

## In Loving Memory of Evan

by Sacha Cueto

My son Evan passed away unexpectedly on March 18, 2009, just 6 days after his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was a horrible, tragic and preventable accident. As completely shocked and devastated our family was (and always will be) over his death, we were equally shocked and devastated to find out what caused the death of this healthy, bright, loving young man. Heroin.



It is my understanding that Evan had first tried heroin about 3 months before he passed away. I continue to struggle with the “Whys”, “What ifs” and “Hows”. “Why” would he try something that was so dangerous? “Why” didn’t he listen to us (his parents) when we talked about drug use. “What If” someone would have told us what they knew so that we could have found out this was going on? Could we have saved him? “How” can a human being use drugs and abuse his or her body for years and live, when a young person can experiment and not get one second chance? The list of “Whys”, “What ifs” and “Hows” are too many to list and I have to accept (or at least try to) the fact that I will never have the answers to these questions. And that is very difficult.

In the beginning of my journey, just 27 months ago, I felt like I “had” do to something to try and “help” other kids not fall victim to the deadly consequences of drug use. I “needed” to talk to them about how to make good and healthy choices and how to choose the right friends. I taught my son all of these things, and it didn’t work! Why do I think if I talked with anyone else, strangers, that they would listen? I went round and round with trying to figure out what to do, what to say, where to start. It was exhausting. After all, most of my energy was used up in just getting out of bed, working, caring for other children, keeping the bills paid on time and basically just “living”.

I have to remind myself to just take baby steps. I learned that I get overwhelmed much more easily and I need to care for myself first before I can help others. The stamina I once had, the ability to multi task to the maximum has gone and I can’t seem to get it back. I am beginning to wonder if I ever will, or if this is just the new me that I just have to accept.

Over the past several months I have volunteered at our local monthly “Dispose-a-Med” drug take back event which is organized by our local law enforcement, firefighters and Optimist Club where medications (prescription and over the counter) are collected and properly disposed of. This is done mainly to keep these medications out of the hands of our youth, who are abusing prescription drugs at alarming rates all over our Country. Prescription drug abuse often leads to other drug abuse, such as heroin.

Volunteering at this event has made me feel as though I am making some small impact in our community and possibly saving a life. It has been very therapeutic for me to be involved in such an event. Working side by side with others who share in the same desires to keep our community safe and drug free is awesome!

I hope that one day I will be able to do more. I am open with my story if anyone wants to know it, but I am NOT a public speaker and the thought of that horrifies me. At this time in my life, I don’t know what I need to be doing to make a bigger impact. In time I hope to be more involved. But I have to remember....baby steps.

Evan Cueto  
3/12/1992-3/18/2009

*Listening Hearts*, Volume III, Issue 4, July/August 2011  
Used with permission from Evan’s mother Sacha.