

## Massman keeps vow made long ago to avoid drugs and alcohol

By: Neal A. Johnson | Source: Unterrified Democrat

Osage County Anti-Drug Community Action Team (OC-ADCAT) Student of the Month Stuart Massman credits his parents, Joe and Melissa, for putting him on the right path in life and said he will honor the vow he made years ago.

"They kind of made a list and explained the reasons why not to do it," said Massman, a senior at Linn High School. "So, I made a pledge to myself never to do any of it. Even when I get old enough to drink alcohol, I probably won't do that, except for special occasions, which still is highly unlikely."

Stuart watched his parents and saw the example they set, which meant more than just the words they shared. "They were a good influence, and I try to do the same for my siblings," Massman said. "They hardly drink at all."

He is joined at home by Leo, Arthur, and Tucker and hopes his example is positive. "I try to be a good big brother," Massman added.

He's also known at school for his position, so peer pressure doesn't really exist. "Most know that I won't drink or do drugs," Massman noted. "They don't push it because they know how I feel, and I've flat-out told a lot of my classmates that I've made an oath to myself never to do drugs, smoke, or any of that stuff because I know what could happen."

Massman is not shy about sharing his feelings. "I talk to my close friends and try to set a good example," he said. "Sometimes, I try to talk to other classmates, but they don't listen very much."

Massman takes no responsibility beyond providing a good example and talking to his peers. "They make their own choices, and it doesn't affect me," he said. "If I ever meet them again at a high school reunion or something, it would be nice to see they've stopped doing the things they shouldn't, but it's highly unlikely they'll do that."

In addition to his parents, Massman said he was most influenced by those at Capital City Christian Church in Jefferson City.

"It's my parents and people that I know, like my youth group minister, that have shaped me into who I am now," he said. "They've helped make me a better person based on how they treat me, how I treat myself, and how well I do in school."

Massman attended a program in February of his sophomore year and continued going to the church. He believes the religious element in his life has helped him keep his pledge.

"I find it very important because it's made me more talkative," Massman explained. "It's helped me write essays. I would always think of an idea and then be like, I don't know what to do anymore because a million other ideas pop up. But now I can write an essay on whatever the topic is, and be fine, or give a speech. I have a few stage fright issues, but I'm still able to give it a few issues. Before, I would sometimes start crying, like shed a tear or two, because I don't like to do it. I also gained a lot more friends."

Jordan Sallin nominated Massman because “he is an outstanding young man who shows respect for others, great decision-making, tireless work ethic, and a high moral standing. He always does what is asked of him, inside and out of the regular classroom, and has the propensity to achieve greatness in his endeavors.”

Massman is an active participant in school. “He keeps his nose to the grindstone until he has met the lofty expectations he has set for himself,” said Sallin. “He is a model student who never has discipline issues and studies hard. Stuart is always willing to help others when needed, explaining topics in ways that his peers can understand easier.”

Sallin added that Massman is a leader by example. “He has recently started to become more vocal in class,” he said. “Stuart mainly leads his peers through his hard work and good learning habits, preferring to let his actions speak louder than his words.”

An A+ Program member, Massman served as a tutor for Sallin during summer school. “He would help students and other teachers without having to be asked,” Sallin noted. “To take it a step further, he never once complained when he was asked to do some of the most boring and tedious tasks that nobody wants to do but need to be done. On top of that, he volunteered more days than were expected of students and, honestly, made everyone’s life so much easier by being there.”

Massman is a member of FFA, Chess Club, Dungeons & Dragons Club, the trapshooting team, and BSA. As a Boy Scout, Massman is closing in on his Eagle Scout rank.

Massman plans to attend State Tech for Auto Collision and Precision Machining. He would like to get lathes and metalworking tools to bring home and make a job of building things out of metal or wood and selling them online or in person. “I would like to do that as a secondary job and also build stuff that I think would look cool around the house, including some things that probably don’t need to be made because I can just buy one online,” he said.

Principal Erin Sassmann said Massman is a very upstanding student. “He is a quiet student, but when you get him talking, he is so much fun to be around,” she added. “Stuart is very dedicated to his classes as well as his extracurricular activities. If drugs and alcohol got in the way, he would not be able to accomplish all he has in school. I am very proud of the young man he has become and can’t wait to see what the future brings for him.”

OC-ADCAT Executive Director Lorie Winslow will present Massman with a certificate, and he will be eligible to apply for the annual Student of the Month Scholarship.

“I am so excited to showcase our seniors who have chosen to live a drug- and alcohol-free life,” said OC-ADCAT Education Committee Chairperson Charlotte Bellsmith. “I know this is not an easy thing to do. The pressure on our teens to drink while still underage is still pretty severe.”

For more information about OC-ADCAT, visit <https://www.ocadcat.org>.