



# 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
- Creative Writing
- Art
- Group Discussion
- Scientific Demonstration

The Program consists of 13-15 highly interactive classroom lessons taught by teachers, trained by the Courage To Speak® Foundation. 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. There is also an option for enhancement with the book *Sunny's Story*, a glimpse at teen drug abuse and loss told through the eyes of Sunny, the family beagle.

The lessons enable students to:

- Have a clear plan to refuse alcohol and other drugs when offered, including tobacco, marijuana, prescription drugs and opioids;
- 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 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. The Courage to Speak Foundation also offers a *Courage to Speak® – Courageous Parenting 101®* course for parents which compliments the Middle School curriculum and cultivates mutual understanding between students and parents about drug prevention.

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.

An optional 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.

### 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