids start smoking marijuana just like Alison—they're having a bad day or a hard time in life, and someone offers them an opportunity

to "feel better." Some kids are lucky—they don't like the way smoking marijuana makes them feel.

"I got paranoid, and my thoughts kept racing," says Martin, a 16-year-old who smoked marijuana twice and regrets it. "I felt like my heart was going to leap out of my chest. It was gross."

What if you're not one of the lucky ones? By the time Alison got help for her addiction, at 15, she had gone from being an A student to being a poor student, dropped all her sports, and ruined most of her relationships. She had been suicidal and had spent time in a psychiatric hospital. She felt completely alone.

"My only friends were other people who smoked. I had dropped my other friends. My family was totally disappointed in me. My boyfriend was a heavy pot smoker who treated me really bad. I didn't trust anyone."

Now that Alison is back home and has returned to high school, she told me the following things she has learned:

## **Most kids don't smoke.**

When Alison smoked, she felt like everyone was. Now she realizes most teens don't get high, and she prefers friends she's made who don't.

"There are so many ways to have fun without getting high. I wish I had known about them before."

- She's right! Fewer than one in four high school seniors smoke marijuana.

**Many people can't smoke marijuana just once, or even once in a while. A lot get addicted.**





“Being addicted to marijuana can be more subtle than being addicted to other drugs, but you are still addicted. There was a period of time I couldn’t face a day without smoking—usually more than once a day. That’s addiction. Smoking a few times wasn’t an option for me. I quickly became addicted. You could too.”

- Addiction treatment centers report a growing number of people coming in who are addicted to marijuana.

**It’s a lot better to face what’s bothering you than to try to smoke it away.**

“I wish I could have told everyone how I was feeling. I was having a hard time socially, and my parents and I were not getting along at all. Still, I should have tried talking to someone, telling them the truth. No problem is so big you can’t face it without drugs, and drugs are not going to help any of your problems get better.”

**Schoolwork seems a lot easier when you are not using marijuana.**

“I am getting pretty much all A’s now, and

that was definitely not the case before I stopped smoking. I only hope I can pull my grades up enough to get into a good college.”

- Marijuana impairs your short-term memory and makes it difficult to concentrate. This means you probably won’t perform well at school if you smoke marijuana regularly.

**There are some scars that don’t heal easily.**

“It’s important to think about the things that can happen to you when you smoke weed that are not the medical things, such as tar in your lungs. I got involved sexually long before I was ready. I was severely depressed, which is typical when you smoke a lot of marijuana. I tried to hurt myself many times. The first few months at the treatment center I felt dead inside.”

**Things could have been a lot worse.**

“I’m thankful that I got help when I did. I could have ended up in jail or dead. I’m trying hard every day to stay clean. My two closest friends from rehab have both relapsed. Staying clean isn’t easy, and it’s something I have to work on the rest of my life.”

**It helps to be looking ahead.**

“I try not to focus too much on the bad things that happened. At the center I learned a great saying: “Look at your past, but don’t stare at it.” We all have to acknowledge the things in our past that hurt, but dwelling on them can keep us in a bad place. I’ve had a second chance, and I’m so grateful.”

Whatever feelings you have, smoking pot may make you feel better for a little while but not for long. Find another way to feel better. Talk to a friend, put on some music, watch a silly movie, go for a run.

Alison told her story so you won’t have to learn things the hard way like she did. 📖

**Check out these Web sites for more information on marijuana:**

- [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)
- [www.nida.nih.gov/MarijBroch/Marijteens.html](http://www.nida.nih.gov/MarijBroch/Marijteens.html) (National Institute on Drug Abuse)



Did You Know...



Gerty Images

- Teens who use marijuana regularly are nine times more likely to mess around with alcohol than nonusers?

- Teens who use marijuana weekly are five times more likely to steal than nonusers?

- Teens who use marijuana regularly are three times more likely to seriously consider committing suicide?

**No?** Take the following quiz to find out what else you might not know about teenage marijuana use.



**QUESTIONS**

1. **T F** Teens who use marijuana regularly are six times more likely to run away from home.

2. **T F** Teens who use marijuana regularly are twice as likely to physically attack other teens.

3. **T F** Teens who use marijuana regularly are more likely to destroy other people's property.

4. **T F** Teens who use marijuana regularly have lots of friends.

5. **T F** Teens who use marijuana regularly are likely to drop out of sports and clubs at school.

"Aha," you say. "These problems come from using marijuana regularly. If I just use the drug occasionally, say once or twice a month, I won't have any trouble, right?"

Wrong! From smoking your very first joint, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main active ingredient in marijuana, changes the messages in the brain that affect your hearing, sense of touch, memory, concentration, depth perception, coordination, and reflexes.

Worse yet, you probably won't even know the drug is seriously messing with your mind.

How dangerous can that be? Answer the following questions about real-life situations that smoking one joint can affect.

6. **T F** You're driving a car after smoking marijuana, and a child runs out in front of you. You can stop as quickly as you can when not smoking marijuana.

7. **T F** You will do as well on your math test after smoking pot as you would have before you smoked.

8. **T F** You will miss the basket on the basketball court after smoking marijuana.

9. **T F** After smoking pot, you can easily remember the directions your history teacher gave for an extra-credit project.

10. **T F** The calm, relaxed feeling you get after smoking a joint will help you control your temper.

**So now you know. Marijuana is not a drug to take just for fun. It seriously impairs your brain's ability to process and carry out information.**

**For fun, make a list of 10 career choices that interest you (i.e., brain surgeon, flight attendant, truck driver, police officer, crane operator). Determine how each of your career choices could be affected when using marijuana.**

**ANSWERS**

- 1. **True** Teens who use marijuana regularly are six times more likely to run away from home.
- 2. **False** Teens who use marijuana regularly are three times more likely to attack another person in anger.
- 3. **True** Teens who use marijuana regularly become fearful of being caught. They isolate themselves from others.
- 4. **False** Teens who use marijuana regularly often lose interest in school, sports, family, and friends.
- 5. **True** Teens who use marijuana regularly often lose interest in school, sports, family, and friends.
- 6. **False** Smoking marijuana causes the brain to slow down reaction time to danger.
- 7. **False** Memory and concentration are affected by marijuana use.
- 8. **True** Coordination and depth perception are affected by the active ingredient in marijuana.
- 9. **False** See the answer to number 7.
- 10. **False** The calm, relaxed feeling you get from smoking a joint soon fades, and you will become more nervous, depressed, and anxious than you were before. Your problems won't go away; they'll only get worse.

- 1. **True** Teens who use marijuana regularly are three times more likely to attack another person in anger.
- 2. **False** Teens who use marijuana regularly become fearful of being caught. They isolate themselves from others.
- 3. **True** Teens who use marijuana regularly often lose interest in school, sports, family, and friends.
- 4. **False** Smoking marijuana causes the brain to slow down reaction time to danger.
- 5. **True** Teens who use marijuana regularly often lose interest in school, sports, family, and friends.
- 6. **False** Smoking marijuana causes the brain to slow down reaction time to danger.
- 7. **False** Memory and concentration are affected by marijuana use.
- 8. **True** Coordination and depth perception are affected by the active ingredient in marijuana.
- 9. **False** See the answer to number 7.
- 10. **False** The calm, relaxed feeling you get from smoking a joint soon fades, and you will become more nervous, depressed, and anxious than you were before. Your problems won't go away; they'll only get worse.



# Hitting Rock Bottom



by Jason Gomez as told to Christy Heitger-Casbon

Laure Hicklin



**H**appy. Confident. Carefree. I could count on feeling these emotions when I was high because the high I got from drugs always seemed so predictable. But one night my reaction to the drug I was taking—in this case, magic mushrooms—was anything but predictable. At first I felt amazing, but then the line between reality and imagination became blurred. Like something out of a horror movie, the walls looked like they were melting. Dizzy, disoriented, I rubbed my burning, blood-shot eyes in confusion.

