

Volunteers turn out to learn how to help parents facing drug issues with children

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It's as easy as training communities to help parents teach their children, but it can prevent tragedy.

The Courage to Speak Foundation held facilitator training for its substance abuse education and prevention program, *Courageous Parenting 101*, Monday night at West Rocks Middle School. Forty-six facilitators have been trained since January 2008.

The Courage to Speak Foundation was founded by Ginger Katz, whose son Ian died at age 20 from an accidental heroin overdose.

Before a presentation on how to talk with parents in the Courageous Parenting 101 program, what kinds of questions to expect and how to market the program, each facilitator stated where they were from and why they attended the session.

Sandra Marr, a human resource practitioner from Greenwich, said she's a former teacher with two sons in their 20s and attended the session for many reasons.

"I feel it's a really important program, and I wanted to see if there's something I can do to help other parents who are maybe struggling and make some sort of a difference," she said.

Eight of the approximately 15 participants were from Milford. Katz said she's met with Milford's mayor and many providers, and they said: "We want what you have in Norwalk."

Sean Macauley from Milford's Youth and Family Services said he sees more need on the parenting level than the child level in his job, and many parents have anxiety about how to deal with the topics, which include warning signs, communication and addiction discussed in Courageous Parenting 101.

Another participant, Maureen Tracy, from Rowayton, said she's been involved with a number of local organizations such as the Human Services Council and was also a mentor.

"They're very treacherous years when kids are teens in high school, and I think the tendency of parents to be in denial is strong, and who's to blame them?" she said.

"But I think (Courage to Speak) is an educational program that really can make a huge difference in these kids' lives, and I'm happy to be a part of it," she added. Visit www.couragetospeak.org