



EMU **Photovoice** Project

ACPA 2011 Baltimore, MD

This project used a concept called the **Photonovella** as a tool to generate greater awareness and discussion around alcohol in the EMU Fraternity and Sorority community.

Their prompt:

To show how **alcohol** affects their lives and their community.

Eight Fraternity and Sorority members picked up cameras and told their **story**.



Since coming to college and joining a sorority, partying has been a large aspect of my life. I joined to meet people, make new friends, and "live the college experience" so to speak. As a college freshman, my education definitely took a backseat. Every Monday you could find me at Theo's. Everyone went there together and we always had a good time. I rarely made it to my 8 AM class on Tuesday mornings and my grades tanked my second semester. I failed a class and lost my scholarship. Not only did I have to explain to my parents that they now had to pay even more money for my education but deal with the embarrassment of being a disappointment.

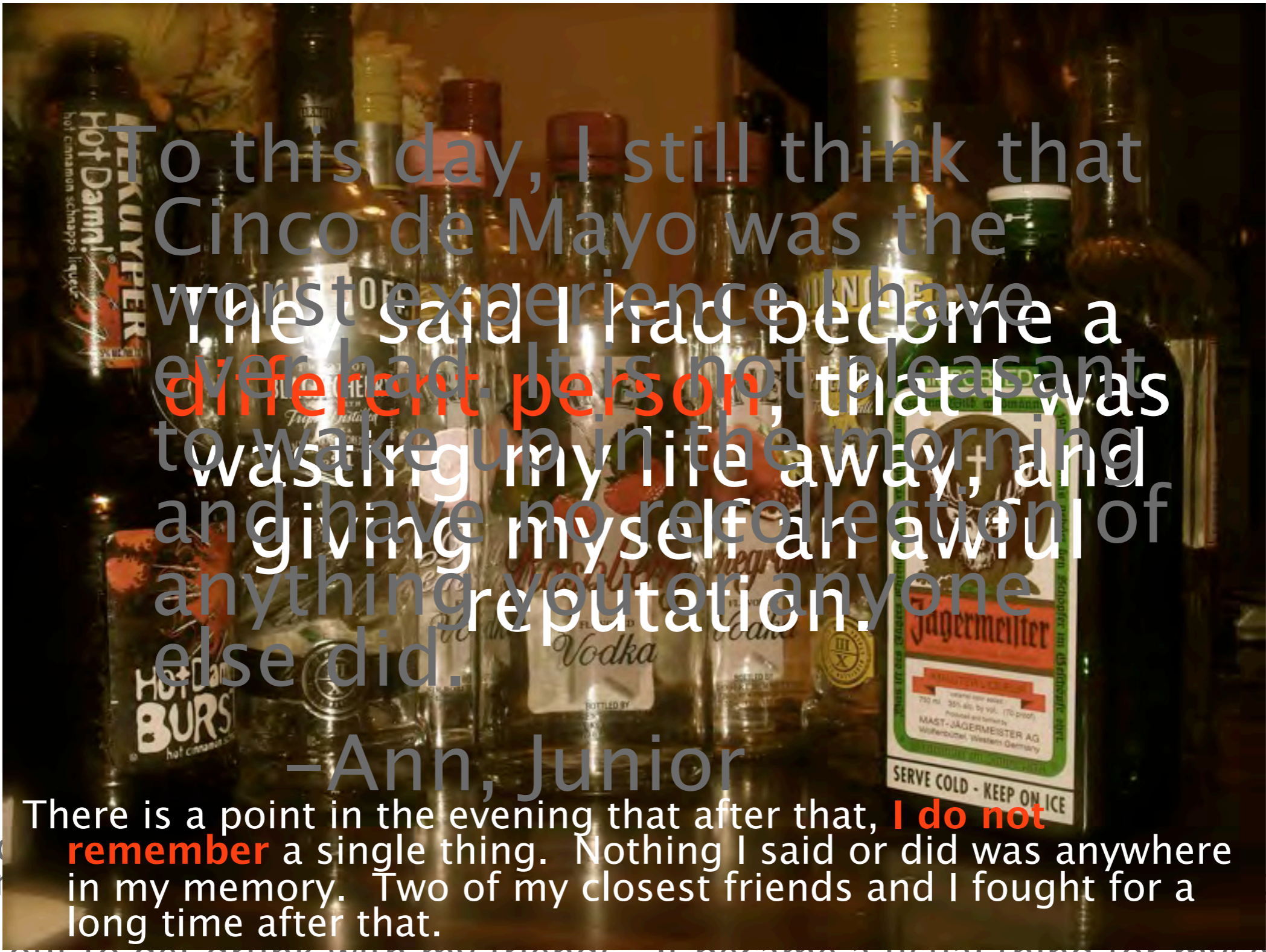
Ann, Junior

It seemed like a great idea at the time. I was meeting new people, I was having fun, and it only cost \$1 to get in. Being a productive student didn't seem too important.



As I continued to meet more people, I met a lot of older students in fraternities and sororities that had their own apartments/houses. One place in particular was located on Normal Street. I went there numerous times to party and **forget about doing anything else**. I always stayed out late and even went out and got wasted the night before my last final of the semester. Final exams are worth a large portion of your grade, and again, seemed to lack importance in my mind.

Ann, Junior



To this day, I still think that Cinco de Mayo was the worst experience I have ever had. They said I had become a different person, that I was to waste my life away, and give myself an awful reputation. I was giving myself an awful reputation.

-Ann, Junior

There is a point in the evening that after that, I do not remember a single thing. Nothing I said or did was anywhere in my memory. Two of my closest friends and I fought for a long time after that.

Spent
Sun
wo

"Ypsi
go to
and

go out to get drunk with my friends. It became a usual thing for myself and a friend to split a fifth every evening. This led to no productivity, being late to work, and wasting away my entire day and summer.

I blacked out for my first time that summer.

