

VIRGINIA (“GINGER”) KATZ

CEO and Founder, The Courage To Speak® Foundation, Inc.

Mission: Saving lives by empowering youth to be drug free and encouraging parents to communicate effectively with their children about the dangers of drug.

Founded in 1996 shortly after Ginger and Larry Katz lost their son, Ian, to a drug overdose and dedicated to fulfilling a promise Ginger made to Ian to do everything in her power to prevent this tragedy from happening to another family.

Core Activities: Educational presentations, proprietary school-based programs/curriculum, parenting programs/curriculum, books and videos that empower students and their parents to break through the silence and denial surrounding substance abuse to honestly communicate about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.

Major Accomplishments

- **Delivered approximately 1000 prevention presentations nationwide** to schools (elementary through college), civic organizations, law enforcement forums, medical forums, provider and prevention organizations, corporations, conventions, conferences and other forums throughout the country.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum for Middle Schools.** Now in its fourteenth year of implementation in many schools across the country, based in Norwalk, CT. Start 2000 to present. Thirteen lesson curriculum plus two booster lessons taught by health class teachers and language art teachers. This program was developed by a team of experts in prevention.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum for High Schools.** Twelve lesson curriculum taught by health class teachers and includes *Sunny’s Story*. This program was developed by a team of experts in prevention.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Prevention Curriculum based on Sunny’s Story for Elementary Schools.** Over 100 classroom teachers trained by the Courage to Speak Foundation reaching many schools since 2007. Taught by language art and health teachers for Grades 4-6. This program was developed by a team of experts in prevention.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Education for After School Programs - New –** Based on *Sunny’s Story* for students in Grades 4-6. Adapted from the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum for Elementary Schools. Four Sessions.
- **Developed the Courage To Speak Drug Prevention Parenting Curriculum *Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101*®.** Launched in 2008, a free multi-session course implemented by Courage to Speak Foundation trained facilitators as a follow up to the *Courage to Speak Presentation* and or video. The program is rapidly growing and has been implemented over 100 times in communities in 12 states. To date, over 132 instructors have been trained to teach this course in English and Spanish. This program was developed by a team of experts in prevention. **Offered free to parents.**
- **The Courage to Speak Empowering Youth to Be Drug Free Family Night 2005–2016.** Exciting event involving all aspect of the community. Parents, children community leaders, state and local officials, law enforcement, clergy, business men and women to engage the home, school and community and join together to make a stand to empower youth to be drug free. **Featuring the work of the students who participate in The Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum (grades 4, 5, 6 and 7th).**
- **Launched website, www.couragetospeak.org.** Information clearinghouse.
- **Authored Children’s and Parenting Book, March 6, 2007 called *Sunny’s Story*-** written by Ginger Katz, a compelling story for children, teenagers, parents, grandparents, educators and more. It tells of

joyful times and of sad times and of how a dog's best friend was needlessly lost to drugs. Narrated by the family beagle who tried to wake Ginger up the night Ian died. It is read at dinner tables across the country, as part of *The Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum* and as a stand-alone book in many schools.

- **Authored Story: *A Mother's Promise to her Son***, October, 2014 in *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Find Your Inner Strength*.
- **Authored Story: *A Mother's Promise to her Son***, 2016 in *Simply Happy: A Crash Course in Chicken Soup for the Soul Advice and Wisdom*
- **Created the Courage to Speak Support Group**. A lifeline for parents who have lost children to substance abuse (est. 2000). Established in 2009, a support group for family members who have young and adult children that are using drugs.
- **Coordinated "The Courage To Speak All Star Basketball Classic" 2000-2005**. Community sporting event shown on local and national television.

