

NEWS FROM...

The Courage to Speak Foundation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Virginia "Ginger"

Katz

March 27, 2008

Phone: 203-247-3975

(Norwalk, CT) Charles Yost, chairman of the board of directors, and Virginia "Ginger" Katz, founder and president of The Courage to Speak Foundation, announced that the United States Department of Justice has awarded the organization \$446,500 to be used over 18 months to enhance and deepen the impact of Courage to Speak substance abuse prevention curricula in Fairfield County schools and in other communities in Connecticut as well as the Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101 program. The funding was included in the FY 2008 Appropriations bill passed by Congress during the week of December 17, 2007 and was made possible by the strong support of Senator Joseph Lieberman and Senator Christopher Dodd.

Charles Yost said: "The Courage To Speak Foundation is humbled and grateful for grant funding that will be distributed by the U.S. Department of Justice to strengthen and grow the impact on children and families of Courage to Speak's empowering substance abuse prevention programs in Fairfield County schools. This is a great step forward for us and for the children and families we serve now and hope to serve going forward."

Ginger Katz added: "This grant would not have been possible without the efforts of Senators Lieberman and Dodd. They have taken the time to understand the impact of our program on students and parents we have reached to date. Their understanding and appreciation of the potential of our programs to positively impact even more Connecticut youth is gratifying. We are thankful for their support. I know we will work hard to ensure that the impact of these funds will be maximized to improve the health and well-being of the students, families, and communities we reach. Ultimately, we will prevent the needless, drug-induced loss of young lives in this state."

The Department of Justice grant will allow Courage to Speak to expand its impact in Fairfield County schools and in schools in other Connecticut communities. It will also enable a long-term evaluation of the program, leading to a wider impact and replication throughout Connecticut and beyond.

The Courage to Speak Foundation was founded in Norwalk, Connecticut in 1996, shortly after Ginger and Larry Katz lost their son, Ian, to a drug overdose. Since that tragedy, The Courage to Speak Foundation has been actively fulfilling a promise Ginger made to Ian. She was determined to do anything and everything in her power to prevent this tragedy from happening to other families.

The Courage to Speak Foundation brings students, parents, teachers, law enforcement, medical professionals, and communities specialized knowledge and tools that encourage children and parents to talk openly and honestly about the dangers of drugs and to empower children to live drug free lives. Courage to Speak works collaboratively with school administrators, teachers, and substance abuse prevention experts to develop its programs. The organization trains teachers to

deliver school-based curricula, establishes and maintains media support, and coordinates community events that raise awareness and commitment to prevention.

The Courage to Speak Foundation has developed substance abuse prevention and education health curricula for children and youth in elementary school, middle school, and high school over the past six years. A new children's book, *Sunny's Story*, which tells the story of Ginger's son's substance abuse addiction from the family dog's perspective, was published and added to the program in 2007. In addition, the foundation is launching a new five-session parent substance abuse education and prevention program called **Courageous Parenting 101** in 2008 in collaboration with area schools, churches and organizations.

Charles Yost noted: "Keeping our children safe from drugs and teaching them to make healthy choices remains one of the most urgent and intransigent problems we face today. Half of all students have tried drugs by the time they graduate from high school."

Ginger Katz added: "Silence and denial are clearly two of the greatest obstacles to defeating youth substance abuse. Everyone agrees that we need to have open and honest communication between children and their parents or other responsible adults. That by itself is not sufficient. Families need support and participation of their schools and communities. Schools need the support and participation of parents and community leaders. Our children, faced everyday with pressures to use drugs from their peers and the larger culture through advertising and media, need the support of their entire community to be able to make healthy choices."

By leveraging the participation of many sectors of the community as partners, the Courage to Speak Foundation provides a process, as well as structured programs, to reinforce commitment and build sustaining support for substance abuse prevention. It is anticipated this project will prove that the Courage to Speak model is a highly effective and replicable prevention and education intervention that will give thousands of Connecticut children and teens, their families, and their communities the courage to speak out and prevent youth substance abuse. For information on upcoming programs, please visit www.couragetospeak.org

-END-