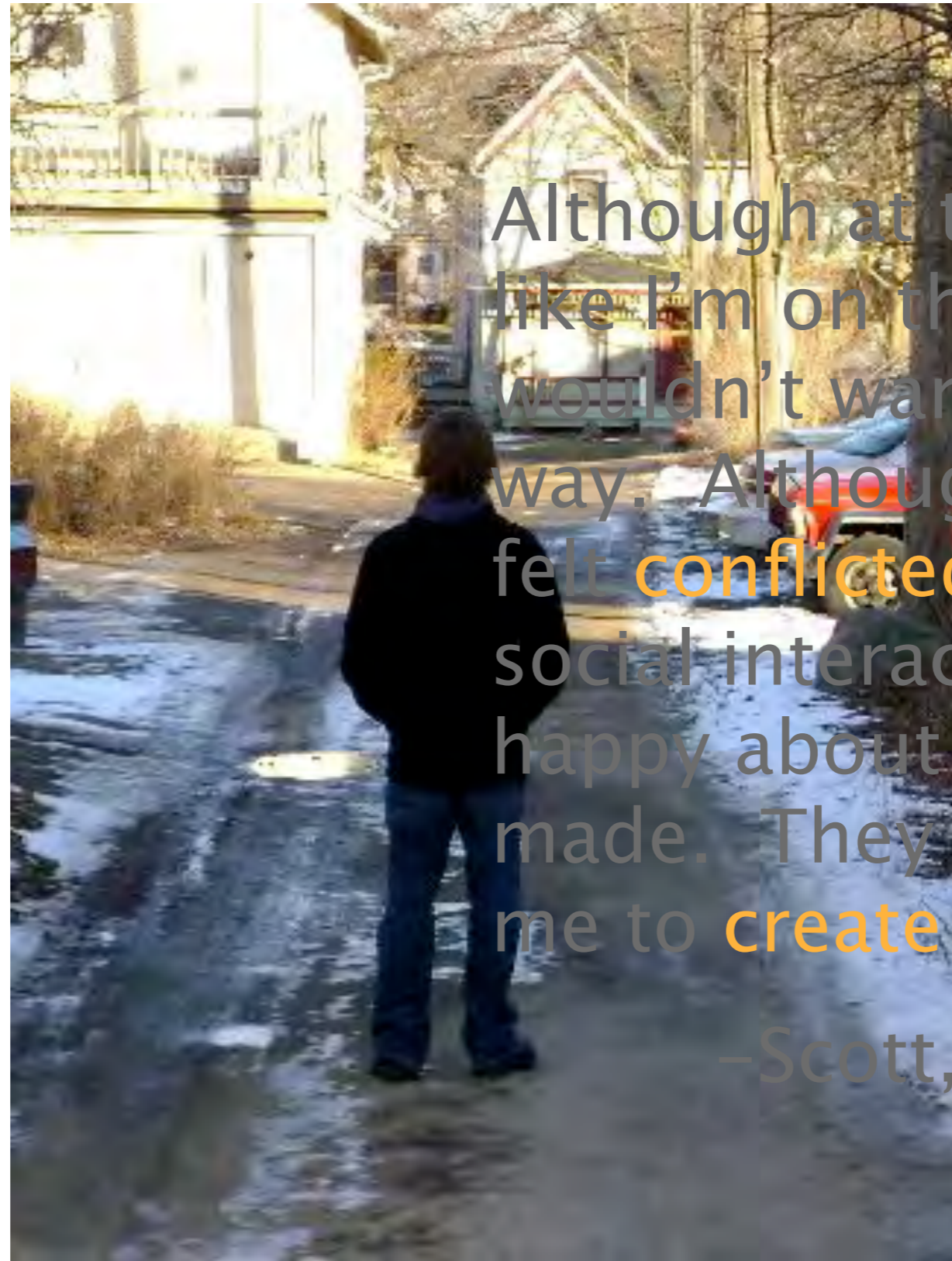


Many times I feel **out of place** when in some of our main social environments.

I have at times felt as if I was on the **outside** looking in.

Scott, Senior





Although at times I do feel like I'm on the outside, I wouldn't want it any other way. Although at times I've felt **conflicted** about my social interactions, I'm happy about the choices I've made. They have helped me to **create** my own path.

