

VIRGINIA (“GINGER”) KATZ

CEO and Founder, The Courage To Speak® Foundation, Inc.

Mission: Saving lives by empowering youth to be drug free and encouraging parents to communicate effectively with their children about the dangers of drugs.

Founded in 1996 shortly after Ginger and Larry Katz lost their son, Ian, to a drug overdose. They are dedicated to fulfilling a promise Ginger made to Ian to do everything in her power to prevent this tragedy from happening to another family.

Core Activities: Educational presentations, proprietary school-based programs/curriculum delivering social-emotional skill building lessons to increase youth’s ability to live healthy lives, parenting programs/curriculum, books and videos that empower students and their parents to break through the silence and denial surrounding substance abuse to honestly communicate about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.

Major Accomplishments

- **Delivered approximately 1000 prevention presentations nationwide** to schools (elementary through college), civic organizations, law enforcement forums, medical forums, provider and prevention organizations, corporations, conventions, conferences and other forums throughout the country.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum for High Schools.** Fourteen lesson curriculum taught by health class teachers. This program was developed by a team of experts in prevention and curriculum development. Including new lessons on marijuana and vaping.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum for Middle Schools.** Sixteen lesson curriculum plus two booster lessons taught by health class teachers and language art teachers accompanied by *Sunny’s Story*. This program was developed by a team of experts in prevention and curriculum development. Including new lessons on marijuana and vaping.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Prevention Curriculum accompanied by *Sunny’s Story* for Elementary Schools.** Taught by language art and health teachers for Grades 4-6. This program was developed by a team of experts in prevention and curriculum development.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Education for After School Programs –** Accompanied by *Sunny’s Story* for students in Grades 4-6. Adapted from the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum for Elementary Schools. Four Sessions.
- **Developed the Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Parenting Curriculum *Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101*®.** A multi-session course implemented by Courage to Speak Foundation trained facilitators as a follow up to the *Courage to Speak Presentation* and or video. To date, over 151 instructors have been trained to teach this course in English and Spanish. This program was developed by a team of experts in prevention. **Offered free to parents.**
- **Developed a single session program for parents, Courage to Speak Courageous Parenting 101, "Parenting Through the Opioid Crisis" program,** delivered by Ginger Katz and a trained facilitator in the field of substance abuse, helping parents navigate through the opioid crisis. Also known as a “Double Dose of Prevention™”
- **Adapted the Courage to Speak Courageous Parenting 101, "Parenting Through the Opioid Crisis" program to an Online Parent Training Module,** accessible from anywhere at any time from the Courage to Speak website, www.couragetospeak.org. Parents will have the ability to login to our platform and complete a skills-based training on their own schedule. Through video lessons, informative presentations, handouts and interactive activities, parents learn the knowledge and skills they need to keep their children safe from drug use

- **Authored Children's and Parenting Book**, called ***Sunny's Story A Drug Prevention Book***- a compelling story for children, teenagers, parents, grandparents, educators and more. It tells of joyful times and of sad times and of how a dog's best friend was needlessly lost to drugs. Narrated by the family beagle who tried to wake Ginger up the night Ian died. It is read at dinner tables across the country, as part of *The Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum* and as a stand-alone book in many schools.
- **Authored Story: A Mother's Promise to her Son**, October 2014 in *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Find Your Inner Strength*.
- **Authored Story: A Mother's Promise to her Son**, 2016 in *Simply Happy: A Crash Course in Chicken Soup for the Soul Advice and Wisdom*
- **Launched website**, www.couragetospeak.org. Information clearinghouse
- **Created the Courage to Speak Support Group**. A lifeline for parents who have lost children to substance abuse (est. 2000). Established in 2009, a support group for family members who have young and adult children that are using drugs.
- **The Courage to Speak Empowering Youth to Be Drug Free Family Night 2005–2019**. Exciting event involving all aspect of the community. Parents, children community leaders, state and local officials, law enforcement, clergy, business men and women to engage the home, school and community and join together to make a stand to empower youth to be drug free. [Featuring the work of the students who participate in The Courage to Speak Drug Prevention Curriculum \(grades 4, 5, 6 and 7th\)](#).
- **Coordinated "The Courage to Speak All Star Basketball Classic" 2000-2005**. Community sporting event shown on local and national television.

