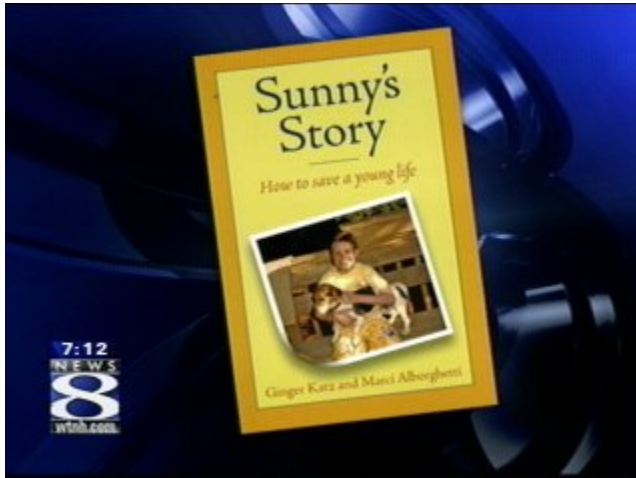




## Sunny's Story by Ginger Katz



Posted April 19, 2008

(WTHN) - Anti Drug Advocate Ginger Katz is on a mission to save lives by empowering young people to be drug free. Katz, founded "The Courage to Speak Foundation" shortly after the death of her son Ian from a drug overdose in 1996. She has also written a book called, "**Sunny's Story**." It tells of how a dog's best friend was needlessly lost to drugs and alcohol.

Information provided by our guest:

[www.couragetospeak.org](http://www.couragetospeak.org)

**Sunny's Story** is a compelling story for children, teenagers, parents, grandparents, and teachers written by Norwalk resident, Ginger Katz. Sunny's Story tells of joyful times and sad times, and of how a dog's best friend was needlessly lost. It is narrated through the eyes, ears and mind of Sunny, the family beagle. It is the ups and downs of Ian's life and his struggle with addiction, beginning with their meeting at an animal shelter, and ending with a futile effort to ward off disaster.

Reason why Ginger wrote the book:

To reach all age children on this topic in a gentle way through the perspective of Ian's dog Sunny. Sunny tried to wake up Ian's Mom, Ginger the night before Ian died. Sunny was trying to tell Ginger. Years later Ginger thought if Sunny could tell the story he would have a lot to say and people would listen.

Among the questions and comments from children:

"I learned from Sunny's Story that no matter how much someone pressures me to take drugs, I shouldn't do it because I will have to pay a lot of consequences in the future."

"I learned from Sunny's Story to never try or think about using drugs, cigarettes or alcohol."

"I hope you can come to our class because I want to ask you a few questions. I know Candi is your daughter. Also, how did Candi take Ian's death?"

"What I learned from Sunny's Story is that you should never do drugs because you could really hurt people but mostly yourself. I also learned that when you meet new friends on the first day of HS, never hang around with them if they do drugs."

"I learned that drugs can damage your body, for example, lung cancer."

"I hope you can spend more time with my class."

"Sunny's Story was good. I didn't want to stop reading it."

Presentations: The organization's strategy begins with a dynamic, riveting and thought-provoking presentation by Mrs. Katz combining the intensely personal story of a family shattered by drugs with the latest information and statistics on substance abuse and prevention. Told with quiet intensity and rigorous emotional integrity in schools, places of worship, conferences and other community venues, her story calls forth in her young listeners a willingness to trust her

and the advice, and information, that she and Mr. Katz offer. Complementary presentations are offered to parents, preparing them to foster the life-saving change in attitude. The presentations have curriculum available as a follow up

Ginger Katz

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

Visit [www.couragetospeak.org](http://www.couragetospeak.org)

We are dedicated to.....

"Saving Lives by Empowering Youth to be Drug Free"

Warning Signs to parents:

Physical Signs:

- Change in sleeping patterns
- Bloodshot eyes
- Slurred or agitated speech
- Sudden or dramatic weight loss or gain
- Skin abrasions/bruises
- Neglected appearance/poor hygiene
- Sick more frequently
- Accidents or injuries

Behavioral Signs:

- Hiding use; lying and covering up
- Sense that the person will "do anything" to use again regardless of consequences
- Loss of control or choice of use (drug-seeking behavior)
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Emotional instability
- Hyperactive or hyper-aggressive
- Depression
- Missing school or work
- Failure to fulfill responsibilities at school or work
- Complaints from teachers or co-workers
- Reports of intoxication at school or work
- Furtive or secretive behavior
- Avoiding eye contact
- Locked doors
- Going out every night
- Change in friends or peer group
- Change in clothing or appearance
- Unusual smells on clothing or breath
- Heavy use of over-the-counter preparations to reduce eye reddening, nasal irritation, or bad breath
- Hidden stashes of alcohol
- Alcohol missing from your supply
- Prescription medicine missing
- Money missing
- Valuables missing
- Disappearances for long periods of time
- Running away
- Secretive phone calls

Biography:

Ginger Katz is a nationally renowned advocate and public speaker for drug prevention, awareness and education. She is the founder of the Courage to Speak Foundation, Inc and has developed curricula for elementary through high schools. Sunny's Story, her first book, is targeted to 8 to 13 year-olds, their parents and teachers.

In the last 10 years, Ginger has touched over a half million parents, students and officials in communities across the country with her story. She is a regular speaker in schools, colleges, law enforcement and other government agencies as well as community, private and medical organizations. Ginger Katz has presented to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Independent Schools, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), as well as 950 school and parent audiences.

An avid sportswoman and athlete, Ginger Katz lives with her husband Larry, daughter Candi and their beagle, Abby, in Norwalk, CT Visit [www.couragetospeak.org](http://www.couragetospeak.org)