–Scott, Senior

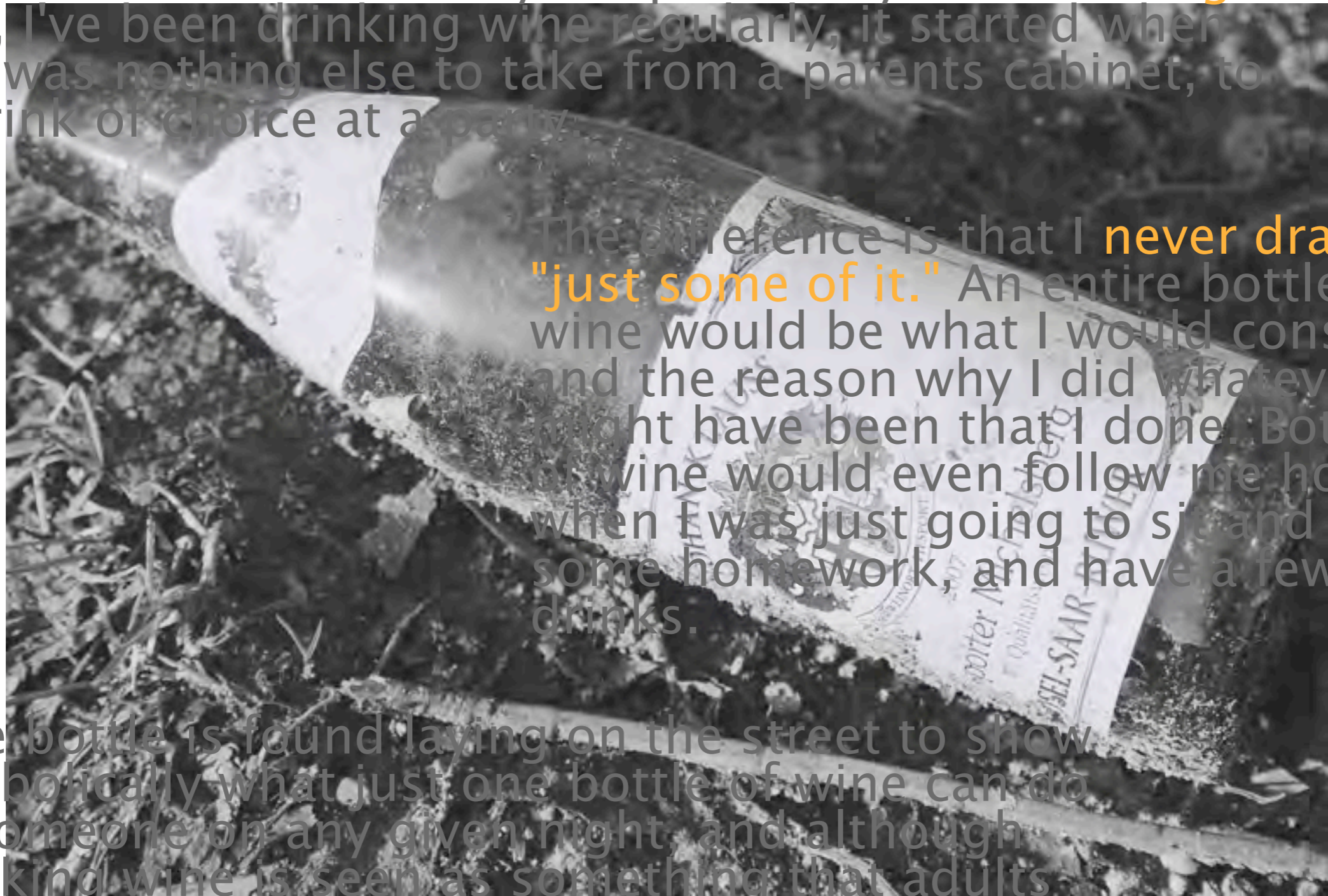


This photo was taken because and represents my very **first impression of Greek Life**. I was taken to a house party on normal street my first week of college my freshman year. This street although empty in the picture, was crawling with college kids all drinking, partying, and enjoying their weekend. This view was the view I remember of what I thought "Greek Life" was originally like, little did I know.

Thinking back, and looking at this picture I now realize what outsiders must think of this view of Greek Life.

Kate, Junior

This photo was taken to represent the damage that "just some wine" has done to my life personally. From the **age of 13**, I've been drinking wine regularly, it started when there was nothing else to take from a parents cabinet, to my drink of choice at a party.



The difference is that I **never drank, "just some of it."** An entire bottle of wine would be what I would consume, and the reason why I did whatever it might have been that I done. Bottles of wine would even follow me home, when I was just going to sit and do some homework, and have a few drinks.

The bottle is found laying on the street to show symbolically what just one bottle of wine can do to someone on any given night, and although drinking wine is seen as something that adults do, it can be **abused** just like hard liquor and beer.

Kate, Junior



This photo was taken outside of a fraternity house on Eastern Michigan's campus. It puts into perspective, not only the disarray of many fraternity houses, but also the **priorities** of many.

What is displayed is the trash left behind after a party: empty bottles, cigarette packs, and pizza roll wrappers. This also shows that while many students, especially Eastern Michigan students **struggle** to make ends meet for school supplies, tuition, and even rent – they have more than enough money for brand name liquor, cigarettes, and dinner.

Partying in many cases takes precedent over school, even though we all attend college to obtain the same thing, a degree.

Continuous wear and tear.
A **metaphor** for the body,
perhaps?



Max, Sophomore

I **wonder** if this is
ingoing or outgoing
mail...