Extreme paranoia also set in. Convinced that my friends were trying to kill me, I watched them closely with heightened suspicion. Perspiration poured down my forehead, and I could feel my heart pounding hard and fast through my shirt. Scared and perplexed, I clamped my hand over my sweat-soaked chest. *Why is this happening?* I panicked. *What's wrong with me?*

### Path of Destruction

It had all started out innocently enough 13 months earlier. I was hanging out with two acquaintances, Bill and Jeremy,\* talking about how much harder college was than high school. Suddenly Bill reached into his coat and pulled out some weed. I was floored, but I played it cool, trying not to act surprised.

Bill handed Jeremy a joint, then turned to me and asked, "Want one?"

"Naaah," I said, waving my hand in that "thanks, but no thanks" sort of way.

Bill shrugged his shoulders as if to say, "Great. More for me." He leaned back, tilted his head, and inhaled slowly. "We're hitting a party tonight," he said. "Wanna come?"

"I don't know," I hedged. "Will there be drugs?" I asked, hoping he'd say no.

Bill grinned and exchanged a look with Jeremy, clearly amused at my naive question.

"You never know," Bill said with a smirk. "Why don't you come see for yourself?"

"Yeah," Jeremy urged. "Come with us!"

Although I felt uneasy, I figured there was no harm in tagging along. *So what if there are drugs?* I thought. *I can say no.*

I went to that party and several others that month, but after a while I grew tired of being the

sober outcast who always said no. So one night after someone offered me a joint for the umpteenth time, I took it. *Just this once*, I promised myself.

Nervously I placed the joint between my lips and inhaled. As I sucked in, I thought, *This isn't right. I should stop.* But as my eyes scanned the room, I suddenly realized that now I was no longer an outcast. I finally fit in. As I continued inhaling the drug, my guilt faded. I felt awesome!

*No wonder Bill and Jeremy use pot*, I thought. *What else can make you feel this good?*

### Downward Spiral

After saying yes once, it became easier to succumb to temptation. I got high again . . . and again . . . and again. Within weeks I was smoking pot daily. I still managed to go to school, but concentrating on my studies wasn't that easy. Dealing with my parents was no breeze either, especially after they discovered I was using drugs. They told me that either I'd have to give up drugs or they'd have to kick me out of the house ("tough love," they said). I made my choice, and for the next eight months I crashed on friends' floors.

## *It had all started out innocently enough.*

Some people call marijuana a "gateway drug," meaning that after using it for a while, you're open to experimenting with more powerful drugs. That was certainly true for me. After smoking pot for six months, I eagerly tried other drugs, including acid (LSD), ecstasy, crystal meth, heroin, crank, cocaine, and crack (a hard smokable form of powder cocaine).

Drugs changed me in every way. Before I started smoking marijuana, I was a healthy 175-pound kid with good morals and a bright future. Once I began that downward spiral, however, I became a scraggly 140-pound thief (stealing \$3,500 from my boss), a shameless moocher (bumming food and clothes from my friends), and a desperate guy with no dignity (I'd trade anything for drugs).

One night a dealer said to me, "Hey, I like



your pants. Hand 'em over, and I'll set you up."

I didn't even hesitate. "Here," I said, as I stripped down to my underwear. I was a 19-year-old addict, devoid of all pride and willing to try any drug once, no matter the risks.

The night I tried magic mushrooms, I never thought about the risks—nor did I anticipate the horrific hallucinations. Still, despite that terrifying night, I continued using. I thought, *I just have to be more careful, and then I won't have another close call* . . . I was wrong.

### Staring Death in the Face

One night I walked into a party where the music was pumping so loud that my chest vibrated. Everyone was laughing, dancing, and getting high. I accepted some ecstasy that my buddy offered me. It made me feel great until a shriek from the bathroom shattered my bliss. I rushed to see what was wrong.

"They won't move!" some girl cried hysterically, referring to two guys lying on the floor motionless.

I knelt down and studied their hollow, lifeless eyes.

## ***A shiver shot through my spine. I was also high on ecstasy.***

"What're they on?" I asked a guy who'd been partying with them.

"Ecstasy," he said. "They must've gotten a bad batch."

Shivers shot through my spine. I was also high on ecstasy.

*Will I end up in a coma too? Or worse?* I wondered. All at once I panicked. I didn't want to die. And this wasn't my first brush with death. I'd been lucky before, but how long until my luck ran out, the way it had for those two guys?

I left the party and crashed at a junkie's trashed apartment. I sat down, cradled my head in my hands, and stared down at the filthy floor. Haunted by the vision of the two guys from the party, I thought, *That could've been me!*

I began to think about the past 15 months of my life, and I realized how many horrible choices I'd made. I'd alienated my family and true friends, destroyed my health, obliterated my sense of morality, and nearly killed myself—all

because of drugs. Overcome by fear and shame, I fell to my knees, sobbing. I had hit rock bottom. Knowing that I didn't have the strength to get clean by myself, I reached for the phone and dialed my parents' number. Thankfully, they didn't freak out, hang up, or yell at me. Instead they promised to help. Two days later they enrolled me in Teen Challenge, a yearlong residential treatment program that helps adolescents deal with life-controlling problems and focuses on total rehabilitation—including emotional, social, educational, and spiritual growth.

### Finding Hope

As my parents drove me to Teen Challenge, I stared out the car window and watched the scenery whiz by. That's what my life felt like lately—fast, blurry, disoriented. I hoped that soon I would find peace and stability.

When we arrived at the center, I felt rattled. My heart rate soared as I breathed in the unfamiliar smells and anxiously assessed my foreign surroundings.

*Will these people understand my feelings?* I wondered. *Will they even care?*

As dozens of worried thoughts whipped through my head, Jim, the director of the program, placed his hand on my shoulder and gently said, "Don't be nervous. I won't judge you. I'm here to help."

His warm reassurance put me at ease and made me feel safe. I suddenly felt I'd be OK. I knew the road ahead would be hard, but I also knew I wouldn't walk it alone. 🍀

\*Names of friends have been changed.

*It's been more than seven years since Jason finished his 12-month program with Teen Challenge, and he's been drug-free ever since. He's currently attending Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida.*

## FACT ATTACK

- \* For the developing adolescent the physical consequences of marijuana use can be severe. [www.health.org/govpubs/rp0884](http://www.health.org/govpubs/rp0884)
- \* Teens speak out. Their parents are the top positive influence when it concerns drugs. Teens want parents to take time to know their friends, to ask them where they are going and when to expect them home. [www.theantidrug.com/marijuana/openletter.html](http://www.theantidrug.com/marijuana/openletter.html)





## KNOWLEDGE Is the Key

**U**nderstanding what's going on in today's world is a daunting task for anyone. There are so many choices we have to make each day. I wish life could be as simple and perfectly planned as seen through the eyes of a child.

Recently at a school in Slidell, Louisiana, we were talking about making right choices—saying no to negative peer pressure, no to drugs, and no to alcohol. Suddenly, from the back of the auditorium, 6-year-old Amanda yelled, “I always make good choices.”

Wow! How exciting to see such a positive and exuberant young individual who already knew where her life was going. I asked her to come stand with me, and then I picked her up and held her in my arms. Here was this tiny person declaring that she was going to be an astronaut someday, while 150 of her classmates and their teachers clapped and cheered.

When it comes right down to it, knowledge is the key to making good choices. The more we know, the more equipped we are to make choices that will have a positive impact rather than a negative one on our lives. Here are a few questions posed to me by a variety of young people across the country.

**Q: Do you have any tips for avoiding peer pressure when dating?**

A: Sure. Start by hanging out with friends who also believe that it's good to wait until marriage for sex. Turn the pressure around. When you go out on a date, go with a group of friends rather than only your date.

