

VIRGINIA (“GINGER”) KATZ

CEO and Founder, The Courage To Speak® Foundation, Inc.

Mission: Saving lives by empowering youth to be drug free and encouraging parents to communicate effectively with their children about the dangers of drug.

Founded in 1996 shortly after Ginger and Larry Katz lost their son, Ian, to a drug overdose and dedicated to fulfilling a promise Ginger made to Ian to do everything in her power to prevent this tragedy from happening to another family.

Core Activities: Educational presentations, proprietary school-based programs/curriculum, parenting programs/curriculum, books and videos that empower students and their parents to break through the silence and denial surrounding substance abuse to honestly communicate about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.

Major Accomplishments

- **Delivered more than 1000 prevention presentations nationwide** to schools (elementary through college), civic organizations, law enforcement forums, medical forums, provider and prevention organizations, corporations, conventions and other forums throughout the country.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum for Middle Schools.** Funded by Fairfield County Community Foundation and corporations, now in its ninth year of implementation in Norwalk, CT public schools. Launched in Bridgeport and Waterbury, CT schools. Start 2001 to present. Taught by health and language art teachers.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum for High Schools.** Funded by Fairfield County Community Foundation and corporations, now in its seventh year of implementation in Norwalk, CT public schools. Start 2004 to present. Taught by health class teachers.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Prevention Curriculum based on Sunny’s Story for Elementary Schools.** Over 40 classroom teachers trained by the Courage to Speak Foundation reaching many schools. Taught by language art and health teachers. Funded by FCCF, corporations and grants.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Education for After School Programs - New** – Based on *Sunny’s Story* for students in Grades 4-8. Adapted from the Courage to Speak Prevention Curriculum for Elementary Schools
- **Developed the Courage To Speak Drug Prevention Parenting Curriculum *Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101™***: Launched in 2008, a free five-session course implemented by the Courage to Speak Foundation trained facilitators as a follow up to the Courage to Speak Presentation and or video. The program is rapidly growing and has been implemented in over 100 communities. To date, 54 instructors have been trained to teach this course.
- **The Courage to Speak Empowering Youth to Be Drug Free Family Night 2005 –2010.** Exciting event involving all aspect of the community. Parents, children community leaders, state and local officials, law enforcement, clergy, business men and women in the community join together to make a stand to empower youth to be drug free. *Featuring the work of the students who participate in The Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum (grades 4, 5, 6 and 7th).*
- **Launched bilingual website, www.couragetospeak.org.** Information clearinghouse, which receives over 20,000 hits per month (est. 1998).
- **Authored Children’s and Parenting Book, March 6, 2007 called *Sunny’s Story***

- **Created the Courage to Speak Support Group.** A lifeline for parents who have lost children to substance abuse (est. 2000). New this year, a support group for family members who have young and adult children that are using drugs.
- **Coordinated "The Courage To Speak All Star Basketball Classic 2000-2005.** Community sporting event shown on local and national television.
- **Wrote Newspaper Column** for the Hour Newspaper 2005 to 2007.

Major Awards, Appointments, and Speaking Invitations

Awards

- **Connecticut Association of Schools, 2010 Distinguished Friend of Education Award,** highest award given by Association to individual not directly involved in public education; nominated by two principals.
- **Hartford Business Journal, 2010 Nonprofit Heroes - Advocate of the Year Award** for outstanding achievement and service.
- **Honorary Chair** of the Parent National Vigil held in Washington DC June 8, 2006 (*Ms. Katz suggestion to the Chief Administrator of DEA*). Visit www.nationalparentvigil.com.
- **2005 Community Leadership Award** of the Junior League of Stamford-Norwalk.
- **Prevention Works Award** recipient at Federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Museum in New York City. Jointly presented by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (**SAMHSA**) (10/6/04).
- **President's "Daily Points of Light "** Award (2/03).
- **"Courage to Speak Day."** Statewide proclamation by CT Governor Jody Rell (10/20/05).
- **"Telly" Award and Worldfest Houston Award** for The Courage To Speak video (8/03)
- **Connecticut's "Woman of the Year."** The Connecticut Post (12/00).