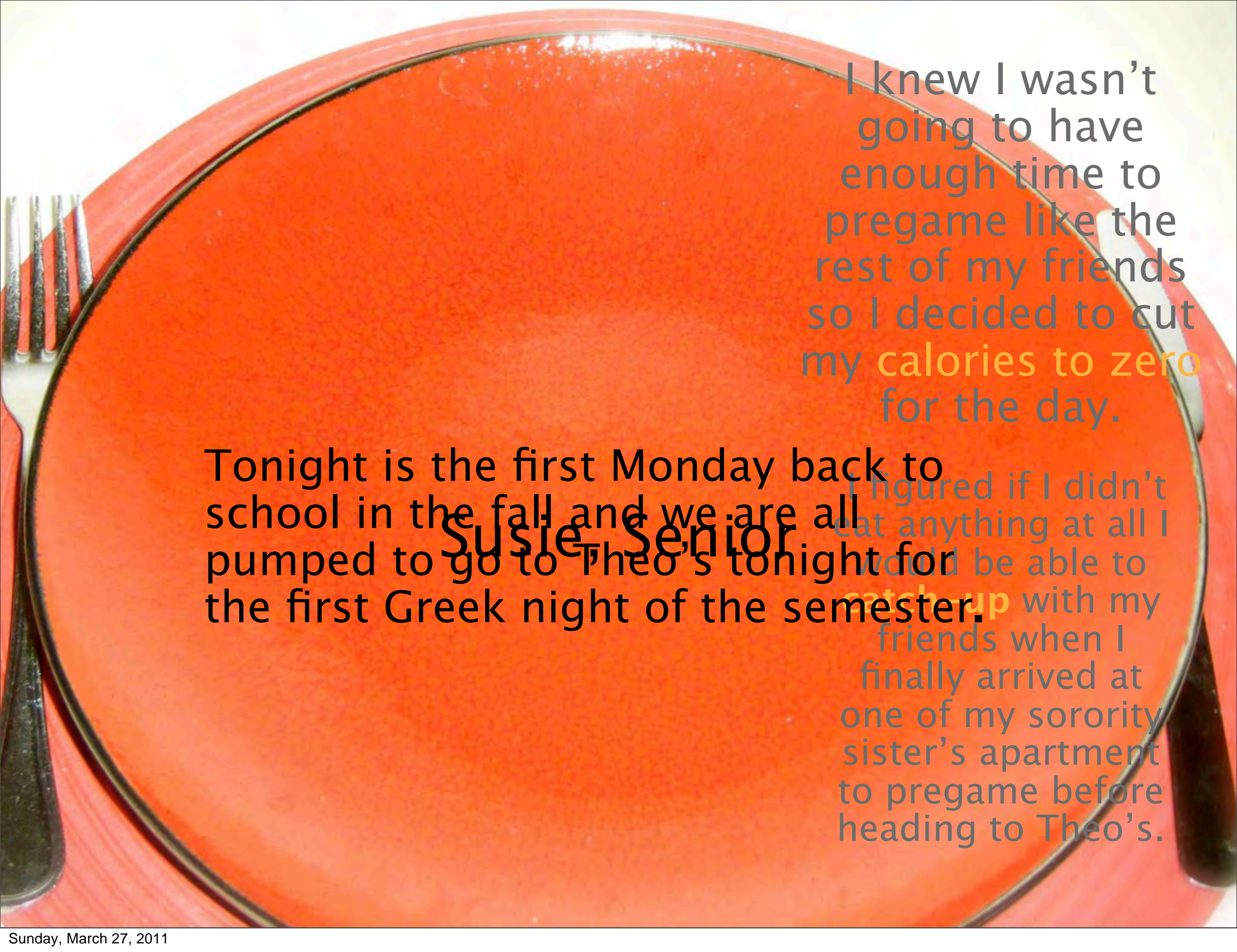
Max, Sophomore





This trashcan was in the house's study room. I can see how this promotes a healthy **learning** environment.

Max, Sophomore



I knew I wasn't going to have enough time to pregame like the rest of my friends so I decided to cut my **calories to zero** for the day.

Tonight is the first Monday back to school in the fall and we are all pumped to go to Theo's tonight for the first Greek night of the semester.

Susie, Senior

I figured if I didn't eat anything at all I would be able to **catch-up** with my friends when I finally arrived at one of my sorority sister's apartment to pregame before heading to Theo's.

At approximately 1:30am **EMS** was called to the
Delta Zeta house.

I was unconscious and rushed to the Hospital.

It is every **parents worst nightmare** to receive a phone call in the middle of the night telling them their daughter is unconscious from too much drinking and is on her way to the Hospital. My BAC was .36. I woke up the next morning with no idea where I was; my parents were just staring at me with a **worried and disappointed** look.





S- Mangled, beyond repair '99 Blazer.

H- A financial issue that could have been avoided.

O- Although things such as cars are replaceable and people are not, there are consequences for all the choices we make.

W- Plenty of reasons this problem exists: Media, peer pressure, perception of society. Being able to drive even after having too much to drink is seemed as "cool", "okay", and more often than not, encouraged.

D- Combat those stereotypes and perceptions of "The drunker you get, the better you become".

Challenge people when they try to encourage such behaviors. Don't allow a loved one or close friend make the same mistake so many are making in the United States today.