Introduce your friends to your parents, and even invite them to your home. Think of what you would say ahead of time in case your date tries to pressure you. Be ready to call your mom, dad, or a friend to pick you up if you need to leave a date. Always carry money for a phone call or cab in case you feel uncomfortable. Or use your cell phone. Never feel obligated to “pay someone back” with sex in return for an expensive date or gift. Say no and mean no.

Remember, everyone is *not* doing it. In fact, more people are *not* than those who *are*. It's a pressure game, and love does not equal pressure!

**Q: Can I have a sexually transmitted disease (STD) and not know it?**

A: Yes, absolutely. Many STDs can take weeks, months, or years before symptoms begin to show. Some people never develop symptoms for certain varieties of STDs. STDs can still be given to someone else even when a person is not experiencing symptoms. And contrary to what some of your friends may say, using a condom does not save you from all STDs.

Well, I hope that you've gained some insight from this article. I'm looking forward to sharing more questions and stories that young people across the country have shared with me. Together we can learn to make good choices. Remember, it's not about what you can't do; it's about who you can become!

Visit us soon at [www.powerofchoice.org](http://www.powerofchoice.org), or you can e-mail us at [powerofchoice@aol.com](mailto:powerofchoice@aol.com). ☎



James Wilson, I wouldn't go out with you if you were the last man on earth," Alicia Brown exclaimed as she plucked his hand off her shoulder and dropped it like a cockroach. She turned and strode down the corridor toward her next class.

James hustled in front of her, blocking her path with an arm against a locker. "Hey, I'm not just a man; I am *the* man. The main man on Southside High's basketball team. I'm offering you the opportunity to spend some quality time together. Let's do it!"

"I'll see you in study hall tomorrow morning at 8:30 sharp," Alicia said. "And the only thing we will do is your math. Have it done."

"Ah, come on," smirked James. "Think of it. Your brains, my good looks—just think of the kids we could have. Course, you aren't bad-looking yourself."

Alicia's eyes hardened, angry. "When I go on a date, it will be with a *real* man, not some loud fool who plays a kids' game. If you even play in Thursday's game."

"Huh?"

"If you don't let me go by the time I count three, I will take these books," Alicia hefted the stack of textbooks in her right hand, "and break your elbow. Then see how well you can play. One . . . two . . ."

James hastily backed away. As she strode down the hall he shouted, "Are you crazy? Violence isn't the answer."

"Ha!" she said as she turned the corner.

Leon looked at James and laughed. "You really showed her."

Turning to his friend, James said, "I just can't figure her out. She's been helping me with math since September, and still hasn't fallen for me."

"There are other fish in the sea. Half the girls in the senior class want to date you, and you're just a junior. Why set your sights on a sophomore?" questioned Leon.

"I dunno," James said. "She's a babe; she's smart. But she lives alone with her grandma, and she's so serious about everything. I just wish she'd let me show her how to have fun."

The second bell rang. Leon ran off to class, and James turned down the hall to his room. There was something about Alicia. She seemed unhappy deep inside, and he didn't like that.

After school James went down to the gym, suited up, and began shooting baskets. He did that when he wanted to think. The custodian liked James and would lock up when James finished. Shooting from the free-throw line, James ran under the basket and punched the ball back up through the hoop. The tenth time, he heard a whistle, and a voice shouted, "Goaltending! Wilson."

James turned. "Hey, Coach. Didn't think you were still here."

Coach Jackson laughed. "Working late. I was going over midterm grades, and heard one of

# THE MAN

by Mark N. Lardas

mother's darlings out on the floor. Should have known it would be you. But your bus has gone. How are you getting home tonight?"

"I'll run it. It's good exercise."

"Didn't I run you hard enough in practice?"

James dug a toe into the court. "Yeah. I just needed time to think. Alone."

"Not about your math grade. You have a B+. And in a college prep course. I'm proud of you."

"Not the grade." James palmed the basketball with one hand, squeezing it as hard as he could. "It's Alicia."

"She's a good tutor," Coach said, "even if she is a year behind you."

"It's just that she's so intense, like she's unhappy inside." James bounced the ball once.





"I wish I knew how to cheer her up. Show her a good time. But she won't let me get near her."

"Do you like her?"

James thought, "Yeah. What's troubling her?"

"Who's raising her?" Coach asked.

"Her grandmother. So?"

Coach looked at James. "Where are your parents right now?"

"Mom's home fixing supper. Dad's at work."

"Where are hers?"

"Dunno. She's with her grandma."

"Alicia doesn't know either. Her mother's on drugs. Her daddy . . ." Coach shrugged grimly.

"Her grandmother is a good woman—none better. But she's old, ill, and living on a pension."

Coach sat on the bleacher. "Kids like Alicia are called displaced. Fifty years ago displaced kids were refugees from war. Today they're ones whose parents cannot—or will not—raise them. Sometimes the parents are dead. Often they're on drugs or in jail or just off having a good time. It's like the parents never grew up—they're twice the kids' age but act half of it. So the kids go to the adults in their family—grandmothers mostly.

"Tossed around like that," Coach continued, "those kids have problems. They miss school, fall behind. Mom takes them back for a few

months, like a girl playing with live dolls. The kids get exposed to dangers children shouldn't be, because mom's living on the edge with drugs or booze.

"Alicia's lucky. She's smart and has kept up with her studies. That's rare. Her grandmother does her best to give Alicia a stable home, but things are tight. What do you think Alicia does with the money she gets from tutoring you?"

James shrugged. "I figured CDs and stuff."

Coach laughed. "More likely school clothes and blankets. She needs that money."

"Why does she push everyone away?" James asked. "Doesn't she want friends?"

"What if your parents didn't care about you?" asked Coach. "That's as deep a hurt as a soul can feel. Should she trust people?"

"I want to see her happy," said James. "And I'm the man."

"She's not looking for *the* man," said Coach. "She's looking for *a* man. Even today she's looking for a future, not a good time. There's steel in that girl. No good-time Charlie will get between her and her dreams. You want her to like you? Be a grown-up. If you're not sure what that means, watch your father. I know him. He's a good man to copy."

The next morning at study hall, Alicia was late. James already had his math books out. When she came in, James saw an elastic bandage on her wrist. "What did you do to yourself?"

"Leave it alone," she snapped.

Concerned, he asked, "Did someone hurt you?"

Startled, she looked at him and said, "Yes. Me. I slipped trying to change the stairway lightbulb. The step stool was too short. I reached too far and lost my balance."

James paused, then said, "Say."

"Don't hit on me today. Not today."

"Did you change the light?"

Alicia glared at him. "No."

"I'm taller than you. How about if I come by after school and change it for you?"

"What?"

"Please? I'll borrow a stepladder from my dad if I need it," James finished.

James looked at Alicia. She stared, thinking. Then she smiled.

So did he. ■





# THE NEXT-DOOR



The 16-year-old boy feels sick to his stomach, but goes to his normal boxing workout anyway. He takes several sharp jabs to the head and suddenly falls down, unconscious. Lonnie Fuller and his partner are first on the scene. Fuller, a firefighter/paramedic, determines immediately that there is brain injury, and works to stabilize the boy. Just as Lonnie has had a profound influence in the outcome of this situation, he touches lives every day.

The boy is one of thousands of emergency victims Fuller has treated in his 25-year career. For Lonnie every day holds the unknown: untold challenges he and his team must face with strength, expert training, and calm resolve. Americans have embraced such people as Lonnie as their new heroes—especially in the light of the horrors of September 11.

Lonnie lives in Beavercreek, Oregon, with his wife, Mary, and two cats. He leads a life dedicated to serving his community both as a firefighter and as a major in the Army Reserve. In the Reserve he counsels 18- to 19-year-olds and has been a mentor to his nephews, both of whom are now army officers, graduates of West Point.

Fire Lieutenant/Paramedic/Major Lonnie Fuller has used his vast experience to assist, serve, and save lives for more than half his life. Had it not been for *Listen* magazine, his life, and consequently the lives of others, could have turned out tragically different.