Major Awards, Appointments, and Speaking Invitations

Awards

- **The Sweet Mother Founder's Award 2015** for dedication of saving lives
- **National Prevention Week 2013, 2014 Award from SAMHSA** In Recognition of dedication and commitment to addressing the issues related to substance abuse and mental health.
- **Norwalk Public Schools Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Committee 2011 Citizenship Award** in recognition of the exemplary vision, leadership and commitment to Norwalk students and community
- **Bank of America 2010 Local Heroes Award**
- **Connecticut Association of Schools, 2010 Distinguished Friend of Education Award**, highest award given by Association to individual not directly involved in public education; nominated by CT principals.
- **Hartford Business Journal, 2010 Nonprofit Heroes - Advocate of the Year Award** for outstanding achievement and service.
- **Honorary Chair** of the Parent National Vigil held in Washington DC June 8, 2006 (*Ms. Katz suggestion to the Chief Administrator of DEA*). Visit www.nationalparentvigil.com.
- **2005 Community Leadership Award** of the Junior League of Stamford-Norwalk.
- **Prevention Works Award** recipient at Federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Museum in New York City with former NY City, Mayor Guiliani. Jointly presented by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (**SAMHSA**) (10/6/04).
- **President's "Daily Points of Light "** Award (2/03).
- **"Courage to Speak Day."** Statewide proclamation by CT Governor Jody Rell (10/20/05).
- **"Telly" Award and Worldfest Houston Award** for The Courage To Speak video (8/03)
- **Connecticut's "Woman of the Year."** The Connecticut Post (12/00).

Speaking Invitations

- **Speaker- 21st Annual CT Associations of Foster & Adoptive Parents (CAFAP) Conference, Mashantucket, CT** (May 13, 2016)
- **Speaker- Commission on Children Public Forum "In Everyone's Neighborhood: Communities Convene on the Opioid & Heroin Crisis"** (April 14, 2016)
- **Speaker- Alliance for Safe Kids "Save a Life Forum 2016"** (April 3, 2016)

- **Speaker- Aware Recovery Care Shoreline Clinical Networking, Madison Beach Hotel, Madison, CT** (June 26, 2015)
- **Speaker- Prescription Drug Abuse: Heroin Use and Overdose, Columbia-Greene Community College, Hudson, NY** (June 10, 2015)
- **Speaker- "Safe School Summit" including parents and law enforcement Worcester District Attorney's Office (54 towns), Worcester, MA** (May 28, 2015)
- **Speaker- 20th Annual CT Associations of Foster & Adoptive Parents (CAFAP) Conference, Mystic, CT** (May 1, 2015)
- **Speaker- Drugs, Alcohol, Teens, and Truth Panel Discussion, Tolland, CT** (April 30, 2015)
- **Speaker- New England Educational Opportunity Association (NEOA) Annual Conference, Portsmouth, NH-** (April 1, 2015)
- **Speaker- The Mark S. Bertuch "Make a Difference Program," Boca Raton, FL** (February 7, 2015)
- **Invited to be Speaker at the CADCA National Youth Conference (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) Washington, D.C.** (February 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013,)
- **Delivered over 50 presentations as a follow up to reading Sunny's Story written by Ms. Katz to the Bridgeport CT Schools** (May-June 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016)
- **Speaker- Roundtable Discussion on the Heroin Epidemic & Use of Narcan, Fairfield, CT** (July 10, 2014)
- **Speaker- Litchfield County Opiate Task Force, Torrington, CT (September 14, 2014)**
- **Health Teachers Drug Prevention Training, Norwalk, CT** (August 26, 2014)
- **"TRAIN THE TRAINER" New Facilitators Training for Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101@, Plainville, CT** (November 7, 2013)
- **Speaker- CADCA's 23rd Annual National Leadership Forum, Washington, D.C.** (February 5, 2013)
- **Keynote Speaker, Office of Norfolk/Canton, MA District Attorney with 28 town representatives** (October 18, 2012)
- **Speaker- Connecticut Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Convention** (November 16, 2012)
- **Speaker- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and Public School Superintendents Convention** (November 17, 2012)
- **Speaker- National Summit on Rx Drug Abuse, Orlando, FL** (April 9, 2012)
- **Speaker- Connecticut Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance** (March 29, 2012)
- **Speaker- CADCA Forum 2012 Sponsored by SAMHSA the Courage to Speak Presentation Prevention Day** (February 6, 2012)
- **Speaker- Connecticut Education Association Summer Leadership Conference 2011**
- **Speaker- Massachusetts Teachers Association Summer Conference 2011**
- **Invited by Mayor's Office Quincy MA to be Speaker at Quincy HS and No Quincy HS** (January 2011)
- **Speaker - Martinsville VA Community** (December 2010)
- **Speaker- Browne Gibbs Young Educational Campus, Washington DC** (December 2010)
- **Invited to be Speaker at Connecticut School Counselors Conference** (October 2010)
- **Optimus Health Care and the University of Bridgeport** in association with transworld power productions. CFN TV show debut featuring Ginger Katz, April 2009