Debbie, Senior



Andrea, Junior

But the role of alcohol and drugs in my life **will not continue** in the violent, progressive ways it has in my parents.

Growing up in a family of addiction—I have been abused, neglected, manipulated and lied to in every way a person never should. The role that alcohol and drugs has played in my life is **not just a role**, but **the entire production**.

let someone take the burden off my shoulders and promises in my life.

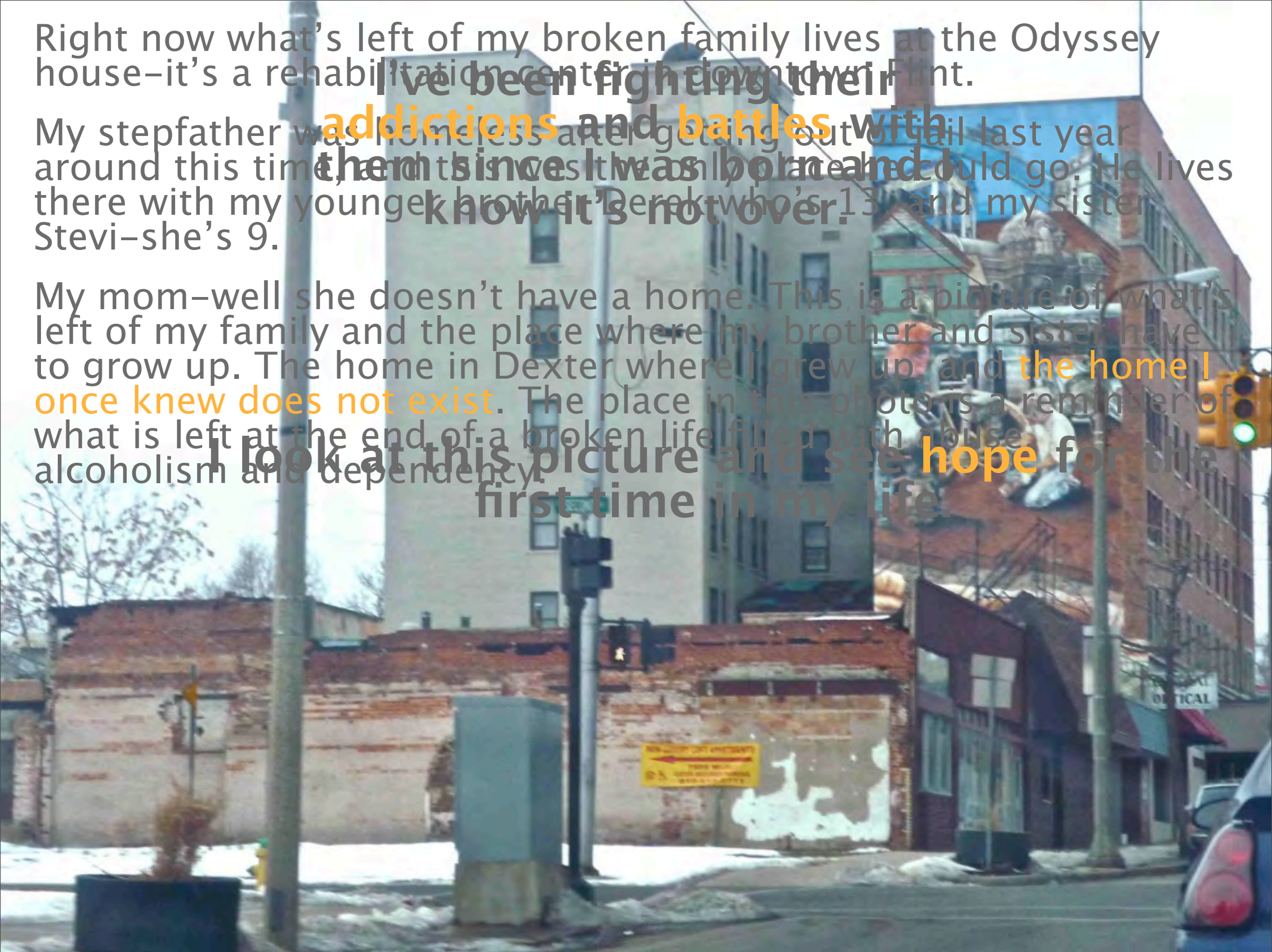
I've seen almost every drug you can name, the inside of a court room, and negated commitments, ambulances, and still replay visions of domestic violence in my head like something from a **horror movie**.