As a youth growing up in a rough neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lonnie had many friends and classmates who took LSD, smoked marijuana, and even brought whiskey to school in thermos bottles. Drugs could easily be found, and temptation to fall into that lifestyle was all around him—and

he would avoid going in the wrong direction, he might be able to make something of his life.

But how to steer a strong-willed, trouble-prone young man like Lonnie?

Martha was a kindhearted neighbor who lived near the Fuller family on Umatilla Street. The Fullers were used to seeing their gray-haired friend in her flower garden, preparing home-grown gifts, or getting ready for canning season. Her contagious smile reflected her heart each time she helped a friend, church member, or stranger in the neighborhood. It seemed that she was always running an errand for someone or helping in community projects.

Young Lonnie was submerged in a gang- and drug-induced culture some believed to be his unavoidable and ultimate destiny. But Martha saw a glimmer of hope in a boy who had a good heart but was often tempted to move in a darker drug-motivated direction.

Lonnie's path began to change when Martha gave him a copy of *Listen*. In his crowded old home filled with seven kids and his grandparents, he would steal away to a corner or chair and read the intriguing real-life stories that came to life in his young mind. Mrs. Herr decided to continue to give Lonnie the magazine, and he read it from cover to cover every time.

Slowly he began to see that just because those around him were taking drugs, life as an addict didn't have to be his future, too. Within the magazine's pages he read true accounts of drugs destroying minds, families, and lives. Directly because of those stories he made the decision that drugs would never control his life. It was in his junior year of high school that he made the decision to become a firefighter and dedicate his life to serving others.

# HERO

WORDS:  
LINDY BATDORF

PHOTOGRAPHY:  
BOB BAHNER

he was just in junior high school.

Lonnie was known as a basically good kid who seemed to have a knack for getting into trouble. Many adults, including his next-door neighbor Martha Herr, believed in Lonnie and knew that if

Lonnie doesn't think Mrs. Herr just gave a magazine to a problem kid who needed something to read; she gave a key to a young man that encouraged him, directed him, and helped unlock the potential in his future. Even though he grew





up in a harsh neighborhood, he found he could take control of his life and steer it decidedly away from the trap that had snared so many of his friends, and toward a life of meaning and promise.

The Fuller family eventually moved away, and Lonnie later found out his kind neighbor had passed away. He regrets he never got to thank her for the influence her gift had in his life, but she lived to see him change from risktaker and troublemaker to a young man who took charge of his own destiny.

Had Martha not shared *Listen* magazine with Lonnie, what might have become of those he has served so dutifully, such as the 16-year-old boxer mentioned at the beginning of this article? You see, the boy had been given a grim prognosis once he arrived at the hospital. Physicians examining his severe head injury were so concerned about the extensive damage and bleeding in his brain that they spoke in hushed tones of his being as an

organ donor.

"But I had a feeling," said Fuller, "a peaceful feeling that he was going to pull through, and I prayed the whole ride in."

Lonnie told the medical personnel at the hospital that he firmly believed the boy was going to make it, and had taken specific measures to keep his brain from swelling—and make it he did.

Three months later the boy appeared at the door of the fire station with tousled brown hair and his father at his side. Standing in the doorway, Lonnie turned his six-foot-five-inch frame from his paperwork, and a smile of recognition slowly crept across his kind face. The young man paused, then looked at his dad with a "that's him" kind of nod. He then walked to Lonnie and lifted his arms toward the man who hadn't given up on him, who had believed he would live, and who had worked to save his life just 12 weeks before. Lonnie embraced the boy as gratefulness welled up in his heart. *I'm living the dream*, he thought. *This is the best job in the world.*

Paramedic/Fire Lieutenant/Army Reserve Major Lonnie Fuller is an example of a true American hero who touches and saves lives almost every day—he's a humble man whose heart is filled with gratitude for the difference *Listen* magazine made in his life, and hopes that others take Mrs. Herr's lead. He knows firsthand that it's possible to do as his neighbor did, and make a difference in the life of a young person who just needs a little direction to stay on the right path. 🍂







by Katie Frantz

# Declaring Freedom

**W**e hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”—Declaration of Independence.

Since the attack on America on September 11, 2001, and the war with Iraq, many Americans are now extremely cautious of their rights and freedoms. They are no longer being taken for granted. As a free nation we need to guard our freedoms, but we also need to be brave and not ignore what is happening to the freedom of other nations.

This past fall my friend's family and I conducted a drive to collect household items to fulfill the needs of a Welcome to America program that would help furnish an apartment for a family of three coming to the United States from Bosnia. This family, a father and two young adult children, had escaped a country torn apart by war that was no longer safe for them. It didn't offer them liberty or the pursuit of happiness. They were included in the groups of citizens who were forced to flee their homes and run through the streets seeking shelter from sniper fire. They would sneak out at night to search for food when it was considered "safe." Many homes were destroyed by bombing and cannon fire attacks as the Serbs controlled Bosnia more and more. The supplies of water, gas, and electricity were cut off. Refugees

were forced to leave their homes. Many of them walked long distances in bad weather with little protection. When they would come to a city where they thought they'd have security, they would soon realize that it was just like the one that they'd fled. There were no safe places to live, and food was scarce.

As citizens of the United States we are shocked to learn of such living conditions and senseless killings. We open our arms and hearts to help provide a safe haven to those who do not have freedom as we know it.

I am grateful and feel privileged to have had the opportunity to meet and welcome a family who hadn't had the freedom we enjoy. They couldn't live their lives as they chose and have the opportunity to find happiness. I hope that they can enjoy and benefit from the freedoms here. As patriots of this country my friends and I open the heart of America and welcome families and individuals in need of a safe place to live. We may not be able to accept everyone who would like to live in this land of opportunity, but for every door we open, we reinforce the ideals upon which our country was founded. 🇺🇸

---

*Listen* commends Katie and her friends for their generous service to this family and their kind spirit to those who have been separated from everything that is dear and familiar. It is a fitting tribute to those who are upholding our flag here at home and across the seas.



# The SKULL BASHING

As the two boys were lifting weights in the basement of the Romero home, neither of them could have imagined what a horrible ordeal was about to happen to them. They would never have suspected that by the end of the day the life of one of them would be almost snuffed out.

"I'm thirsty. Let's go and get something to drink," Willie suggested to his 16-year-old cousin David. Willie had come from his home in Minnesota to Montana to attend his grandmother's funeral, and was staying with his cousin.

"It's getting late. I don't think my mom will let us go," David said.

"Just ask," Willie insisted.

