

The Hour online

Courage to Speak now offered in Spanish

By GINGER KATZ

I just couldn't believe it happened in our family.

I just couldn't believe that children are being exposed to this.

I just couldn't believe that drugs took my son.

My name is Ginger Katz and I live in Norwalk. In 1996, I founded the Courage to Speak Foundation shortly after my son Ian lost his battle with drug addiction. The doctors suggested we tell people Ian died of a heart attack or an aneurysm. But that was a lie. I never lied about my son and I certainly wasn't going to lie about him at his death. Ian made an unhealthy decision to use drugs and I was not ashamed of him.

My husband Larry and I decided to speak out about the impact of drugs on children and families. For the last 14 years, we've delivered more than 1,000 presentations to students, parents, teachers, churches, colleges, law enforcement and civic groups, in Connecticut and nationally.

Since this happened to Ian, our son, I wanted no other family to experience this terrible loss. In addition to speaking out we vowed to team up with experts in prevention and in 2008 the Courage to Speak Foundation developed a free drug prevention education program for parents called Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101, offering them real life tools to keep their children safe from drugs and other risky behaviors.

This program is taught by trained facilitators who are school counselors, law enforcement officers, social workers, youth serving organization administrators and all 79 of them are experts in the field of prevention. Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101 is delivered in both English and Spanish and covers the following:

- * How to help your child handle stress, warning signs, the power of denial
- * Teen drug use trends and party culture
- * Drug and alcohol abuse, addiction and its physiological consequences
- * Protective, psychological & developmental guidance to help reduce risks of substance use

- * Communication and listening strategies
- * Parenting styles that work best
- * Dangers of enabling and hands-off parenting
- * Practical steps if use or abuse is suspected
- * And sources of help and more

We are offering a two-session course of Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101 in Spanish on Tuesday, May 10 and 17, at the South Norwalk Public Library, 10 Washington Street, Norwalk. Our office is 161 East Ave Norwalk, and if you would like us to drop off some flyers please let us know.

I can be reached at (877) 431-3295 or gkatz@couragetospeak.org. Please visit our web site at www.couragetospeak.org

Ginger Katz is founder of Courage to Speak Foundation.