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A loss due to drinking, driving

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Christopher L. Jons, captain of "The Eight," Buffalo

Ten years ago on the East Coast, there was one of the largest losses of human life due to hatred and anger. In the Mountain West five days later, there was one of the largest losses of life, and potential, due to a bad decision and stupidity.

On Sept. 16, 2001 eight members of my University of Wyoming Cross Country team were killed by a drunk driver.

I would like you to think of this for a moment. Pick 10 to 15 of your closest friends and family, people you spend every day with, and now find out half of them are gone. You don't know who; just half of your world is gone.

Look at it a different way: eight kids gone. That would leave 16 parents, 32 grandparents, and if there is an average family of 2.5 kids, over 12 brothers and sisters, and, for arguments sake, let's say triple that for cousins, aunts and uncles.

The number gets larger; when you are in an athletic team you have a closeness that is deeper than just friendship. So, that number has now probably doubled; these eight also had high school teammates, who shared the same bond of mutual companionship, so double that number again.

One bad choice of drinking and driving has changed the lives of not only my eight friends' families, but friends and members of the community as well.

I am not writing this to make anyone feel bad, or to say our tragedy is any worse than any other tragedy. I am just hoping that one person will read this and not drink that extra beer or two. When your friend has had too many to drink, you don't let them get behind the wheel. If you are the bartender don't serve one more to the person who can't walk or stay on the stool.

I write this to thank the officers who pull over the weaver and the wobbler; the Good Samaritan who will call in that same weaver on the road. I am asking that organizations continue their campaigns to educate our youth and adults to make good choices. Even if this means beer or liquor companies need to use harsher wording to help detere people from consuming too much of their product. This is how you keep people alive.

I ask you please do these simple things for yourselves and others. And, I ask you to do only one thing for me. Remember Cody, Kyle, Nick, Josh, Shane, Kevin, Justin, and Morgan with a run, jog, walk or even just a few seconds to tell someone close to you that you love them. This is how you keep memories alive.

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