

# Crash victim has a message for teenagers

By Mary Rodrigue staff writer

Brian Moore's life is far different from the way he envisioned it while a teenager growing up in Livonia.

Then he planned on a career in writing.

As a Bentley High Junior, he particularly enjoyed concert choir.

Outside school, he played baseball with his friends.

MOORE'S LIFE was tragically altered Memorial Day weekend, 1978. He was 17.

"I was up near Bishop Lake State Park with two friends, both seniors. We were all in the Bentley concert choir together," Moore said in the slow, deliberate speech pattern he now uses.

"We were partying, drinking beer."

One of the trio was feeling ill and not drinking. So Moore and his other buddy split the 24 bottles of beer between themselves. Moore was driving, although "I was out of my mind — crooked," he said.

He remembers the non-drinking friend shouting "Stop. I want to get out before we all get killed."

"I remember that like it was in a dream," Moore said. "I locked up the brakes and the Bronco went airborne, up through the guardrail."

Moore sailed through the windshield and began what was to be nine months of unconsciousness.

"Thank God the truck didn't run over me. I didn't break any bones. I heard the cops were chasing me when we crashed. That was lucky. Probably before I crashed to a halt, ambulances were on the way."

His friends both suffered minor injuries. No other vehicle was involved in the accident.

To this day, Moore is still recovering.

HOME NOW is an apartment in Livonia that is staffed 24 hours a day by college students.

Moore was the first patient (he calls it guinea pig) for Personal Therapist Incorporated, an 18-month-old organization that places handicapped people in home-like settings. P.T.I. has placed 20 clients.

Over the past decade, Moore has lived in hospitals, a nursing home and group homes.

"Part of the time in the coma, I had my eyes wide open. But if someone from my family came up, I didn't know them," said Moore, who

has six sisters and a brother. "I do recall coming to in the hospital. I saw wheelchairs and nurses. I would see changing odors and people walking by would be hopping up and down. It was bizarre. My mind wasn't well enough to think anything through."

Doctors were less than encouraging. He was labeled brain injured; recovery would be unpredictable.

"A doctor in the nursing home looked at my X-rays and said I would never walk again. It was like I was a senior citizen when I was 18 years old. He didn't try to motivate me. He wanted me to get used to a wheelchair. I said 'bull.'"

MOORE IS a man with a mission — to warn others of the dangers of drinking and driving.

He gives speeches to high school students, to Mothers Against Drunk

Driving and Students Against Driving Drunk groups, at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings — to anyone who asks.

He has traveled to Tennessee, Ohio and Canada and throughout Michigan's lower peninsula to spread the word.

The standing ovations, the tears in the eyes of his audience show he is making an impact — the kind parental preachiness or boring statistics cannot achieve.

In Moore, the audience sees a young man with a zest for life. And they see the havoc drunk driving has wreaked on his body — his halting speech, walking with the aid of a walker.

There is much they don't see — a life that is tedious and slow moving,

recorded hour for hour on a written form, the loneliness, the lapsed of memory.

"I'm getting sick and tired of clinic rules. But it's a lot better than it was."

MOORE HAS a business card that shows a young man slumped behind the wheel of a car under a barrage of alcoholic beverages. Under his name it says crash victim, advocate against drinking and driving.

"I think I reach the kids because I'm kind of young. They see what happened to me. The radical type, the partiers, they like that."

Moore attends remedial classes at the building of his alma mater, Bentley High School (he earned a General Educational Development certifi-

cate after his accident). He rides a three-wheeled bicycle. He writes short stories — in printed serial.

And he plays a mean game of chess, according to his stepfather, Jimmy Shelp.

But Moore is most enthusiastic about the speeches. He believes he was spared so that he can spread the word that drinking and driving don't mix.

And he fervently hopes he has reached some people in his audiences.

"It would be nice to know I made a difference."

(Brian Moore is available to speak to groups about drinking and driving. He can be reached at 477-8516.)

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### Ice cream social to have 1890s theme

Cool, creamy treats may rekindle warm memories when the American House Retirement Residence opens its doors for an old-fashioned ice cream social from 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 15.

The social will be hosted at no charge for all American House residents, their families and anyone interested in learning more about "congregate" retirement living.

"We'll be ordering over 150 gallons of ice cream for this event," said Bob Gillette, American House president.

The social will feature live entertainment and decorations reminiscent of the early 1890s.

American House staff will be available to answer questions about congregate living and conduct tours of the facilities.

The ice cream social is part of a series of events planned by American House Retirement Residence based on the theme "Do You Remember?" These activities will bring to mind the first quarter of this century, a nostalgic era that holds fond memories for most American House residents.

American House operates 14 retirement residences in southeast Michigan for individuals and couples who can manage most of their personal needs, but prefer the house-keeping and food services, as well as the companionship offered through congregate living.

The Farmington Hills site is at 24400 Middlebelt, north of 10 Mile.

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