I have watched lives become **ruins** and feelings and emotions become masked by an addiction.

Right now what's left of my broken family lives at the Odyssey house—it's a rehabilitation center in downtown Flint. **I've been fighting their**

My stepfather was homeless after getting out of jail last year around this time, **addictions and battles with** them since it was born and could go. He lives there with my younger brother, Derek, who's 13, and my sister Stevi—she's 9. **know it's not over.**

My mom—well she doesn't have a home. This is a picture of what's left of my family and the place where my brother and sister have to grow up. The home in Dexter where I grew up, and **the home I once knew does not exist.** The place in this photo is a reminder of what is left at the end of a broken life filled with abuse, alcoholism and dependency. **I look at this picture and see hope for the first time in my life.**



I'm **scared**

~~from my friends who~~
think that drinking
constitutes a
“Good time.”





This picture is not the result of a **good** time,
nor is it a result of a **good** life.

How do you make someone realize now that at
the end of each drink, could be a **life** like this?
Andrea, Junior

I would **never** wish this
upon a single person.



EMU Photovoice Project

Music by Explosions in the Sky, 2007

The Photonovella

Granting a **Voice** (Wang and Burris, 1997)

Youth Photovoice Introduced in Baltimore
(Strack, Magill & McDonagh, 2004)

Three Step Process:

Taking Pictures

Group Discussion

Informing Policy Makers/Creating
Awareness

Photovoice and **Alcohol**
(Goodhart et. al, 2006)

Used photovoice to
complement NCHA data
at Rutgers University

Photovoice and Alcohol (Wilson et. al, 2008)

SHOWED acronym: What do we see in this picture? What's
really happening? How does this relate to our lives? Why does
it exist? What can we do about it?

Creating Critical Dialogue

The Process

Selection of Students

Initially 14 students committed, 8 completed the project

Setting Expectations and Training

Photo Taking

Photo Selection and Narrative Writing

Exhibition and Discussion

Student Process

Open to All Students

A Variety of Students Were Recruited

Substantial Confusion Early in the Process

Not Sure What to Expect

Ground Rules and Expectations

The students created the following ground rules and expectations:

Ground Rules

No chapter houses/
letters
No slander
No photo w/o consent if
it clearly shows
someone/something
specific/recognizable

Expectations

Be yourself
Be respectful
Be REAL
Cover different aspects of the
alcohol issue
Be supportive of each other
COMMIT to the project!

Training

“If we wanted a **Facebook** party album we would just go online and download one.”

Photo Taking

Students Were Initially Given One Month to Take Photos

An Additional Two Months Were Required

Address different levels of Prowess with Photography

Coaching and Follow Up

“I don’t have anything interesting to say.”

Encourage Vulnerability

Find an Artistic Place

It Becomes a Journey

Selection and Narratives

Students met with staff and collectively selected the best photos and the desired **message**.

Utilized the **SHOWED** method to coach students through the process of writing a narrative.

Students were given little direction in writing their narratives to **encourage creativity** and ensure a personal message.

Most students required multiple drafts, there was a great deal of **hesitation**.

Exhibition and Discussion

Faculty, staff and students were invited to an open exhibition in the EMU Student Center.

After the exhibition the Photovoice students **told their story** and presented their photos individually.

Participants were then divided into small groups for discussion. Each discussion was **facilitated** by the Photovoice students with staff assistance.

Discussion guides were provided for the students.

Outcomes - Participant Reactions

“As a team, our biggest challenge was to open ourselves up to the vulnerability. In return we found that allowing ourselves to be vulnerable was **an opportunity to learn about who we are**, grow by means of personal reflection, and to discover a common ground between members of our group.

From Start to finish, each of us found ourselves experiencing an array of emotions. From hearing the idea, to taking the actual pictures, to finally hanging them up for everyone to see we experienced sadness, excitement, and a sense of accomplishment. Importantly, we experienced this process together.

