

Stamford

Son's Overdose Gives Mom Courage

By Felicia Hunter
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Norwalk resident Ginger Katz knows what it's like to lose a child. She lost her son, Ian, to a drug overdose 14 years ago. There was nothing she could do to bring back Ian. But what she could do was try to help other parents and children. One way she attempted to do that was by writing a drug-prevention book for children, "Sunny's Story," which tells Ian's ordeal through the eyes of the family beagle. Another way she channeled her heartbreak was by starting an anti-drug organization, the [Courage to Speak Foundation](#). The work of the foundation recently was recognized with the awarding of two separate grants.



Photo above: Ginger Katz signs copies of her book, 'Sunny's Story,' which she wrote after the death of her son due to drug use.

The First County Bank Foundation has awarded a \$10,210 grant that will be used to translate into Spanish the Courage to Speak training program Courage to Speak–Courageous Parenting 101. The free course, given over five sessions, helps parents talk candidly with their youngsters and teenagers about the dangers of drug use, according to a press release.

"The key is to get parents to take the course to help save lives," said Katz, who oversees 52 course facilitators dispersed throughout the state. The other sum, a \$5,000 grant from the Fairfield County Community Foundation Financial Management Fund, will be applied to enhancing the organization's bookkeeping and accounting functions, and building its infrastructure, according to the release.

Katz said she's "grateful" for both awards. "Parents have an enormously powerful influence on their kids," she said in the release. "That's why it is so important to be able to communicate our drug and alcohol prevention message to as many parents in our community as possible."

Katz founded Courage to Speak in 1996, shortly after losing Ian to drugs. "I was there, and I know," she said.