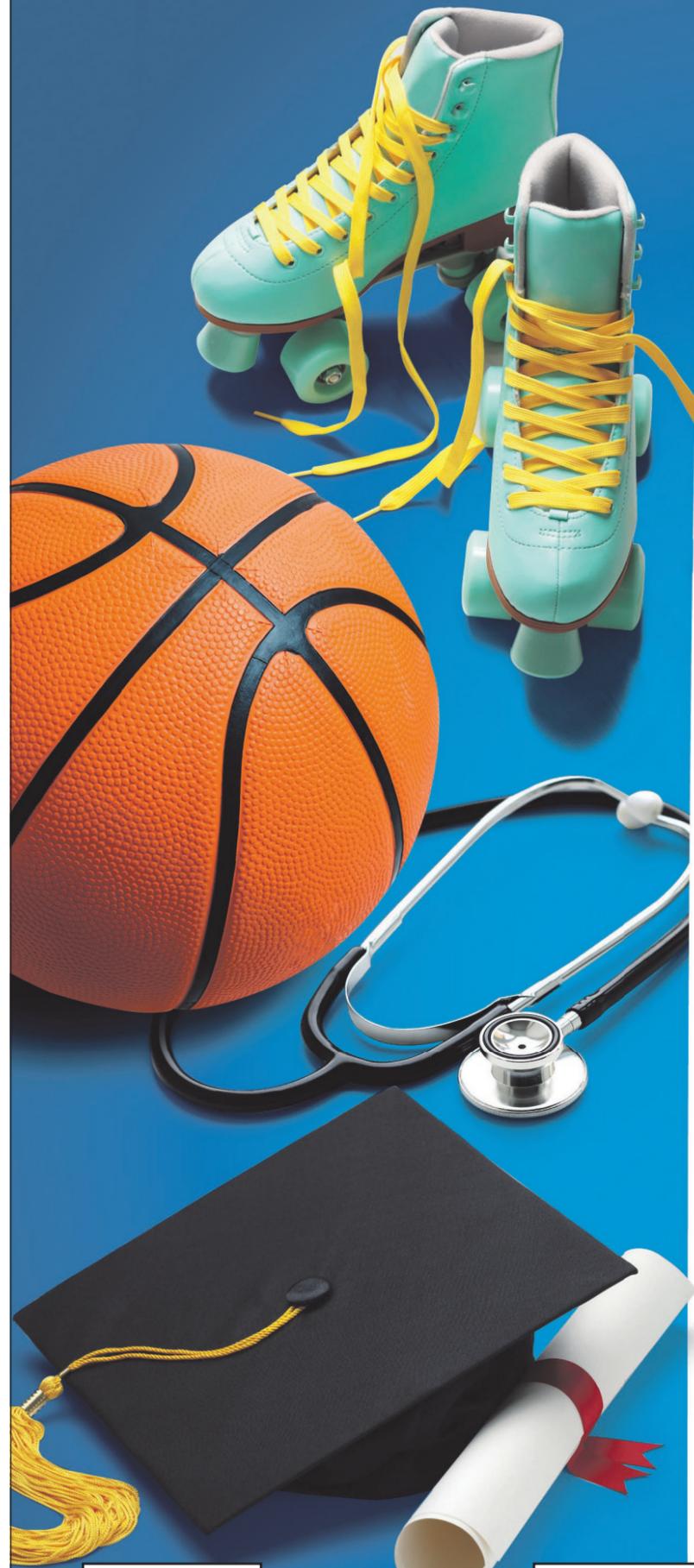


BROUGHT TO YOU BY



A Letter to Derrick

Today is my graduation ceremony. As I walk across the stage to receive my certificate, I see mum and dad in the audience.

They are smiling, but I know they're also thinking of you. You should've been here too.

Growing up, I've always been afraid of trying out new things. Whether it's learning how to take public transport for the first time or to skate, you'd tell me: "Don't worry! Together, we can do anything!"

I remember you used to say that as the older brother, you'd be the first to enter secondary school and help me "scout things out". You said you'd check out their basketball team, and when I'd join you two years later, we'd show everyone in the school that we were unbeatable on the court.

You said you wanted to be a doctor to help people in need. I've always wanted to be a social worker or counsellor.

"Great! We can help people together!" you said.

I knew you always had very high expectations of yourself, especially with regard to your grades. You were always striving to do better and ace your examinations. But this also meant that you were putting yourself through too much stress. You managed to get into the secondary school of your choice, the school's basketball team and the student council. And you were always surrounded by friends, many of whom looked up to you.

Things started to go downhill when you met a new group of friends.

One day, you came home looking really excited. You said your new friends introduced you to something you had never tried before, something "new and exciting".

You showed me a packet of white crystallised substance. You said that it was really expensive, but your friends were generous and gave you some to try.

"My friends said it would help me forget my problems and it really worked," you said. "For the first time in ages, I finally feel relaxed and free from stress."

It sounded too good to be true, I thought to myself. You warned me not to let mum and dad know. I foolishly followed your bidding.

Eventually, your eyes that were bright and full of life became dull and troubled. You struggled with insomnia and started losing weight. You were always out late and avoided mum and dad's questions on what you were doing. Even when they confronted you about your deteriorating grades, you just stared blankly into space. They didn't know what to do with you.

You kept asking them for more pocket money, and when they refused, you flew into a rage. I even caught you stealing money from my wallet. It was like the brother I had known for life turned into someone I didn't know.

On the eve of your O-level examinations, mum and dad found you lying motionless in bed. You were rushed to the hospital but it was too late. That's how we found out you'd been taking drugs — methamphetamine. You were two months shy of your 16th birthday.

Life without you has been so different and difficult — the house felt empty, family gatherings became unbearable for mum and I could no longer stand the pounding of the ball at the basketball court next to our block. Until today, I would take a detour from the bus stop just to avoid having to walk past the court, our childhood haunt.

It's been two years since you passed away, but the void you left behind can never be filled.

Even though you are no longer with us, I'm still chasing the dream we shared, the dream of helping people. I want to become a social worker in the future. I hope no other family would have to lose their child to drugs, the way that mine did.

Thinking of you always,

Keith

What's new?



Have you seen these cute stickers around? Find out more about these #ILiveFor stickers on CNB's Instagram account and pledge for a #DrugFreeSG (@cnb.drugfree). Scan the QR codes on the right to download the stickers on Telegram and WhatsApp.

TELEGRAM



WHATSAPP



Did you know?

The packet of white crystallised substance is methamphetamine, commonly known as 'ice'. Derrick exhibited many effects of methamphetamine abuse, from extreme weight loss to mood swings and insomnia. Other side effects include hallucinations and paranoia. Derrick was stealing money from his brother because he needed more money to buy the drugs from his "friends" to feed his addiction.

The proportion of young drug abusers remain high in Singapore. In 2019, there were 1,460 new drug abusers arrested. About 62 per cent of them were below the age of 30.

If you know of anyone with a drug problem or have any drug-related information to report, immediately inform your teacher or call CNB at 6325-6666.

Contest

Answer a simple question correctly to stand a chance to win a limited-edition DrugFreeSG goodie bag!

STEP 1: Borrow a copy of Captain Drug Buster vs Dr. Wacko: The First Encounter from the public library or school library. You can also scan the QR code here to access a digital copy from the CNB website.



STEP 2: Answer this question: What is the name of the product created by Dr. Wayne Wack?

STEP 3: Send your answer to CNB_Community_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg by Oct 7, 2020. Winners will be contacted via the e-mail address used to submit the answer.