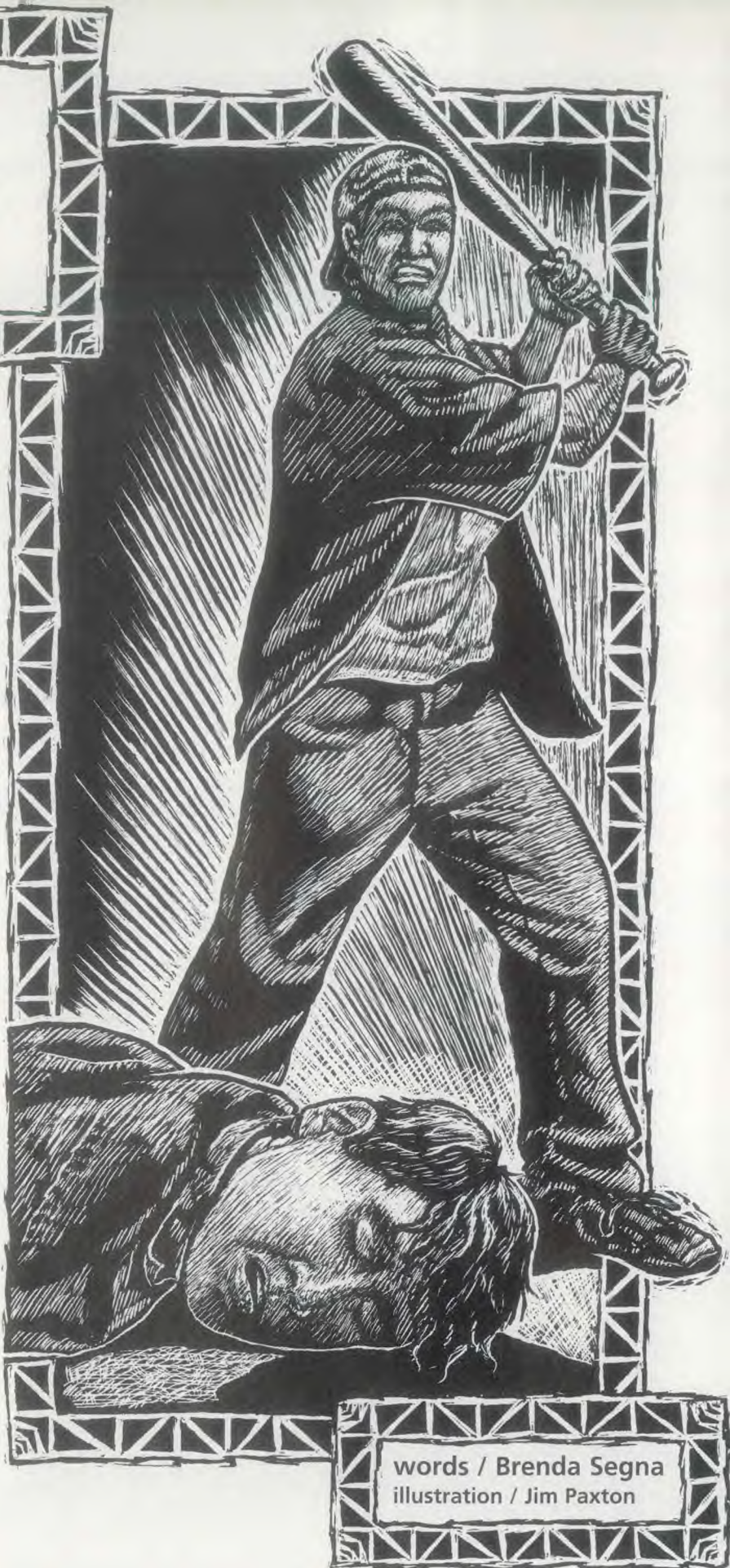
"OK," David said and yelled up the stairs to his mother. "Hey, Mom, can we run to the store to get a soda?"

"Sure," his mother responded. "But you go straight to the store and come right home."

"We will," David promised.

After David grabbed his wallet, the two boys headed to Kwik Way, the corner store. As the boys walked along they noticed that a blue car kept driving around the block, and David began to feel apprehensive.

Suddenly three teenage boys ran around the corner toward them. One boy pulled a gun and pointed it at Willie.



words / Brenda Segna  
illustration / Jim Paxton



"Hey, put that thing down before someone gets hurt," Willie exclaimed.

"You're the one who's going to get hurt," the kid yelled, shaking the gun in Willie's face. "Cuz it's payback time."

"Payback?" Willie questioned. "For what? I don't know you. I haven't done anything to you. I don't even live here. I'm just visiting."

"Yeah, right," the second kid said, starting to slug Willie in the face.

"Hey, knock it off," David shouted. He didn't really want to fight, and couldn't understand why these guys were so mad at them.

"What's the matter?" the third boy yelled at David, punching him hard in the stomach. "Are you afraid to fight?"

David swung his fist toward his tormentor's jaw, but he'd swung too quickly without sufficient aim. The blow almost missed its target, just brushing the other kid's jaw.

The kid grinned and then struck back with all the force he could muster.

David had braced himself for the blow, but it took him by surprise with its force. The entire planet around David was jarred for a moment. The trees swayed, the moon danced, and the pain in his neck was agonizing from the impact of his attacker's fist. Somehow he managed to stay on his feet, though his jaw felt like it was on fire and he could taste blood. He pressed his lips together and tried shaking his head to clear his vision.

David pleaded with the guys while trying to free Willie from the blows he was receiving. All at

once David sensed that something or someone was behind him. There was a roar from a guy named Yo-Yo, and before David could cry for help, Yo-Yo blindsided him with a baseball bat, smashing his skull.

David quietly slumped to the pavement. As he lay there on the ground, blood dripping from his skull, his assailants fled. As Willie fell to his knees by David he could already hear sirens coming. He was thankful that someone had heard the commotion and called 9-1-1.

When David's parents arrived at the hospital, they were told that his skull had been shattered and his brain had swollen so much that it mushroomed out. "In fact," a doctor said, "the left side of David's brain is dead."

"He's not going to live," one doctor stated.

"If he survives, he'll be a vegetable," another doctor added.

Five doctors agreed that there was no hope. David was brain-dead. But his parents refused to accept the verdict.

While they were waiting by David's hospital bed the police arrested the three teens responsible for the attack on the two boys. It appeared that Willie and David had not been the intended victims after all. It was a case of mistaken identity. Yo-Yo and his friends thought that David and Willie were a couple of guys the three had met at a party the night before. Evidently there had been a fight, and Yo-Yo and his friends were bent on revenge. For David and Willie it was a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Meanwhile David lay fighting for his life. His mother sat by his

bed holding his hand, her head resting on the bed rail. All at once she felt David's fingers squeeze her hand.

Hope at last.

Three months later David was back home. The doctors and nurses who had cared for him during that time called him "the miracle child."

"I should be angry," David said. "But anger isn't going to help me. Look what hate and anger and revenge did for Yo-Yo and his pals. I'll let the courts take care of them. I don't have time to hate. I'm too busy working on getting my life back. The love and support of my family are helping me to heal." And there has been a great outpouring of love in the Hispanic community in Billings. In fact, they raised enough money to cover all of David's enormous medical expenses.

David's doctors told how the injury impacted his brain. "The brain," they explained, "is like a filing cabinet filled with files of information. The severe blow to David's head caused that cabinet to be knocked over, and the files spread all over the floor. So now David has to work hard in therapy to put those files back in their proper place."

David is scheduled for one more surgery to put in a steel plate to replace the part of his skull that was so severely crushed. After recuperating from surgery, David plans to return to high school, where he'll be a junior. Here's a young man with courage and vision. 📖

---

*Listen* pays tribute to young people such as David and Willie, who can rise above adversity in their lives and be a positive influence.



# WORKING AHEAD

by Michele Deppe

Every day, I'm trying to get better at my craft," says 15-year-old actor Stephanie Sawyer. "I keep on it, and I don't give up."

A quick review of Stephanie's schedule validates her claim. Stephanie is enrolled in a challenging performing arts school that requires students to take the usual high school curriculum as well as classes to help them grow as artists and performers. The pace is demanding.

"For me a typical day begins at 5:00 in the morning," says Stephanie, explaining her routine at Orange County High School of the Arts. "I do some homework in the morning, usually because I haven't had time the day before. A 40-minute bus ride gets us to school, where I spend the first half of the day in academic classes and the afternoon in conservatory classes."

"I am in a musical theater

program, so I spend the afternoon learning about theatrical history, and then dancing and voice and drama lessons. Sometimes I have homework for them, such as having to learn a song or a dialogue." Determined to do her very best, Stephanie has straight A's in the 13 classes she is taking.

She arrives home about 6:30 in the evening and begins activities that can include tutoring, additional lessons, participating in a charity, or going to an audition. Although her evening activities may sound like voluntary slave labor, Stephanie says enthusiastically, "I love my school. I feel so fortunate to go there!" As for the long commute and disciplined lifestyle, she simply says, "You get used to it."

