



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COURAGE TO SPEAK LAUNCHING COURAGEOUS PARENTING 101
PARENTS ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE**

Ginger Katz, founder and president of The Courage to Speak Foundation, has announced plans to launch a new four-session substance abuse prevention and education program, called *Courageous Parenting 101*. The new program targets and is designed for parents using the Courage to Speak model and philosophy as a touchstone. It will have its inaugural run at West Rock Middle School in Norwalk with the parent series starting **January 15, 2008** following a traditional Courage to Speak Presentation on **January 8, 2008**. Courageous Parenting will be open to parents from throughout the community free of charge. *Special training for facilitators who will lead the new program will take place on January 10, 2008.*

In *Courageous Parenting 101*, parents will learn fundamentals of substance abuse prevention, communication skills, drug trends in America, how to find out if your child is using drugs, what to do if your child is using drugs, how to access help, MTV, MySpace, FaceBook and other timely and relevant material. They will gain the tools and knowledge required to communicate effectively with their children on substance abuse issues. It is expected that participating parents will demonstrate an active role in supporting their children’s decision to not use tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. They will also develop improved listening and communication skills, which have been shown to be a critical factor in the prevention of substance abuse by young people.

The Courage to Speak Foundation will also train teachers, parents, social workers, prevention experts, and other interested professionals as facilitators to conduct *Courageous Parenting 101*. This will enable community groups, civic organizations, churches, schools and others to offer the program for parents in their communities, ***whether in Norwalk or other communities.***

The Courage to Speak Foundation was born of family tragedy, namely, the death in 1996 of Ian Eaccarino, Ginger Katz’s 20-year-old son, as the result of a drug overdose. A well intentioned, but misguided family physician suggested that the family call his death the result of a brain aneurysm. In their gut and soul, they knew better. They balked. Having fought the good fight for several years, Ginger and her husband, Larry, knew that denial plays an important role in the lives of young people using alcohol and other drugs. They chose to speak out and share the pain of Ian’s reality and their horrific loss.



Ginger and Larry founded The Courage to Speak Foundation in 1996 to save lives by empowering youth to be alcohol and drug free. They are accomplishing that mission one child and one family at a time. The Courage to Speak Foundation has gained local, state and national recognition through its educational programs for children, teens, parents, and communities aimed at breaking through the silence and denial surrounding the dangers of drugs. They help children and families learn to communicate honestly and to make healthy choices.

Among its programs and services today are: The Courage to Speak Presentation; The Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum for Elementary School, Middle School and High School; The Courage to Speak Support Groups for parents and family members who have lost a family member to drug abuse; The Courage to Speak Referral Help-Line with information on treatment facilities, counseling, and support; The Courage to Speak Community Awareness Building Campaign disseminating information to children/teens, parents, and educators; and The Courage to Speak Family Night.

Ginger Katz has also published a new book, *Sunny's Story*, which tells the story of the life and tragic death of Ian through the eyes and mind of the family dog. It is frequently used as part of the elementary and middle school programming drawing rave reviews from kids as well as their parents.

Katz added that funding is being sought to cover costs of the new program, such as curriculum development, facilitators, handouts and program materials. Courage to Speak intends to offer the program at no charge to parents, however, this requires adequate funding from multiple sources, such as foundations and corporations, service clubs, individual giving, and special events. Donations are always welcome.

Courageous Parenting 101 is the natural next step in the evolution of Courage to Speak from curriculum and programs for elementary, middle and high schools to a more formal program for parents. If you would like to become a facilitator for *Courageous Parenting 101* or you are a parent and would like to attend the inaugural parent program in January, please contact Ginger Katz at **1-877-431-3295** or e-mail GKcourage@aol.com and visit the website at www.couragetospeak.org

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