Speaking Invitations

- **Invited to be Speaker at the CADCA National Youth Conference (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America)** Washington, D.C. (February 2010)
- **Delivered over 20 presentations as a follow up to reading *Sunny's Story* written by Ms. Katz to the Bridgeport Schools** May and June of 2009 and 2010.
- **Optimus Health Care and the University of Bridgeport** in association with transworld power productions. CFN TV show debut featuring Ginger Katz, April 2009
- **Keynote Speaker at the Wheeler Clinic** December 17, 2008 in CT
- **Keynote Speaker at Quincy, MA Drug Symposium** established by the Mayor of Quincy October 16, 2008
- **Keynote Speak at Yale University,** September 24, 2008 sponsored by SAPN.
- **Keynote Speaker at University of Florida, School of Addiction Medicine** February 2008
- **Speaker – JMATE Conference,** Washington DC March 25, 2008
- **Speaker – Prevention Not Punishment Conference** Washington DC, June 2007
- **Speaker at Optimus Health Care** - formerly Bridgeport Community Health Center June 2007

- **Speaker at JMATE, Joint meeting on Adolescent Treatment**, Washington, DC [Courage to Speak: A Model for Enhancing Parent-Child Communication and Advocacy](#) April 2007
- **Speaker at UCONN Providers Conference** at Storrs, CT, plus Workshop Leader – 05/10/06.
- **Speaker at Waterbury Alliance Doctors Group**, Waterbury, CT – 08/06
- **National Keynote at Circle Around Families Conference** in Indiana – 4/05/06.
- **Speaker at the National Narcotic Officers Associations** in Washington DC – (2/13/06).
- **Keynote Speaker at the Connecticut PTA 105th Convention** – (5/ 07/05).
- **Speaker at the CADCA National Youth Conference (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America)** Washington, D.C. – (1/04 and 1/05).
- **Invited by the Drug Enforcement Agency to speak, along with former New York City mayor Rudolf Giuliani, at the opening of the DEA Museum’s drug prevention exhibit, “Target America,” in Times Square.** Other presenters: John Walters, Drug Czar, Karen Tandy, DEA Administrator and Beverly Watts Davis of federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – (9/14/04).
- **Invitation from Senator Joseph Lieberman** to lead a landmark symposium on the dangers of Ecstasy in Trumbull CT – (2002).
- **Invitation to attend White House ceremony** appointing John Walters "drug czar" – (2002).

National Media/Web Recognition

- **Invited to the White House** for a press conference for a report of national drug use and recognition of the Courage to Speak work. December 2007
- **National spokesperson** for the National Parent Vigil in Washington, DC June 8, 2006
- **Wrote newspaper column in The Hour**, Norwalk, CT – 2005 - 2007
- **Interviewed for law enforcement training film** shown nationally in 2004. Produced by Multi-jurisdictional Counter Drug Task Force in Jupiter, FL – (2/14/04).
- **Featured in prominent media outlets:** The New York Times, New York- Daily News, Washington Times, Boston Herald, Hartford Courant, NBC-TV, NBA Inside Stuff, Life Time for Women, MSNBC, Cablevision of CT, CPTV, CT Post, The Hour, The Advocate, The Norwalk Citizen News, Yes Network, Cox Radio Station, WEBE 108 in Fairfield County – Women in Sports, Madison Square Garden, SportsDesk MSG Network.
- **BBC News Broadcast** – (May/June 2003).
- **Produced “The Courage to Speak Video”** (25-minute and 6-minute versions and 30 second PSA)
- **Current Health Magazine Interview** 10/03 distributed to all schools in U.S.
- **CT and NY Family Magazine** 12/03
- **Produced Drug Prevention P.S.A.** Feature shown in Crown Movie Theaters, CT Cablevision, Life Time for Women, MTV and other channels (2002 to present)
- **Featured on websites of the White House Office of Drug Control Policy, (ONDCP) www.drugstory.org, and the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), www.preventionpartners.samhsa.gov** – (5/03-to present).
- **"Meet the Leaders" Show on Cablevision of CT** – (entire month of June 2005).
- **Authored article on “The Courage To Speak” for Principal Leadership Magazine** – (2/03).