Juggling a professional acting career, her education, and auditions is challenging, but all contribute to her goals. "Auditions

really pick up January through May," reports Stephanie. "That is the time of year when writers are preparing new pilots and the networks are casting people to act in them. There is so much going on, and you're really pumped up, running from one audition to the next. "I'm really lucky, because my family support my acting. They get me where I need to go."

Pursuing acting is Stephanie's main objective. "As much as I love my school, acting definitely comes first. If I was chosen for a role in a pilot, I'd leave school in a heartbeat and switch to being tutored on the set," she says.

Stephanie's résumé is impressive, beginning at the age of 1 when she did TV commercials for children's department stores. Starring in a McDonald's commercial gave her national coverage; a TV casting director saw her and got her the role of Allison in *Days of Our Lives*. When she was



4, she played the only child of a young couple who were having marital problems in the film *Hero of My Heart*. A year later she acted opposite Jennie Garth and Gregory Harrison in *Lies of the Heart: The Laurie Kellogg Story*. Stephanie worked with Gregory Harrison again when she played Olivia Newton-John's daughter in the television movie *A Christmas Romance*. She has since played in a number of other TV programs, movies, and films.

Stephanie isn't very comfortable talking about her achievements. In fact, she struggles with being shy. "I don't go around telling people about things I've done. If you meet someone who enjoys soccer, they don't tell everyone 'I play soccer' the second that you meet them. My

to do. It's hard to explain, but it's like a place that I can go, and I'm so happy when I'm there."

Getting accepted into her special high school was a dream come true for Stephanie. But she vividly recalls the night she could easily have forfeited her chances of being accepted.

She explains what happened that night. "My friends and I had rented two hotel rooms for a birthday slumber party. We had just gone up to our rooms when two of the girls took marijuana from a secret hiding spot in their backpacks. They started sharing them. I didn't want to be there while they smoked, so a friend and I left. We came back later and had fun the rest of the evening—drug-free. We didn't need drugs to have fun in the

of the story happened shortly afterward. The principal who disciplined the girls for having drugs left that school and became the principal of the performing arts school where I had hoped to attend the next year. Had I gotten messed up in drugs that night, I might not have been accepted into this special school! And who knows what else could have happened—nothing good if I had used drugs, that's for sure."

There are no drugs at Stephanie's art school, and she says that's a big relief. "I know I wouldn't do drugs, no matter what. But I've also realized that just being around people who do them makes for a totally different atmosphere. It sort of lowers the standard, and people focus on negative things. I'm glad that I



friends just basically know me, not things that I've done."

Though unpretentious, Stephanie sets daring goals for herself. "I hope to go to Yale University when I finish high school. And I would love to be an accomplished actress with a steady career like one of my role models, Meryl Streep—she's amazing!

"Acting is what I really love

first place!"

But the story doesn't end there. "On Monday one of the girls confessed to the principal about using marijuana. Everyone at the party (except my friend and I, who hadn't participated) was called to the principal's office. I was so glad that I'd left and didn't have to suffer the consequences of doing drugs.

"But the really amazing part

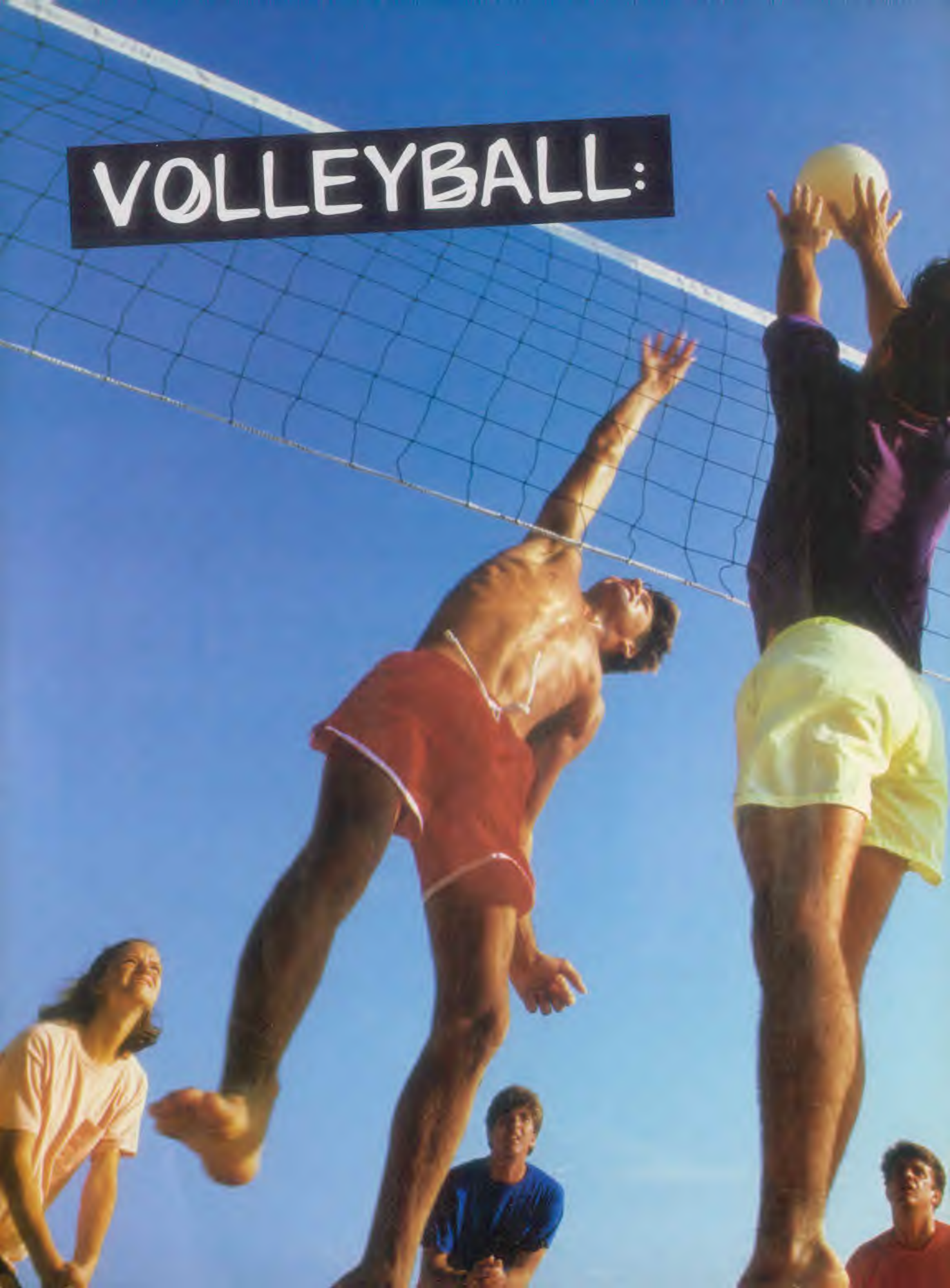
have a dream of continuing to do what I love, and I'm not so bored that I need drugs for excitement. There are so many other cool things to do, and it is sad when people don't realize that." ☛

**For more about Stephanie and more photos, visit her Web site:**

[www.stepsawyer.tvheaven.com](http://www.stepsawyer.tvheaven.com)



# VOLLEYBALL:







# More Than Just Bump, Set, Spike

**C**hase Spent's friend was sick, and his other friend didn't show up, so Chase had no choice but to go to PE class. Chase and his family had moved several times during his childhood, and now he was in eighth grade and found himself at another new school. He'd also made some new friends. Unfortunately, they were friends who got in trouble a lot.

But on this particular day his friends were no-shows, and Chase found himself in PE class playing volleyball. After an especially good serve, a high school senior came up to him and suggested that he try out for the high school volleyball team. He warned Chase that this year he might only make the practice squad and play a few home games, but when he started high school, he'd have a better chance. The senior then went on to compliment Chase on his serving abilities.

