



The Courage to Speak® Foundation Newsletter

February 2011

Welcome to our February Issue!

7th Annual Courage to Speak Empowering Youth to be Drug Free Family Night
Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101® Expands to Hispanic Communities
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Upcoming Presentations - February/March 2011
A Valentine Wish... from the Heart!
Tip of the Month - Developmental Assets
We All Love the Pizza Guy

You Are Invited

The 7th Annual Courage to Speak Empowering Youth to be Drug Free Family Night

March 15, 2011 - 5:30 PM (Snow Date: March 16)

Become a sponsor - help us save young lives. [Click here](#) to view our sponsorship letter and agreement. Please call 203-831-9700 with any questions.

Interested in volunteering for this event? E-mail Amanda at abolanos@couragetospeak.org or call 203-831-9700. We are looking for volunteers to help with set-up, registration, dinner service and many other areas!

Interested in attending this event?

E-mail Amanda at abolanos@couragetospeak.org or call 203-831-9700. Complimentary dinner will be served. [Click here](#) for last year's program. Bring your children and friends!



AFFINION GROUP Presents
The Courage To Speak®
Seventh Annual Empowering Youth
To Be Drug Free Family Night

Tuesday, March 15th, 2011 • 5:30pm Snow Date March 16
 West Rocks Middle School 81 West Rocks Road, Norwalk

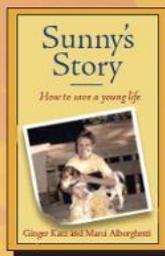


Students standing proudly around their anti-drug posters they created in their seventh grade classroom with the Courage to Speak drug prevention curriculum.

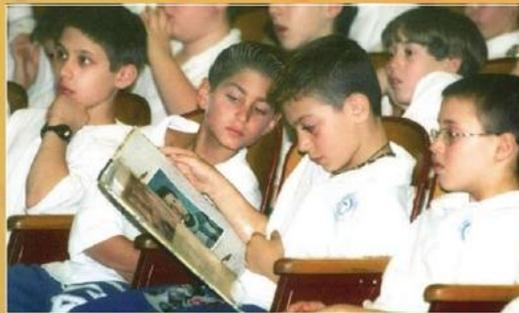
- The number one key to prevention is parents talking to their children about the dangers of drugs
- Make this connection with your child on Tuesday night March 15, 2011 enjoy the activities and hear **The Courage To Speak® Presentation**

Program Includes:

Display of Students' Drug Prevention Messages
 Complimentary Dinner at 5:30pm
 Recognition and Leadership Awards
 Cameo appearances by Norwalk's Mayor Richard Moccia, Chief of Police Harry Rilling, and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Susan Marks
Students Speak Out
The Courage To Speak® Presentation



"Sunny's Story"
 written by Ginger Katz is a story for children, teenagers, parents, grandparents and teachers. It is narrated through the eyes of Sunny, a beagle, and the ups and downs of his life with his young master, beginning with their meeting at an animal shelter.
 Sunny's Story and signing will be available at this event!



Students listening to The Courage To Speak® presentation. The program has taught the dangers of drugs to many children.

The Courage To Speak® Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to helping in the fight against drugs and violence in our school, our workplace and our communities. The Courage To Speak® Foundation provides drug prevention presentations to students, parents, churches, corporations, conferences and other forums. The Courage to Speak® Foundation develops in-school drug prevention curricula in elementary, middle, high schools and a new program called *Courage to Speak – Courageous Parenting 101*®.

The Courage To Speak® Foundation, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation approved by the Internal Revenue Service for tax deductible status under section 501 (c)(3).

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1-203-831-9700 www.couragetospeak.org

Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101 Expands to Hispanic Communities



Courage to Speak® Foundation Facilitator Millie Seguinot teaches Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101® in Spanish to West Rocks parents.

The Courage to Speak® Foundation is pleased to announce that *Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101®* was recently translated and will be rolled out in Spanish three times this winter. This free course that educates parents on how to keep their children safe from drugs was offered at West Rocks Middle School in Norwalk and Madison Elementary School in Bridgeport for the first time to Spanish speaking parents. The overwhelming support of Hispanic community leaders, principals and teachers allowed us to bring the course to many local families. Our first sessions were a wonderful success, and we look forward to continuing to spread our mission to Hispanic communities.

Since the 2008 launch of *Courageous Parenting 101®*, **70 professional facilitators (8 bilingual)** were trained by the Foundation to teach this course which has been implemented 44 times in communities throughout Connecticut and beyond.

