

### Rory J. Weichbrod Application - Essay

In the last year and a half I have been to the funerals of two young people. Both died because bad decisions were made. Both were too young to die. In Rory's case, he died because of the bad decisions someone else made. I have learned a lot about the importance of making good decisions from my family, my school, and my church. Going to these funerals showed me that actions do have consequences and these consequences can be deadly. I also learned that sometimes one bad decision can lead to others and that I need to make good decisions.

I am entering the years of peer pressure. To me, peer pressure is when your friends try to get you to do something you know is wrong. So, peer pressure feels almost like a betrayal. I know these years will be tough and my friends may disappoint me with the decisions they make. They may try to tempt me to make bad decisions like smoking a cigarette or drinking beer at a party. I know that I don't want to make a bad decision, but saying the right words will be tough. It is hard to stand up to your enemies, but it is even harder to stand up to your friends. The word "no" is so simple, but so powerful. God gave us the ability to say "no" and I hope I find the strength and wisdom to use this word when the time comes. There is a good path and a bad path. It is my choice to decide which path to take.

There are a lot of reasons I should make good decisions. Bad decisions can have negative consequences. Addiction, expulsion, cancer, death or injury, emotional pain and suffering, and jail time can be the result of bad decisions. Not only would these things affect me, but they would also affect my community. I can hurt myself or others with bad decisions and cause others pain. I think if I hurt someone or caused pain to others, it would affect me for the rest of my life. I would be disappointed in myself and I know I would feel bad about myself if I caused pain to others.

I don't think people who try their first beer at a party ever imagine that the decision to try that beer will ever lead to serious consequences. Once that first bad decision is made, it makes it easier to make other bad decisions like driving drunk. This may result in serious consequences like hurting or killing someone. I know I have to be careful to make good decisions early on and stick to them. I don't want to start my way down a bad path and I don't want to ever forget how serious bad decisions can be.

After each funeral, I talked a lot to my family. I was really upset by how sad the families were and hated to see them suffering! My father told me a story about another young man from our community. My father said when he was a teenager, he came home one day and found his family crying at the dining room table. He found out that their close friend died at the age of nineteen. His friend drank too much at a party because he was upset that the Redskins lost the Super Bowl, drove home from the party, and was killed. The Redskins game does not seem important now, but this friend is gone forever and he is still missed by his family and ours. All three of these deaths have created sadness and grief in our community.

When I am faced with peer pressure, I need to remember that I am not alone. I have friends and family who will support and help me to make the right decision. But what about the future? What will I do when my parents, friends, and teachers aren't there to help me and guide me along the right path? I am still not alone. I am never alone. I always have God and God will help me. The future may seem a long way away, but I know it really isn't. To help me make good decisions and avoid peer pressure, I will rely on God and the lessons I have learned along the way...