Major Awards, Appointments, and Speaking Invitations

Awards

- **The Sweet Mother Founder's Award 2015** for dedication of saving lives
- **Norwalk Public Schools Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Committee 2011 Citizenship Award** in recognition of the exemplary vision, leadership and commitment to Norwalk students and community
- **Bank of America 2010 Local Heroes Award**
- **Connecticut Association of Schools, 2010 Distinguished Friend of Education Award**, highest award given by Association to individual not directly involved in public education; nominated by CT principals.
- **2010 Distinguished Friend of Education Award- Connecticut Association of Schools** (March 2010), **giving to one person or organization each year**.
- **Hartford Business Journal, 2010 Nonprofit Heroes - Advocate of the Year Award** for outstanding achievement and service.
- In 2008, the Courage to Speak® Foundation received the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) **Service to Science Award** to enhance the evaluation capacity of the innovative and promising programs.
- Nominated by the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services- 2008
- **Honorary Chair** of the Parent National Vigil held in Washington DC June 8, 2006 (*Ms. Katz suggestion to the Chief Administrator of DEA*). Visit www.nationalparentvigil.com.
- **2005 Community Leadership Award** of the Junior League of Stamford-Norwalk.
- **Prevention Works Award** recipient at Federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Museum in New York City with former NY City, Mayor Guliliani. Jointly presented by the **Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)** and the **U.S. Dept. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** (10/6/04).
- **President's "Daily Points of Light "** Award (2/03).
- **"Courage to Speak Day."** Statewide proclamation by CT Governor Jody Rell (10/20/05).

- **"Telly" Award and Worldfest Houston Award** for The Courage To Speak video (8/03)
- **Connecticut's "Woman of the Year."** The Connecticut Post (12/00).

Speaking Invitations

- **The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity In Partnership with the Department Of Mental Health And Addiction Services Hosts the Courage to Speak®- COURAGEOUS PARENTING101 “Protecting Youth Through the Opioid Crisis and Beyond” Online Parent Training Module Event & Panel Discussion with DMHAS Commissioner Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., State Senator Bob Duff, Executive Director of Commission on Women, Children and Seniors Steven Herenandez, Ginger Katz, Founder of the Courage to Speak Foundation, Carlos Reinoso Jr., Manager at CCAR, Nicole Hampton, Peer Engagement Specialist at Norwalk Hospital/Nuvance Health – Online Facebook Live, CT Network, Zoom Meeting**
- **The HUB hosted the Courage to Speak®- Courageous Parenting 101 'Parenting Through the Opioid Crisis and Beyond' Online Parent Training Module – Online Zoom Meeting**
- **Fairfield Cares hosted the Courage to Speak®- Courageous Parenting 101 'Parenting Through the Opioid Crisis and Beyond' Online Parent Training Module – Online Zoom Meeting**
- **State Education Resource Center Summit Hosted by CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services– Systemic Opioid Prevention Efforts in Schools Summit – Cromwell, CT**
- **Keynote 20th Annual Loss and Trauma Conference - The Pain of Addiction – Worcester, MA**
- **Keynote for Arch Diocese of Boston Teacher Workshop – Braintree, MA**
- **24th Annual Connecticut Alliance for Foster and Adoptive Families Conference – Stamford, CT**
- **Keynote Speaker- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “The Opioid Impact on Families and Children” – John F. Kennedy Federal Building, Boston, MA**
- **Keynote Speaker- CT Department of Corrections- Health and Addiction Services presenting "Courage to Speak® Courageous Parenting 101-"Parenting Through the Opioid Crisis and Beyond"™**
- **Keynote Speaker at The Commission on Women and Children Hartford Opioid Forum – Legislative Office Building – Hartford, CT**
- **State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Opioid Symposium II - Gateway Community College, New Haven, CT New program delivery "Courage to Speak® Courageous Parenting 101-"Parenting Through the Opioid Crisis and Beyond"™**
- **South Carolina School Boards Association Risky Business Convention - Myrtle Beach, South Carolina**
- **National Principals Conference and the National Principals of Secondary Schools Conference – Philadelphia, PA.**
- **Keynote Speaker at Connecticut Opioid Use, Addiction, Overdose and Treatment Conference for State of CT, Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division**
- **Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families 22nd Annual Conference – Trumbull, CT**
- **Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Leadership Forum in Washington DC – Gaylord Conference Center.**
- **National Narcotic Officers Association Coalition (NNOCA) 325 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC.**
- **Speaker- 21st Annual CT Associations of Foster & Adoptive Parents (CAFAP) Conference, Mashantucket, CT**
- **Keynote Speaker- Judicial Branch Opioid Symposium I -Commission on Children Public Forum “Communities Convene on the Opioid & Heroin Crisis” at Gateway Community College, New Haven**
- **Speaker- Alliance for Safe Kids “Save a Life Forum”**

