Pledge to Keep Friendship Alive

By KATHLEEN LOFTUS

MSU Greeks “Stay Strong” and pledge to party smart and eliminate drug and alcohol related deaths in the community with Erica Upshaw’s help.

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**Greeks Stay Strong Steps:**

1. Take the pledge! “I pledge to help stop alcohol and drug related deaths in the MSU Greek community by partying smart.” Students took this pledge by “liking” the Greeks Stay Strong Facebook page in September.

2. Let’s Hear from Erica: Erica came to speak to Greeks on October 17 in the auditorium. She said, “Every person in this room will be equipped to prevent a future tragedy from effecting your group of friends.”

3. Get your chapter to learn more! Greek government is sponsoring a $10,000 crisis management program from the Olin Center in November. The sorority/fraternity who has the most members enroll wins an award.

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**Erica’s Story**

Erica Upshaw lost her brother in 2000 to drugs and alcohol. At the time, Erica was a sophomore and her brother Joey a senior at Ohio State University. Joey was in Delta Tau Delta fraternity, the “life of the party” and an honor student according to his sister.

After a late night out, Joey’s fraternity had an after hours party. At Ohio State, like lots of universities, many students experimented with drugs and alcohol, Erica said. She said one in particular, GHB, or gamma-hydroxybutyric acid, was popular. GHB is also known as the date-rape drug.

Many of my friends used GHB, Upshaw said. “Just a cap-full was all you needed for the night.”

That same night, Erica was feeling sick around midnight so she gave her brother a hug goodnight and decided to go home.

Once Erica left, Joey continued to drink heavily as. According to Erica, friends also started taking cap-fulls of GHB and passing a water bottle around. Her brother Joey was always one to challenge people, she said. When it was his turn, he chugged the majority of the water bottle with GHB in it, she said.

When Erica woke up at dawn, her brother was dead.
substance abuse really can happen to any of us even though and staying safe while going out. The consequences from inspiring, and I am now more aware of knowing my limit send a message and she most definitely did that. She was one to “say something” to all of us. It takes one person to weekends. Her message touched me because she was the other people present. Her story really spoke to my heart. look after myself better, as well as all of my friends and all of the dangers so real to me again. I am definitely going to lead to death, but this information had been slipping my mind since I arrived at MSU. Erica’s presentation made all of the dangers so real to me again. I am definitely going to look after myself better, as well as all of my friends and all of the other people present. Her story really spoke to my heart. I have a friend who I have wanted to say something to for a while now about his/her drinking habits, and now I have the strength to do it. I thank Erica for this.”

Karilynn Burks

“I want to tell Greeks how proud I am for Monday’s presentation. It was the best hour and half I’ve spent in a long time. Erica was fantastic and I am thrilled about the new program. My only regret of the night was not having my wife and two daughters there to listen to the talk.”

Mayor Vic Loomis

“I am a freshman this year, so all of the partying is fairly new. I could already tell that alcohol being present at parties was the norm, and quite frankly it seemed like no problems were happening or could happen. I have always been taught that alcohol leads to dumb decisions and can eventually lead to death, but this information had been slipping my mind since I arrived at MSU. Erica’s presentation made all the other people present. Her story really spoke to my heart. I have a friend who I have wanted to say something to for a while now about his/her drinking habits, and now I have the strength to do it. I thank Erica for this.”

Joey Upshaw: http://www.joeupshaw.org/  
Keep Friendship Alive: http://www.keepfriendshipalive.org/