

VIRGINIA (“GINGER”) KATZ

President and Founder, The Courage To Speak™ Foundation, Inc.

Mission: Saving lives by empowering youth to be drug free.

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 sixth 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 fourth year of implementation in Norwalk, CT public schools. Start 2004 to present. Taught by health class teachers.
- **Development the Courage to Speak Prevention Curriculum for Elementary Schools.** Developed and implemented 2006-08 school year and will be implemented 2007– 08 in other schools. Taught by language art and health teachers.
- **The Courage To Speak Drug Prevention Parenting Curriculum – NEW “Courageous Parenting 101”** launch date: January 10, 2008. A five session program developed and implemented by experts in prevention as a follow up to The Courage to Speak presentation and or video.
- **“The Courage to Speak Family Night 2005 - 2008.** 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 \(grades 4 to 7th\).](#)
- **Development and implementation of High school curriculum.** (2005-2008)
- **Launched website, www.couragetospeak.org.** Information clearinghouse, which receives over 20,000 hits per month (est. 1998).
- **Created the Courage to Speak Support Group.** A lifeline for parents who have lost children to substance abuse (est. 2000).
- **Coordinated "The Courage To Speak All Star Basketball Classic 2000-2005.** Community sporting event shown on local and national television.
- Writes Newspaper Column for the Hour Newspaper
- Authored Children’s and Parenting Book, March 6, 2007 called the [Sunny’s Story](#)

Major Awards, Appointments, and Speaking Invitations

Awards

- Honorary Chair of the parent national vigil held in Washington DC June 8, 2006 (*Ms. Katz suggestion idea to the Chief Administrator of DEA*). Visit www.nationalparentvigil.com.
- 2005 Community Leadership Award of the Junior League of Stamford-Norwalk.
- Recognition Prevention 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**)
- President's "Daily Points of Light " Award (2/03).
- "Courage to Speak Day." Statewide proclamation by former 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

- 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).
- **Invited to be kick off speaker of the CADCA National Youth Conference** (Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America) Washington, D.C. – (1/10/04 and 1/10/05).
- **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 ceremony at the White House 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
- Writes newspaper article column in The Hour, Norwalk, CT – Dec 2005 to 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.
- **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.
- **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 –
- **Community Service Award.** Toughlove International – (1/99).
- **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).**
- **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 – (2001-03).**
- **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*).

- **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).**
- **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)**
- **Bronze Medalist, Naragasset, MA Sweeps and Sculls, RI (7/06)**