- **Speaker- Aware Recovery Care Shoreline Clinical Networking, Madison Beach Hotel, Madison, CT**
- **Speaker- Prescription Drug Abuse: Heroin Use and Overdose, Columbia-Greene Community College, Hudson, NY**
- **Speaker- “Safe School Summit” including parents and law enforcement Worcester District Attorney’s Office (54 towns), Worcester, MA**
- **Speaker- 20th Annual CT Associations of Foster & Adoptive Parents (CAFAP) Conference, Mystic, CT**
- **Speaker- Drugs, Alcohol, Teens, and Truth Panel Discussion, Tolland, CT**
- **Speaker- New England Educational Opportunity Association (NEOA) Annual Conference, Portsmouth, NH-**
- **Speaker- The Mark S. Bertuch “Make a Difference Program,” Boca Raton, FL**
- **Invited to be Speaker at the CADCA National Youth Conference (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) Washington, D.C.**
- **Delivered over 50 presentations as a follow up to reading *Sunny’s Story* written by Ms. Katz to the Bridgeport CT Schools**
- **Speaker- Roundtable Discussion on the Heroin Epidemic & Use of Narcan, Fairfield, CT**
- **Speaker- Litchfield County Opiate Task Force, Torrington, CT**
- **Health Teachers Drug Prevention Training, Norwalk, CT**
- **"TRAIN THE TRAINER" New Facilitators Training for Courage to Speak - Courageous Parenting 101®, Plainville, CT**
- **Speaker- CADCA’s 23rd Annual National Leadership Forum, Washington, D.C.**
- **Keynote Speaker, Office of Norfolk/Canton, MA District Attorney with 28 town representatives**
- **Speaker- Connecticut Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Convention**
- **Speaker- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and Public School Superintendents Convention**
- **Speaker- National Summit on Rx Drug Abuse, Orlando, FL**
- **Speaker- Connecticut Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance**
- **Speaker- CADCA Forum Sponsored by SAMHSA the Courage to Speak Presentation Prevention Day**
- **Speaker- Connecticut Education Association Summer Leadership Conference**
- **Speaker- Massachusetts Teachers Association Summer Conference**
- **Invited by Mayor’s Office Quincy MA to be Speaker at Quincy HS and No Quincy HS**
- **Speaker - Martinsville VA Community**
- **Speaker- Browne Gibbs Young Educational Campus, Washington DC**
- **Invited to be Speaker at Connecticut School Counselors Conference**
- **Optimus Health Care and the University of Bridgeport in association with Transworld power productions. CFN TV show debut featuring Ginger Katz**
- **Keynote Speaker at the Wheeler Clinic in CT**
- **Keynote Speaker at Quincy, MA Drug Symposium established by the Mayor of Quincy**
- **Keynote Speaker at Yale University sponsored by SAPN.**

- **Keynote Speaker at University of Florida, School of Addiction Medicine**
- **Speaker – JMATE Conference**, Washington DC
- **Speaker – Prevention Not Punishment Conference** Washington DC
- **Speaker at Optimus Health Care** - formerly Bridgeport Community Health Center
- **Speaker at JMATE, Joint meeting on Adolescent Treatment**, Washington, DC [Courage to Speak: A Model for Enhancing Parent-Child Communication and Advocacy](#)
- **Speaker at UCONN Providers Conference** at Storrs, CT, plus Workshop Leader
- **Speaker at Waterbury Alliance Doctors Group**, Waterbury, CT
- **National Keynote at Circle Around Families Conference** in Indiana
- **Speaker at the National Narcotic Officers Associations** in Washington DC
- **Keynote Speaker at the Connecticut PTA 105th Convention**
- **Speaker at the CADCA National Youth Conference (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America)** Washington, D.C.
- **Invited by the Drug Enforcement Agency to speak, along with former New York City mayor Rudolf Giuliani, at opening of DEA Museum’s drug prevention exhibit, “Target America,” in Times Square.** Other presenters: John Walters, Drug Czar, Karen Tandy, DEA Administrator and Beverly Watts Davis of US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- **Invitation from Senator Joseph Lieberman** to lead a landmark symposium on the dangers of Ecstasy in Trumbull CT
- **Invitation to attend White House ceremony** appointing John Walters "drug czar"