Please [click here](#) to view the 2011 Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101® Schedule.

Please [click here](#) to read more about the program.

For more information, call 203-831-9700.

Calling All Courageous Parents!



Courageous Parenting 101

ALL PARENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE

**What are kids doing?
How are they doing it? Why?**

These questions and more are answered in this **FREE** drug prevention education program called *Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101*[®] that educates parents to keep their children safe from drugs and gives them the knowledge and confidence required to communicate more effectively with their children. This course is taught by one of our 70 trained facilitators, including 8 bilingual instructors. **Please note that the Madison Elementary and South Norwalk Public Library programs will be presented in Spanish, and Mrs. Katz's presentation will be translated by an interpreter.**

Upcoming Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101[®] Programs:

Norwalk Community College

East Windsor Wellness Coalition

South Norwalk Public Library (Two Courses - Spanish & English)

Guilford High School

In Collaboration with Guilford Youth & Family Services, Guilford HS PTO & Adams MS

Madison Elementary School, Bridgeport (Presented in Spanish)

In Collaboration with Ms. Giovanna DeNitto, Principal

Please [click here](#) to view upcoming Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101[®] course dates and locations. Flyers and registration forms are all posted on our website.

Check back frequently for updates!

www.couragetospeak.org

Upcoming Presentations February/March 2011



[Click here](#) to view the entire Courage to Speak® Presentation schedule.

February 14th

Malta House, Norwalk, CT

March 5th

Norwalk Community College, Norwalk, CT

March 15

West Rocks Middle School, Norwalk, CT

March 18

Lehman High School, Bronx, NY

March 22, 3 Presentations

Centereach High School, Centereach, NY

March 29

South Norwalk Public Library, Norwalk, CT

March 30

Seaford High School, Seaford, NY

March 31

TBA

[Click here](#) to read about the presentation.

[Click here](#) to book your presentation now!

Courage to Speak Valentine Wish... from the Heart!



Sunny's Lasting Message

I remember the day a beagle puppy named Sunny came into our lives. He quickly became my 7-year-old son Ian's best friend. Sunny would follow Ian from room to room. He waited by the door for Ian to return from school. Sunny was the heart of our family.



Fourteen years ago, I lost my beautiful 20-year-old son Ian to a drug overdose. Sunny tried to wake me the night Ian died, struggling up four flights of stairs to let me know something was wrong. But his message went undelivered. I slept soundly that night. Ian told me he would see a doctor in the morning to face his addiction. I woke the next morning to find my son not breathing. My cries for help were heard two blocks away.

In the painful days following Ian's death I was overwhelmed with a commitment to prevent others from enduring this tragedy. I founded the Courage to Speak Foundation to share Ian's story and take my prevention message to children, parents, and educators across the country. Our mission is saving young lives by offering real life tools that help parents and students face and avoid drug abuse.

I held Sunny one afternoon saying, "If you could talk - you'd have a lot to say". In that pivotal moment I was inspired to write the book *Sunny's Story* about the special relationship between Sunny and Ian. It is narrated by Sunny - telling joyful and sad times

and how his best friend was needlessly lost.

Today, Sunny inspires children nationwide. I receive thousands of letters and emails telling how Sunny's Story helped them stay away from drugs. Sunny's message is as fresh today as the day Ian died.

For his unwavering loyalty and the powerful message he conveys, Sunny is forever close to my heart.

[Click here](#) to purchase *Sunny's Story!*

[Click here](#) to listen to audio excerpts.

[Click here](#) to read Ginger's Promise.

Tip of the Month

Developmental Assets



1. Developmental assets are building blocks to help kids grow up healthy & responsible
2. Categories include Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, Constructive Use of Time, Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies and Positive Identity
3. The more assets youth have, the fewer risk factors are present
4. The more assets youth have, the more thriving behaviors are present
5. All young people need them, but most young people have too few

Some examples of assets include:

Family Support - Having Dinner Together
Parent Involvement in Schooling - Participating in PTA
Service to Others - Volunteering
Family Boundaries - Setting the Rules
Adult Role Models - Kids Watch What You Do
Creative Activities - Sports, Music, Theater
Self-Esteem - Building Confidence
Reading for Pleasure - Taking Time for Yourself
Responsibility - Following up on Chores and Duties
Resistance Skills - Teaching Kids How to Cope

For more information, contact the [Courage to Speak Foundation](#):

203-831-9700

www.couragetospeak.org

We All Love the Pizza Guy

Courage to Speak Board Member in the News



Norwalk Pizza and Pasta owner Luis Solis pulls one of his pizzas out of the oven at his East Ave location. Photo: Alex von Kleydorff.