- **Keynote Speaker at the Wheeler Clinic** December 17, 2008 in CT
- **Keynote Speaker at Quincy, MA Drug Symposium** established by the Mayor of Quincy October 16, 2008
- **Keynote Speaker at Yale University**, September 24, 2008 sponsored by SAPN.
- **Keynote Speaker at University of Florida, School of Addiction Medicine** February 2008
- **Speaker – JMATE Conference**, Washington DC March 25, 2008
- **Speaker – Prevention Not Punishment Conference** Washington DC, June 2007
- **Speaker at Optimus Health Care** - formerly Bridgeport Community Health Center June 2007
- **Speaker at JMATE, Joint meeting on Adolescent Treatment**, Washington, DC [Courage to Speak: A Model for Enhancing Parent-Child Communication and Advocacy](#) April 2007
- **Speaker at UCONN Providers Conference** at Storrs, CT, plus Workshop Leader – 05/10/06.
- **Speaker at Waterbury Alliance Doctors Group**, Waterbury, CT – 08/06
- **National Keynote at Circle Around Families Conference** in Indiana – 4/05/06.
- **Speaker at the National Narcotic Officers Associations** in Washington DC – (2/13/06).
- **Keynote Speaker at the Connecticut PTA 105th Convention** – (5/ 07/05).
- **Speaker at the CADCA National Youth Conference (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America)** Washington, D.C. – (1/04 and 1/05).
- **Invited by the Drug Enforcement Agency to speak, along with former New York City mayor Rudolf Giuliani, at opening of DEA Museum’s drug prevention exhibit, “Target America,” in Times Square.** Other presenters: John Walters, Drug Czar, Karen Tandy, DEA Administrator and Beverly Watts Davis of US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – (9/14/04).
- **Invitation from Senator Joseph Lieberman** to lead a landmark symposium on the dangers of Ecstasy in Trumbull CT – (2002).
- **Invitation to attend White House ceremony** appointing John Walters "drug czar" – (2002).

National Media/Web Recognition

- **Interviewed with Bill O’Reilly on The O’Reilly Factor on Fox News** - June 7, 2013
- **Invited to the White House** for a press conference for a report of national drug use and recognition of the Courage to Speak Foundation work. December 2007
- **National spokesperson** for the National Parent Vigil in Washington, DC June 8, 2006
- **Wrote newspaper column in The Hour**, Norwalk, CT – 2005 - 2006
- **Interviewed for law enforcement training film** shown nationally in 2004. Produced by Multi-jurisdictional Counter Drug Task Force in Jupiter, FL – (2/14/04).
- **NPR Radio** – 2007 Interview with Ms. Katz
- **Featured in prominent media outlets:** The New York Times, New York- Daily News, Washington Times, Boston Herald, Hartford Courant, NBC-TV, NBA Inside Stuff, Life Time for Women, MSNBC, Cablevision of CT, CPTV, CT Post, The Hour, The Advocate, The Norwalk Citizen News, Yes Network, Cox Radio Station, WEBE 108 in Fairfield County – Women in Sports, Madison Square Garden, SportsDesk MSG Network.
- **BBC News Broadcast** – (May/June 2003).

- **Produced “The Courage to Speak Video”** (25-minute and 6-minute versions and 30 second PSA). New video in development 2012.
- **Current Health Magazine Interview** 10/03 distributed to all schools in U.S.
- **CT and NY Family Magazine** 12/03
- **Produced Drug Prevention P.S.A.** Feature shown in Crown Movie Theaters, CT Cablevision, Life Time for Women, MTV and other channels (2002 to present)
- **Featured on websites of the White House Office of Drug Control Policy, (ONDCP) www.drugstory.org, and the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), www.preventionpartners.samhsa.gov** – (5/03-to present).
- **"Meet the Leaders" Show on Cablevision of CT** – (entire month of June 2005).
- **Authored article on “The Courage To Speak” for Principal Leadership Magazine** – (2/03).
- **Feature on Education Notebook, Cablevision of CT, 2005 to present.**