BY MARKIE BAZZY

Getty Images





Corbis



Corbis

So with nothing better to do with his time than get into trouble, Chase decided to give it a try. He was accepted and was the only eighth grader on the high school's volleyball team. Then the next year as a high school freshman he became a starter.

Chase credits volleyball with changing his life. He used to be shy and introverted, which made finding friends difficult, but playing volleyball changed that. "Who knows where I would be today if it hadn't been for volleyball," says Chase, now a college freshman in Sacramento, California.

In 1895 William Morgan, a physical education instructor at the YMCA in Holyoke, Massachusetts, created a blend of sports for middle-aged businessmen that he called mintonette. It didn't catch on, but the game volleyball did. Actually that's what the players were doing in mintonette: they were volleying

the ball back and forth over a raised tennis net.

Interest in volleyball as a sport quickly spread around the world: from Japan to Norway and from Cuba to Brazil. It was introduced as an Olympic sport at the XVIII Olympiad in Tokyo, Japan, in 1964. Although it originated in the United States, volleyball didn't become a popular sport in America until the advent of beach volleyball. Now, more than 100 years later, volleyball is a great game for those who like to get together with a few friends and play a game, whether in the backyard or on the beach.

Volleyball is a team sport. In regular volleyball the most common number of players is six per side, but beach volleyball can be played with as few as two people to a side. Volleyball is unique as a sport in that it allows each player to play all positions. Unlike other sports in which you play a specific position on the court or the field, volleyball allows each player to rotate through the six positions.

While they are in each different position,



Corbis



Getty Images



the players' roles may change, and they must know how to play the position. If they're the server, they must serve the ball over the net to the opposing team, then quickly jump into the game to play the backcourt position, ready to bump the ball to the setter. The setter is traditionally the middle player of the front row, who sets the ball to one of the players next to him or her, who can then spike the ball into the opposing team's court.

Volleyball is different from many main-

**VOLLEYBALL IS A SOCIAL SPORT**

**AND CAN BE PLAYED ALMOST**

**ANYWHERE BY ANYONE.**

stream sports, even those from which it came. For those who play competitively, there is much more to volleyball than just volleying the ball back and forth. It is not about speed or endurance, but about reflexes and thinking. Volleyball is a strategy sport, with different plays developing to achieve the goal of scoring a point.

Volleyball has grown in popularity, especially among girls. Crystal Wheeling from Bozeman, Montana, says she joined the volleyball team at her school because there wasn't much else for girls to participate in. For three years she played varsity volleyball. "It challenged me to do my best," says Crystal. "Mostly, I didn't want to let the team down."

The team concept in volleyball is important. The six players must react together to the opposing team's serves and spikes. They must depend on one another for quick reaction and then set up to spike the ball. "It was easy for some of the girls to give up when they made a bad play," says Crystal. "But the rest of us would encourage them, regardless of whether the bad play let the other team score." A team must play together as a group rather than as individuals. "It's a team-centered sport," says Chase. "One person cannot lead it. Everyone is involved and works together."

Volleyball is a social sport and can be played almost anywhere by anyone. A net can be purchased at a sporting goods store for a relatively

inexpensive price. It can be put up in a park, in your backyard, or at the beach. Getting together with a group of friends to play volleyball is an excellent way to build lasting friendships.

No matter what your skill level is, you can play volleyball. Most people can serve the ball and bump it, although some of those bumps can be pretty wild. But that's what makes the game fun when you're playing with friends. You may not be able to spike the ball like the front line of the U.S. men's volleyball team, but you can still enjoy the game with your friends or family.

For those who want to improve their skills there are many volleyball camps during the summer, such as Big Lake Youth Camp ([www.biglake.com](http://www.biglake.com)) in Sisters, Oregon, which offers a week of intensive training in volleyball in a summer-long lineup of sports camps. "Those who come to volleyball camp are often those who play for their high schools," says Monte Torkelsen, camp director. "They are serious about improving their skills." There are several organizations that offer volleyball camps like Big Lake Youth Camp's program. U.S. Sports Camps has partnered with Nike to offer volleyball camps around the country each summer. Check it out at ([www.ussportscamps.com](http://www.ussportscamps.com)).

Just as in any sport, the health benefits of volleyball are numerous. By being an active player, you can increase your cardiovascular conditioning. In addition to conditioning muscles, and enhancing lung capacity, playing volleyball also improves your eye-hand coordination. "Essential in a game of volleyball are the explosive movements of jumping," says Mandi Leno, a fitness trainer at the Ace of Clubs in Walla Walla, Washington. "By developing the fast-twitch muscles in your legs and conditioning the quick reflex, you are able to react to the ball and respond quicker." In a game setting in which the person is alert and the adrenaline is pumping, there is less notice of fatigue, which allows a person to further challenge himself or herself physically.

"Playing volleyball gives me a sense of accomplishment. I did something constructive for my body," says Chase. "It's not so much about winning or losing for me; it's about getting in the game and playing." That's the thrill of volleyball. 🏐



# THE SARGE



Photos supplied by the NHRA

by Debbie Haan

## GETS YOUR ATTENTION

**I**magine flying down a quarter-mile track at 333 miles per hour. You hear little else but a roar, and your vision blurs ever so slightly. Still, you need to calculate exactly what air-to-fuel mixture will allow your machine to reach its potential. You need to know the distance in millimeters to steer your machine correctly.

All the while you're reaching 100 mph in .8 seconds and 200 mph in 2.2 seconds, and you're accelerating faster than the space shuttle. The slightest miscalculation could mean more than the difference between winning or losing—it could be the difference between life or death.

Welcome to Tony "The Sarge" Shumacher's job. Tony drives a United States army-sponsored Top Fuel dragster—a 25-foot, 6,000-horsepower machine—and tours the nation with the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) . . . and wins.

The Sarge experienced the thrill of a Top Fuel NHRA championship in 1999. "I don't remember

wanting to do anything else but race," Tony says. "I grew up seeing the excitement of the sport, and I knew the details involved in being successful. Most of all, I saw the speed."

Tony gained more and more speed as his career unfolded. When he was 20, he raced a 90-mph Pontiac. At 23 it was 160-mph Super Comp dragsters. At 24 he started racing the world's fastest jet-powered dragster, approaching speeds of 300 mph. And in 1995, at age 26, Tony started his own NHRA racing team centered around a 250-mph Oldsmobile Funny Car. He started driving the Top Fuel dragsters in 1996. Racing is undoubtedly in his blood.

Tony grew up playing every sport imaginable, including soccer, football, baseball, and hockey. He took numerous fishing trips with his family, sometimes to Canada. And he still does. "I've never been an outstanding fisherman," Tony says. "I'm a lot better for the fish than I am for the sport. But it's another thing we [his family] all share together."



But other sports faded into the background when at 16 Tony started racing. Soon that was all he had time to do. When he turned 19, he was initiated into the NHRA, with inspiration coming from his father, Don "The Shoe" Schumacher, a drag racing legend. Recognizing Tony's passion for racing, Don supported and nurtured his desire to race.

"It has always been very important to me to have the support of my father—of my family," Tony says. "Every kid should look for that support. You need to be around the right people no matter what you want to be."

Tony knows that kids need to surround themselves with the right people for positive direction and to build inner strength. He believes that although there is the opportunity for every kid to get into trouble, if there are good people around you enjoying the things you enjoy, trouble won't find you.

"Growing up, there were opportunities for me to get into alcohol and drugs," Tony says. "Kids are going to need to make the choice. I didn't have time for that stuff. I didn't allow time for that stuff.

Neither did my friends.

"My best friend today, Chuck Huettinger, was my best friend growing up. He was the best man at my wedding, and he's the manager of my race team. He's family. That's the kind of people I surrounded myself with."

At each race Tony sees himself in thousands of kids who've taken up racing cars as a hobby, using their time constructively. Some kids even bring their vehicles to compete at the race. Others come just to watch. These kids know every square inch of their cars and trucks. They understand the mechanics involved, and they see the math and science behind it all.