Additional Speaking Invitations from National Conventions and Forums

- **Keynote Speaker at the Narcotic Enforcement Officers Association (NEOA) Annual Conference**, Newport, RI – (11/16/04) and Washington DC (04/07/06)
- **Speaker, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA)**, and feature story in newsletter in November 2004 – (10/22/04).
- **Speaker, Connecticut Association of Schools Annual Winter Conference**. High school and middle school principals' professional organization – (1/28/04).
- **Press Conference and Forum at Yale School of Medicine**. Invitation from the Office of National Drug Control Policy.
- **The ONDCP Summit, Washington, DC**. Invited by John P. Walters, Drug Czar – 10/30/03.
- **Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Convention** – (11/03).
- **The New England Governors Summit**, Faniel Hall Boston, MA. Invited by Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy – (10/8/03).
- **Speaker, Pride International, Ohio** – (2002 -03).
- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**, Washington, D.C. – (2/02).
- **Keynote, National Association of Drug Court Professionals, Reno, NV** – (1/02).
- **Keynote, Atlanta, GA** – Parent Corp, National Association of Independent Schools, New York; National Association of Secondary School Principals, San Diego, CADCA Leadership Forum, D.C. 2001 and 2002; Pride International.
- **Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Leadership Forum Washington** – (12/02, 1/05)

Additional Awards, Appointments, Board Memberships

- **Jr. League of Stamford Norwalk, Community Leadership Award** – 04/05.
- **Executive Committee of FAST in CT – Families Advocating for Treatment in CT**.
- **Award for Community Service**. Seventh Day Adventist Church – (6/02).
- **"Celebrate Women" Award**. Honoree of Norwalk Women's Professional Organization –
- **Board Member, Connecticut Communities for Drug-Free Youth** – (1997-2003).
- **Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**. Partnership Council and Standing Committee of Connecticut – (2000-2002).
- **Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), Columbia University Task Force Member** – (1999-2000).
- **Community Service Award**. Toughlove International – (1/99).
- **Member, Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)** – (1997-present).
- **Member, Mid-Fairfield Substance Abuse Coalition** (1997-present).
- **Member, Community Prevention Task Force of Norwalk** – (1997-present).
- **Member, Kiwanis Club of Norwalk** – (2001-04).
- **Norwalk Planning Commissioner** – (1994-02).

Athletic Achievements

(Note: The Courage to Speak Foundation empowers young people to find their passion in life as an alternative to using alcohol and other drugs. Ginger Katz models this through her athletic achievements and *very positive, motivational presentations*).

- **Silver and Bronze Medallist, U.S. Rowing masters national Championship, Cherry Hill, NJ** (08-12 to 08-15)
- **Gold Medalist, Narragansett, RI / Sweeps and Sculls, RI** (07/10)
- **Gold and Silver Medalist, US Rowing National Master's Championship** (08/09)
- **Gold Medallist, Carnegie Lake Regatta, Princeton, NJ**, (06/09)
- **Invited to the Head of the Charles Regatta** Boston, MA – second place grand masters women's four boat (10/08)
- **Bronze Medalist, Naragasset, MA Sweeps and Sculls, RI** (7/06)
- **Gold Medalist, Howard Diamond States Regatta, DL** – (7/05).
- **Silver and Bronze Medalist, U.S. Rowing Masters National Championship, MA** – (8/05).
- **Silver Medalist, Mystic Seaport Regatta, CT** – (9/05)
- **Invited with her crewing team to the "Head of the Charles Regatta"** – (2003 -2004)
- **Captain, "The Hot Shots," CT's Senior Olympic Women's Basketball Team**, ranked 7th in U.S. – (2000 to 2005)
- **Gold Medalist, Connecticut Senior Games** – basketball, tennis, running – (6/02).
- **Silver Medalist, U.S. Rowing Masters National Championship, KS** – (8/98).

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