

# NEWS FROM....

## The Courage to Speak Foundation, Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Virginia "Ginger" Katz

July 12, 2008

PHONE: 877-431-3295

### THE TENTH IAN JAMES EACCARINO MEMORIAL 9 MILE RACE

Ginger Katz, President of The Courage to Speak Foundation and author of *Sunny's Story*, announced the **Tenth Annual Ian James Eaccarino Memorial 9-Mile Race** on Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> at 8am at Calf Pasture Beach in Norwalk sponsored by The Lightfoot Running Club, the Parks and Recreation Department of Norwalk, Stew Leonard's, The Hour Newspapers, Booth Financial, Cook Associates Your Company Store, Patriot National Bank, Stew Leonard's, The Hour Newspapers, Kaiser-Battistone, Sandra and William Bennett, Kaiser-Battistone, Via Sforza, Trattoria Pizzeria, Fenella Pearson - ASID and WSTC 1400/WNLK 1350.

Ginger and her husband, Larry, have been members of Lightfoot Running Club for over 26 years and are co-founders of The Courage to Speak Foundation. The running club suggested this race be dedicated in Ian's memory, because he worked at the beach the summer before he died. He personally planted many of the trees that now line this beautiful beach.

In 2007, over 140 runners participated in this extraordinary community race. The first place winner was Jim Buchanan with a time of 53:58. Jim reported that as he approached the finish line, he was in awe of the fact he was accomplishing a goal that eluded him for the prior 8 years, something he had always wished for Ian, namely, to win the race for him. A plaque was also given to Ryan Haney, age 18, of Wilton, with a time of 1:15:32, as the youngest participant in the race to underscore the importance of passion, commitment, and a healthy drug-free lifestyle.

Ginger now shares her story to tens of thousands of students and parents nationwide every year and has been doing so for over 11 years. She remains committed to the race and to prevention of substance abuse. A little over 14 years ago, Ginger was a new member of the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce, a commissioner on the Norwalk Planning Commission, a wife, and a mother of two children. Her son, Ian, graduated from Norwalk High School and began college. In February of 1996, Ian called home asking for help. He had become addicted to drugs and couldn't stop. Ginger and Larry brought him home to get help and believed it was working. He had his whole life ahead of him.

In September 1996, Ian transferred to UCONN, near their home, and on Tuesday, September 10, he died of a drug overdose. Addiction does not discriminate. It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what race you are, how financially sound you are, or if you have a family who loves you dearly. Sadly, it can happen to anyone.

After Ian's death, Ian's former principal, Dewey Amos at Norwalk High School and Ginger's priest from St. Thomas Church, asked her to speak to children and parents in the community about what had happened and how simply Ian's life could have been saved. Since then, Ginger and her husband, Larry together have presented their story to over a half a million people across the country and been recognized on a national level for their work. Through The Courage to Speak Foundation, they have developed elementary, middle, high school curricula and that are helping children in our Norwalk schools. New this fall is a parent program called **"Courageous Parenting 101."**

For information on sponsoring the race, running the race and volunteering, e-mail [gkcourage@aol.com](mailto:gkcourage@aol.com) or call The Courage to Speak Foundation at 203 877 431 3295.