"There are so many classroom concepts involved in racing," Tony says. "Knowing the science, the physics, and the chemistry of racing is essential to being successful. Even as a driver I need to understand how oil mixtures, tire pressure, and weather all work together."

He had to learn all of that so that he could communicate with his pit crew. He is the only one on the team getting out of the car who can tell his crew what went right or wrong.

"And I'm learning more about racing every day," he says. "What a kid sees today as a hobby, tomorrow may be their career. Mine is driving."

In addition to racing, The Sarge is active in the

NHRA's Youth and Education Services (YES) program, presented by the U.S. Army. This program enables students to get an up-close look at Tony's vehicle. He spends the morning discussing the career opportunities surrounding racing, and how math and science can play a role. He also discusses how his choices as a former owner and driver on various teams have shaped his personal career path.

"It's an amazing experience to represent the U.S. Army not only on the track but also in the classroom," Tony says. "I stress to students the impact education has on their lives. At the track my crew and I use math and science to squeeze out every bit of speed we can."

Soon after joining his father on Team Schumacher in 1998, Tony rocketed to the edge of 315 mph—a personal best. In 1999 he scratched out the NHRA's first-ever run of more than 330 mph, astounding a Phoenix crowd by getting down the track in 4.54 seconds at 330.23 mph. He currently holds the NHRA speed record of 333.08 mph, set in 2000.

When the U.S. Army came on board for the 2000 season, Tony was made an honorary sergeant, and he continued to lead the way.

But then tragedy struck. While he was qualifying in Memphis, Tony's car cleared the cement wall trackside and flipped wildly out of control. He's lucky that all he experienced was a broken leg. He got back behind the wheel of a new U.S. Army dragster at the season finale and went on to finish second in championship points.

"At 333 mph I am traveling the length of a football field every second," Tony says. "And I am doing this for a living. I can't think of a better office in the world than the fastest race car on the planet."

Tony's vision may blur as he speeds down the track, but his focus has always been clear. 🏁



**The Sarge online**  
[www.tonyschumacher.com](http://www.tonyschumacher.com)



# listen

EDITOR  
**Anita Jacobs**

DESIGNER  
**Doug Bendall**

EDITORIAL SECRETARY  
**Gail Hanson**

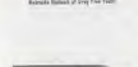
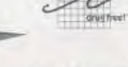
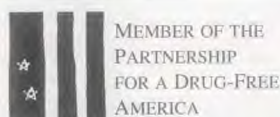
VP PERIODICALS  
**Richard Coffen**

ASSISTANT VP PERIODICALS  
**Howard Scoggins**

SALES DIRECTOR  
**Ron Clark**

### EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS

- Richard Coffen
- Hans Diehl, Dr.H.Sc., M.P.H.
- Winston Ferris, M.A.
- Allan Handysides, M.B., B.Ch.
- Peter N. Landless, M.B., B.Ch.
- Stoy Proctor, M.P.H.
- Francis A. Soper, Litt.D.
- DeWitt Williams, Ph.D.



## THE POWER OF CHOICE

When Jim was sober, he was one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet. When he came into a room, it seemed brighter and friendlier. There was more laughter—Jim was fun.

However, Jim had a dark side that showed only when he was with his family. This dark side started when he began smoking marijuana. The Jim who loved his family and would never do anything to endanger them changed completely when he was stoned.

One afternoon when he was taking the family shopping, he started driving the car faster and faster. As he rapidly approached the car in front of him, his family hollered in panic, begging him to slow down before they hit the car—but he just laughed. Perhaps if he'd read some of the facts from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, he wouldn't have laughed. He would have known that marijuana affects driving skills, alertness, ability to concentrate, coordination, and the ability to react quickly.

I personally knew Jim; in fact, he was my father. I was part of the family who cried and begged him to slow down. Jim's addiction to tobacco, pot, and alcohol became more important to him than his family. His poor choices in life were a warning to me to make better choices in my life.

This month we are introducing Scot Cressman, who is a licensed professional counselor with a Ph.D. in counseling. During college he played football and went on to be a free agent in the National Football League. For several years now Cressman has traveled with the Power Team, the number one anti-drug and abstinence school assembly program in the country. He has had the opportunity to speak to tens of thousands of students worldwide.

In his column, The Power of Choice, Cressman shares with readers answers to questions that he is asked by students. Life is made up of choices. You make choices as soon as you awaken in the morning, from "What shall I wear today? What do I want for breakfast?" to major choices that can affect your future. How you respond to these choices is up to you. But the results of your choices may be who you will be in five years, 10 years, or the rest of your life.



**Anita Jacobs**

LISTEN (ISSN 0024-435X) September 2003, Volume 57, Number 1. Published monthly (EXCEPT JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST) and copyrighted © 2003 by The Health Connection, 55 West Oak Ridge Dr., Hagerstown, MD 21740. One year \$26.95 (U.S.); Outside U.S. \$33.45 (U.S.). PERIODICALS postage paid at Hagerstown, MD. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LISTEN, P.O. Box 859, Hagerstown, MD 21741. 1-800-548-8700, Alaska or Canada, 1-301-393-3267. This publication is available in Microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. (313) 761-4700. Printed in U.S.A.



# contents

LISTEN MAGAZINE • VOLUME 57 • NUMBER 1



## Features

- 2** • **THE FIRST ONE WAS FREE**  
Smoking weed almost cost Jared everything that was precious to him.
- 6** • **PROBLEMS DON'T GET SMOKED AWAY, BUT DREAMS DO**  
Once you're around pot smokers, you're bound to be offered other drugs.
- 10** • **HITTING ROCK BOTTOM**  
I thought using marijuana would help me make friends, fit in, and feel happier. Instead, pot led me down a dangerous path that nearly cost me everything, including my life.
- 14** • **THE MAN**  
Alicia was a displaced teen, but she had a strong will to make something of her life.
- 16** • **THE NEXT-DOOR HERO**  
Lonnie Fuller is one of America's true heroes. He says reading *Listen* helped him be the person he is today.
- 19** • **DECLARING FREEDOM**  
"We need to be brave and not ignore what is happening to the freedom of other nations," states 17-year-old Katie Frantz.
- 20** • **THE SKULL BASHING**  
Violence and revenge nearly cost David his life.
- 24** • **VOLLEYBALL: MORE THAN JUST BUMP, SET, SPIKE**  
A sport that needs only a net, a ball, and a few friends whether it's in your backyard or at the beach.



## Departments

- 5** • **ASK GARY**  
Marijuana and Driving
- 8** • **CHOICES**  
Did You Know . . .
- 13** • **THE POWER OF CHOICE**  
Knowledge Is the Key
- 22** • **PRIME TIMES**  
Working Ahead—Teen actress Stephanie Sawyer's story
- 28** • **PRIME TIMES**  
The Sarge Gets Your Attention
- 30** • **JUST BETWEEN US**  
The Power of Choice
- COVER PHOTO**  
Bob Bahner



# ECSTASY

## HARMFUL EFFECTS

**BRAIN DAMAGE**  
ADDICTION  
SEVERE ANXIETY  
PARANOIA  
DEPRESSION

**BLURRED VISION**

**TEETH CLENCHING**

**SWEATING**  
CHILLS  
FAINTING

**LUNG FAILURE**

**INCREASES HEART RATE & BLOOD PRESSURE**  
HEART FAILURE

**LIVER DAMAGE**

**LOSS OF APPETITE**  
VOMITING

**KIDNEY DAMAGE**

**INCREASES BODY TEMPERATURE**  
HEAT STROKE

**NAUSEA**

**MUSCLE TENSION**

*Listen gives you a clear window on the world!*

*The Health Connection gives you cool posters for your wall!*

Visit or contact us:  
[www.listenmagazine.com](http://www.listenmagazine.com)  
[www.healthconnection.com](http://www.healthconnection.com)  
1-800-548-8700