

June 20, 2008

SAVE A CHILD FROM DRUGS

You are invited to join us as a supporter of the *Tenth Annual Ian James Eaccarino Memorial 9-Mile Race* on Saturday, July 26 starting at 8:00am at Calf Pasture Beach in Norwalk. The race is sponsored by the Lightfoot Running Club, Patriot National Bank, The Hour Newspaper, Norwalk Recreation and Parks Department, Mr. and Mrs William Bennett, Stew Leonard's, Booth Financial Associates and Cook Associates Your Company Store and 1400 WSTC/1350 WNLK.

My husband, Larry, and I have been members of Lightfoot Running Club for over 26 years. The club suggested this race be dedicated in memory of our son, Ian, as he worked at Calf Pasture beach the summer before he died. Ian personally planted many of the trees that now line our beautiful beach.

We had more than 150 runners in this extraordinary community race last year. It is an event that underscores the importance of passion, commitment, and a healthy drug-free lifestyle. That is an important part of our message to young people through our work on behalf of The Courage to Speak Foundation. Your donation for the race will help raise awareness of the dangers of drugs in our schools, workplaces, and communities. You empower youth to be drug free. You encourage parents to communicate the dangers of substance abuse and misuse to their children. *You may save a life in the process.*

Let me share our story and why we remain committed to the race and our cause. I was a new member of the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce, a commissioner on the Norwalk Planning Commission, a wife, and a mother of two children a little over 12 years ago. Ian had graduated from Norwalk High School and had begun college. In February, 1996, he called asking us for help. He had become addicted to drugs and couldn't stop. We brought him home to get help and believed we were on track with his recovery. He had his whole life ahead of him.

In early September that year, Ian enrolled at UCONN, near our home, and on Tuesday, September 10, he died of a drug overdose. Our lives changed forever. Addiction does not discriminate. It doesn't matter who you are, what race you are, how financially sound you are, or whether or not your family loves you totally. Sadly, it can happen to anyone.

After Ian's death, Dewey Amos at Norwalk High School and my priest at St. Thomas Church, asked me to speak to children and parents in the community about what had happened to us and how simply Ian's life could have been saved. Since then, we have presented our story to over half a million people across the country. The Foundation has developed elementary, middle, and high school curricula that are helping children in our Norwalk schools. We added a new five-session parent education program, *Courageous Parenting 101*, earlier this year with over 100 parents attending and 21 facilitators trained.

We need your support to help us save a child, save a family, and build a healthier community. Please consider becoming a Friend of the race with a gift of \$100, a Bronze Sponsor (\$250), a Silver Sponsor (\$500), a Gold Sponsor (\$1,000), or a Platinum Sponsor (\$2,500), or what ever you can. Together we can make a difference in the lives of our children. For more information call 1-877-431-3295. *Our race flyer is attached.* [Click here](#)

Sincerely,

Ginger Katz

Founder & CEO of The Courage to Speak Foundation and author of *Sunny's Story*

Visit www.couragetospeak.org