The biggest thing I took away from this project was that no matter where each of us started, no matter the life experiences we had, we ALL had experiences, rather different or the same. Our community has identified alcohol as a problem and we are willing to address it as an issue.”

Andrea, Senior



Outcomes - Participant Reactions

Scott, Senior

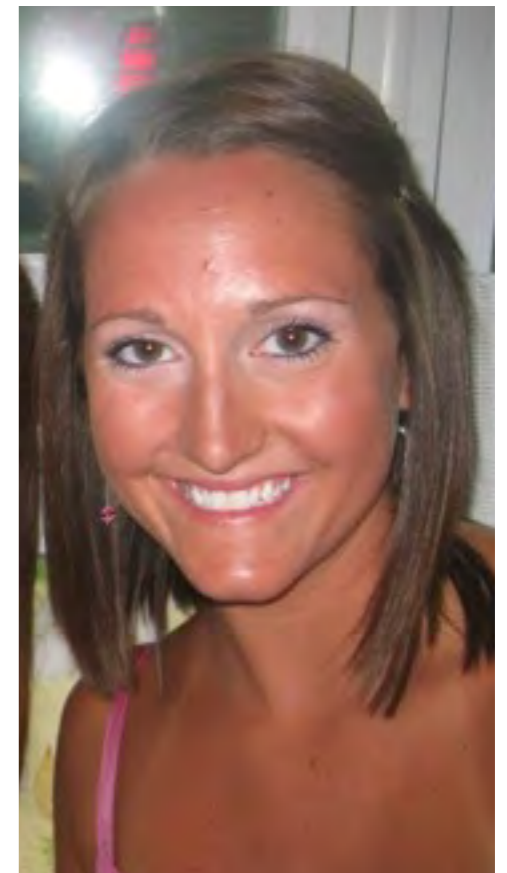


“I didn’t find success until I realized what my story really was about. During my self-analysis, I discovered my story wasn’t about the use of alcohol. Instead it was about constructing a social environment that didn’t need alcohol. My story was the realization that I didn’t want the typical “college party” experience. I had the opportunity to avoid that lifestyle and I did my best to take it. **I wanted other students to realize that they have a choice** in shaping their social environment.”

Outcomes - Participant Reactions

Susie, Senior

“I have always wanted to share my story to members across the Greek community because I feel that it is important for my peers to understand the effects alcohol have on you. It only takes one bad night for you to realize the potential dangers that can occur. Participating in Photovoice gave me the opportunity to be creative and think of photographs that would tell a story through art. The **facial expressions and comments from the students at the program are unforgettable.** I feel that each story that was told impacted someone in the room.”



Outcomes - Attendee Reactions

Peer influence was substantial

Students saw more **credibility** in their peers

The status of the students participating was of note

Rich **dialogue**

Significant interest in future Photovoice Projects

Outcomes - Faculty/ Staff Reactions

Increased **awareness** about student experiences

Getting beyond the data

Increased **emotional** affect

Generated interest from faculty and staff with expertise in AOD prevention

Outcomes - Assessment Data

Hmm...

Next Steps at EMU

Find a way to utilize the product of Photovoice in additional media

Find more effective ways to assess – possible follow up assessment

Conduct additional Photovoice Projects on different topics

- Mental Health

- Civic Engagement

- Integration of Values

Lessons Learned

Students appreciate the **self disclosure** of their peers.

The peer to peer messages have more impact than many staff and professional programs.

Collaborating with staff from Health Education was pivotal for adding credibility to the project.

Due to the personal nature of the project, **students** should be involved in all facets of the planning and execution.

Students should meet with staff multiple times during the photography process for **coaching**.

It is a fine line between coaching and polluting.

An unexpected by product was an opportunity to engage students who might need help.

Lessons Learned

Meaningful **diversity** is a challenge – getting men involved is difficult

Printing and mounting will either take a long time or **cost** a lot of money

Assessment – Do some
Significant missed opportunity

How to Start a Photovoice Project

Do the Research

Develop Relationships

Target the Right Students

Create a Clear Prompt that Empowers the Student Voice

Give Yourself Plenty of Time

Conduct a Training

Facilitate Access to the Necessary Audiences

How to Start a Photovoice Project

Using the toolkit can be a good resource – see handouts

Photovoice.org



Thank You for Attending!

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