Additional Speaking Invitations from National Conventions and Forums

- **Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Leadership Forum Washington DC** – (12/02, 1/05, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014)
- **Keynote Speaker at the Narcotic Enforcement Officers Association (NEOA) Annual Conference, Newport, RI** – (11/16/04) and Washington DC (04/07/06)
- **Keynote Speaker at the Connecticut PTA 105th Convention** – (5/ 07/05).
- **Speaker, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), and feature story in newsletter in November 2004** – (10/22/04).
- **Speaker, Connecticut Association of Schools Annual Winter Conference.** High school and middle school principals’ professional organization – (1/28/04).
- **Press Conference and Forum at Yale School of Medicine.** Invitation from the Office of National Drug Control Policy.
- **The ONDCP Summit, Washington, DC.** Invited by John P. Walters, Drug Czar – 10/30/03.
- **Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Convention** – (11/03).
- **The New England Governors Summit, Faniel Hall Boston, MA.** Invited by Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy – (10/8/03).
- **Speaker, Pride International, Ohio** – (2002 -03).
- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Washington, D.C.** – (2/02).
- **Keynote, National Association of Drug Court Professionals, Reno, NV** – (1/02).
- **Keynote, Atlanta, GA** – Parent Corp, National Association of Independent Schools, New York; National Association of Secondary School Principals, San Diego, CADCA Leadership Forum, D.C. 2001 and 2002; Pride International.

Additional Awards, Appointments, Board Memberships

- **2010 Distinguished Friend of Education Award- Connecticut Association of Schools** (March 2010)
- **Jr. League of Stamford Norwalk, Community Leadership Award** – 04/05.
- **Executive Committee of FAST in CT – Families Advocating for Treatment in CT.**
- **Award for Community Service.** Seventh Day Adventist Church – (6/02).

- **"Celebrate Women" Award.** Honoree of Norwalk Women's Professional Organization –
- **Board Member, Connecticut Communities for Drug-Free Youth** – (1997-2003).
- **Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.** Partnership Council and Standing Committee of Connecticut – (2000-2002).
- **Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), Columbia University Task Force Member** – (1999-2000).
- **Community Service Award.** Toughlove International – (1/99).
- **Member, Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)** – (1997-2006).
- **Member, Mid-Fairfield Substance Abuse Coalition** (1997-present).
- **Member, Community Prevention Task Force of Norwalk** – (1997-present).
- **Member, Kiwanis Club of Norwalk** – (2001-04).
- **Norwalk Planning Commissioner** – (1994-02).

Athletic Achievements

(Note: The Courage to Speak Foundation empowers young people to find their passion in life as an alternative to using alcohol and other drugs. Ginger Katz models this through her athletic achievements and very positive, motivational presentations).

- **Second Place, Silver Medal, Camden, NJ, US Masters Nationals, Women's 8+ Boat** (8/15)
- **Second Place, Saratoga Springs, NY, Head of the Fish, Women's Four Boat** (10/13)
- **Gold Medalist, Narragansett, RI** (07/10)
- **Silver and Bronze Medallist, U.S. Rowing masters national Championship, Cherry Hill, NJ** (08/10)
- **Gold Medallist, Narragansett, RI** (07/10)
- **Gold and Silver Medallist, US Rowing National Master's Championship** (08/09)
- **Gold Medallist, Carnegie Lake Regatta, Princeton, NJ,** (06/09)
- **Invited to the Head of the Charles Regatta Boston, MA** – second place grand masters women's four boat (10/08)
- **Bronze Medalist, Naragasset, MA Sweeps and Sculls, RI** (7/06)
- **Gold Medalist, Howard Diamond States Regatta, DL** – (7/05).
- **Silver and Bronze Medalist, U.S. Rowing Masters National Championship, MA** – (8/05).
- **Silver Medalist, Mystic Seaport Regatta, CT** – (9/05)
- **Invited with her crewing team to the "Head of the Charles Regatta"** – (2003 -2004)
- **Founder and Captain, "The Hot Shots," CT's Senior Olympic Women's Basketball Team,** ranked 7th in U.S. – (2000 to 2005)
- **Gold Medalist, Connecticut Senior Games** – basketball, tennis, running – (2000 to 2005).
- **Silver Medalist, U.S. Rowing Masters National Championship, KS** – (8/98).

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