

Norwalk Citizen

Courage to Speak's family night slated March 16

Saturday, March 13, 2010

NORWALK

The 6th Annual Courage To Speak Empowering Youth to Be Drug Free Family Night will take place on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m., at [West Rocks Middle School](#), 81 West Rocks Road, in Norwalk (snow date: March 18).

All are invited to the event, which will bring families, educators, and community leaders together to affirm their commitment to keeping our children safe from drugs. Dinner is included.

Proceeds from the event benefit The Courage to [Speak Foundation](#) programs and curricula to educate children and their parents about the dangers of drug and alcohol use. The evening features elementary and middle school students speaking about their drug prevention message, as well as a display of drug prevention posters and collages created by students during classes they've taken as part of the Courage To Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum. The evening also includes dinner and a presentation for parents and students by [Ginger Katz](#), founder and CEO of the Courage to Speak Foundation. All communities are invited.

This year's event also features Operation Medicine Drop; a new drug disposal program partnership between the Foundation and the [Norwalk Police Department](#) designed to help keep unused medications out of the wrong hands. Attendees are encouraged to bring any old, unused, or out-of-date prescriptions or over-the-counter medications they find in their medicine cabinets to the event. The controlled substances that are collected will then be disposed of in a safe and non-hazardous manner.

"Many young persons' first experience with drugs comes from drugs found in the family medicine cabinet," explains Norwalk Chief of Police [Harry Rilling](#).

"We sometimes lose sight of that fact and do not take recommended precautions to ensure these drugs are not accessible to the other members of our family and friends. Not only can these drugs lead to abuse of and addiction to other drugs, their consumption can be deadly. All drugs collected at the event will be properly disposed of by members of the Norwalk Police Department," added Chief Rilling.

"Please help us to help you make your home as safe an environment as possible."

In addition to Chief Rilling, other Family Night attendees will include more than 15 students speakers, Norwalk Mayor [Richard Moccia](#) and Norwalk Assistant Superintendent of [Norwalk Schools Tony Daddona](#). [State of Connecticut General Assembly House](#) Minority Leader, [Lawrence F. Cafero](#), Jr. will serve as Master of Ceremonies. Participants will also include school principals and prevention and treatment professionals, teachers, business and community leaders, representatives of state and local government, and members of the Courage to Speak Foundation Board of Directors. Special guest [Dianne Harnad](#), director of prevention and health promotion at the Dept. of [Mental Health and Addiction Services](#), will also attend.

"Bringing students and parents together to talk openly and honestly about the dangers of drugs is the most important goal of Family Night," stated Katz. "By helping our students become outstanding anti-drug advocates and mentors for their friends and younger siblings, we hope to eradicate the problem of drug and alcohol use among young people in Connecticut and across the country."

The 6th Annual Courage To Speak Empowering Youth to Be Drug Free Family Night is sponsored by Affinion Group and Pepperidge Farm, Inc. Other sponsors include Cablevision, Connecticut Business Systems, Continental Manor Catering, Crystal Rock, [David Molina](#), gWay Marketing Gymnasium, [Hilton Garden Inn](#), JetBlue Airways, MBI, Inc., Mutual Security, Nestle [Waters](#), [Norwalk Pizza & Pasta](#), [Patriot National Bank](#), Sharp Performance USA, Silvermine Golf Club, SmartCycles, Stew Leonard's, [Webster Bank](#), and WSTC 1400 / WNLK 1350.

For information about the event, visit www.couragetospeak.org, or call 203-831-9700.