



# THE COURAGE TO SPEAK® FOUNDATION PROGRAM FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS

## Courage to Speak® Drug Prevention Education Program for Middle Schools

The *Courage to Speak® Drug Prevention Education Program for Middle Schools* builds skills to help students make good decisions and resist the pressure to use drugs. Students take part in specific skills development and asset-building activities through:

- Internet research
- Group discussion
- Creative writing
- Scientific demonstration
- Art

The Program consists of 13-15 highly interactive classroom lessons taught by teachers, trained by the Courage To Speak® Foundation and begins with the book *Sunny's Story*, a glimpse at teen drug abuse and loss told through the eyes and mind of Sunny, the family beagle. The Program basis is the *Courage to Speak® Presentation* (live or DVD) by founder Ginger Katz, which introduces the real-life story of her son Ian's losing battle with addiction, launching open and honest discussions in a school setting regarding alcohol and other drugs.

The lessons enable students to:

- Have a clear plan to refuse alcohol and other drugs when offered
- Develop clear decision-making strategies
- Identify 3-5 adults who will support them when needed
- Communicate with their parents about risk behaviors and the dangers of drugs.

A critical component of the Program is the *Courage to Speak® Empowering Youth to be Drug Free Family Night and Media Event*. Students, parents, teachers, school and government officials and key community leaders gather to celebrate the commitment of students in the *Courage to Speak® Drug Prevention Program* to be drug free and be anti-drug advocates with siblings and friends.

A Yale University evaluation reported statistically significant increases in youth's communication with their parents about substance use and an increase in the number of times students talked to their parent(s) about: drugs and family rules and expectations about drug use; things they could do to avoid drugs; drug use in movies; and people they know who have been in trouble because of drug use.

This study further demonstrates the effectiveness of the Courage to Speak® Foundation Drug Prevention Education Model that engages home, school and community to keep our children safe from drugs.

### Teacher Comments

*"The work the kids have done to this point has been well beyond what I could ever hope for."* Pat Vigilio, Ponus Ridge Middle School, Norwalk CT

*"The students' reactions to these lessons are genuine...and their comments demonstrate their insights into this highly charged material. The Courage To Speak Program is one of the finest I have ever encountered."* York Mario, West Rocks Middle School, Norwalk CT

### Student Comments

*"The most important thing this program teaches is not to be afraid. It's better to talk out your problems than resort to drugs."* Julie, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, Norwalk, CT

*"The program taught me to speak up when I have a problem."* Jason, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, Waterbury, CT