



The Courage to Speak® Foundation is a Connecticut-based nonprofit organization with a national reach that provides presentations, school based and parent programs scientifically evaluated by Yale University, books and other proven drug prevention resources to help break the silence and denial that enable drug abuse and gives students, parents, teachers, schools and communities, tools and information to keep our children safe. All Courage to Speak programs empower children to make healthy decisions and encourage parents to communicate openly and honestly with their children about the dangers of drugs. The organization was founded in 1996 by Ginger and Larry Katz and is devoted to fulfilling a promise Ginger made to her son, Ian, who died when he was just 20 years old of an accidental drug overdose - to do everything in her power to prevent this tragedy from happening to another family.

The heart of the work is the nationally renowned Courage to Speak Presentation. Ginger Katz tells the story of her son Ian's losing battle with drugs and provides insight into a young person's journey into addiction, which began with cigarettes, beer and marijuana to his death from a heroin and valium overdose. Ian's story weaves prevention facts with a family's experience to help audiences understand the silence and denial surrounding drug use and connects students, parents and educators to the urgent need to address youth drug abuse.

This real life story with its prevention message has been delivered in over 1000 presentations to hundreds of thousands of students, parents, teachers, colleges, law enforcement and others across the country and state and national conferences. Among the more notable are National Association of Secondary School Principals, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Youth Conference and Keynote at the National Narcotic Officers Association and the Connecticut PTA 105th Convention.

The Foundation partners with many community sectors to build sustaining support for its school-based drug prevention programs, developed with teams of experts in the prevention field and includes: an 8-lesson Elementary School Program (Grades 4-6) based on the book *Sunny's Story* written by CEO and Founder Ginger Katz; a 15-lesson Middle School Program (Grades 7-8); a 10-lesson High School Program; and an After School Program (4-8). The organization trains classroom teachers and professional facilitators to teach the drug prevention programs and coordinates community events fostering commitment to drug prevention education, thereby saving lives.

Courage to Speak-Courageous Parenting 101® is a free multi-session course designed so that parents understand what their children are facing and to arm them with the knowledge and tools to keep their children safe. To date 132 professional facilitators have been trained by the Courage to Speak Foundation to teach the course in English and Spanish in CT, DE, IN, KY, MA, ME, MI, NV, NY, RI, TN, and Panama City, Panama.

Ms. Katz authored *Sunny's Story*, a drug prevention book narrated by Sunny, Ian's pet beagle, and told from the dog's perspective of the ups and downs of life with his young master. The story is an age appropriate way to help young people form an understanding of peer pressure temptations, gain insight into the social and familial impact of unhealthy decisions, and become alert to the consequences of drug use. The book is being read by Elementary, Middle, High School, and Parents around the country.

The Courage to Speak Foundation has alliances and collaborates with local, state and national organizations such as the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, Mid-Fairfield Substance Abuse Coalition, National Institute on Drug Abuse. Visit www.couragetospeak.org