The Hour online

February 14, 2011

By JOHN H. PALMER, Hour Correspondent

Every neighborhood has one.

You might only see him once in a while, but the pizza guy is one of your best friends.

Welcoming you into his shop, maybe he tells you a joke or asks how the kids are doing. All this while he's whirling and twirling in his fingertips the dough that will become your yummy dinner.

It's at this point that a question pops into your mind. What toppings should I get on my pizza? Thin crust or thick?

Nope. There's only one thing you want to know as you watch the dough fly up in the air.

How the heck does he do that?

"It's all about playing with it," said 41-year-old Luis Solis, owner of Norwalk Pizza and Pasta on East Avenue. "It's like playing with Play-Doh when you're a kid and you're seeing how far you can stretch it without it breaking."

Anyone who's tried to copy a good pizza at home knows he makes it look easy, and that's why he's done good business in Norwalk since 1996 when he took over the former Shark Attack Pizza and made it his own.

Solis starts his day around 9 a.m. every day, prepping ingredients, buying ground beef at **Stew Leonard's** (A Dinner Sponsor for the 7th Annual *Courage to Speak Empowering Youth to be Drug Free Family Night*), or taking phone orders as soon as they start coming in at around 9:30 a.m.

The cold, snowy weather has been tough on everyone, so who wants to cook? Take-out and delivery orders have picked up, and Solis has to be ready for it, especially when the kids have a snow day.

"When you have kids running around the house and didn't expect it, they order out a lot," he said. "Do we want snow on the ground all the time? Maybe not, but for us it's been an awesome situation."

The snow doesn't make it easy on him. Because winter storms have hit all across the country, crops are affected so Solis finds himself spending double what he would normally pay for ingredients such as lettuce and other foods.

In addition, the food service makes it hard on family life. He will work until 10:30 at night most nights, which doesn't leave much time at home for his personal life.

"You don't have that time at home with my daughter, and we don't take normal family vacations," he said. "Still, I meet a ton of people from young to old, and everyone has their own character."

Born Oct. 5, 1969, in Los Angeles to parents who immigrated from Costa Rica, Solis moved to Norwalk as a young boy and attended Jefferson and Kendall Schools, Ponus Ridge Middle School, and graduated from Brien McMahon High School in 1987.

After graduation, he took a few business classes at Norwalk Community College and served some time in the U.S. Marine Corps, but he admits that he was bored and didn't know what he wanted to do with his life. So he came back to what he's always known.

Since the age of 15 Solis worked in restaurants, and all through high school he worked at Rowayton Pizza, learning the ropes of how to run a business, interacting with customers, and how to cook Italian food the "right way," with fresh ingredients.

"I was taught to cook by three old Italian guys, and I owe my success to them," he said. "They love to eat and they know what they are doing. They never reach for a can of tomatoes and they get their eggs fresh from the farm."

The experience and training he received from years of working in food service inspired Solis to make his first venture into entrepreneurship, and he bought the shop that would become Norwalk Pizza and Pasta. After some renovations and a few changes on the menu, he opened in 1996 and has been there for 15 years.

It's not an easy life. He says he will spend 12- to 14-hour days at the restaurant, taking phone orders, cooking, and preparing catering orders. His wife, Kristen, can often be found at the shop helping out. She knows the life she chose -- she met Solis while she was a nanny in Rowayton and would come in to eat pizza with the kids she cared for. The couple was married in 2000, and they have a 6-year-old daughter, Julianna Grace.

"If you're in it, your wife is in it," he said of the food business. "I'm not the kind of guy who can sit behind a desk -- you'd find me asleep. Here I'm in motion all day every day."

Luis Solis is a member of the Courage to Speak® Foundation Board of Directors and is donating the pizza for the 7th Annual Courage to Speak Empowering Youth to be Drug Free Family Night on March 15, 2011 at West Rocks Middle School, Norwalk, CT.

[Click here](#) to learn more!

Visit the Courage to Speak® website: www.couragetospeak.org

Visit the Sunny's Story website: www.sunnysstory.com

To join us on Facebook, please [click here!](#)

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Thank you for your ongoing support!

Courage to Speak® Foundation

"Saving lives by empowering youth to be drug-free."

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