National Media/Web Recognition

- **Interview with John Voket – Connoisseur Media** (95.9 Fox, Star 99.9, Webe 108, WICC)
- **Interview with WSHU Radio**
- **Interview with Nia Hamm on Hartford Fox 8 News**
- **Interviewed with Sarah Cody on News Channel 8**
- **Interviewed with Bill O’Reilly on The O’Reilly Factor on Fox News**
- **Invited to the White House** for a press conference for a report of national drug use and recognition of the Courage to Speak Foundation work.
- **National spokesperson** for the National Parent Vigil in Washington, DC
- **Wrote newspaper column in The Hour**, Norwalk, CT
- **Interviewed for law enforcement training film** shown nationally - Produced by Multi-jurisdictional Counter Drug Task Force in Jupiter, FL
- **NPR Radio – Interview with Ms. Katz**
- **Featured in prominent media outlets:** The New York Times, New York- Daily News, Washington Times, Boston Herald, Hartford Courant, NBC-TV, NBA Inside Stuff, Life Time for Women, MSNBC, Cablevision of CT, CPTV, CT Post, The Hour, The Advocate, The Norwalk Citizen News, Yes Network, Cox Radio Station, WEBE 108 in Fairfield County – Women in Sports, Madison Square Garden, SportsDesk MSG Network.
- **BBC News Broadcast**

- **Produced “The Courage to Speak Video”** (25-minute and 6-minute versions and 30 second PSA).
- **Current Health Magazine Interview** distributed to all schools in U.S.
- **CT and NY Family Magazine**
- **Produced Drug Prevention P.S.A.** Feature shown in Crown Movie Theaters, CT Cablevision, Lifetime for Women, MTV and other channels
- **Featured on websites of the White House Office of Drug Control Policy, (ONDCP) www.drugstory.org, and the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), www.preventionpartners.samhsa.gov**
- **"Meet the Leaders" Show on Cablevision of CT**
- **Authored article on “The Courage to Speak” for Principal Leadership Magazine**
- **Feature on Education Notebook, Cablevision of CT**

Additional Speaking Invitations from National Conventions and Forums

- **Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Leadership Forum Washington DC**
- **National Narcotic Officers Association Coalition (NNOCA) 325 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC.**
- **Keynote Speaker at the Narcotic Enforcement Officers Association (NEOA) Annual Conference, Newport, RI and Washington DC**
- **Keynote Speaker at the Connecticut PTA 105th Convention**
- **Speaker, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), and feature story in newsletter**
- **Speaker, Connecticut Association of Schools Annual Winter Conference.** High school and middle school principals’ professional organization
- **Press Conference and Forum at Yale School of Medicine.** Invitation from the Office of National Drug Control Policy.
- **The ONDCP Summit, Washington, DC.** Invited by John P. Walters, Drug Czar
- **Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Convention**
- **The New England Governors Summit, Faniel Hall Boston, MA.** Invited by Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy
- **Speaker, Pride International, Ohio**
- **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Washington, D.C.**
- **Keynote, National Association of Drug Court Professionals, Reno, NV**
- **Keynote, Atlanta, GA – Parent Corp, National Association of Independent Schools, New York; National Association of Secondary School Principals, San Diego, CADCA Leadership Forum, D.C. ; Pride International.**

Additional Awards, Appointments, Board Memberships

- **2010 Distinguished Friend of Education Award- Connecticut Association of Schools (March 2010)**
- **Jr. League of Stamford Norwalk, Community Leadership Award – 04/05.**
- **Executive Committee of FAST in CT – Families Advocating for Treatment in CT.**

- **Award for Community Service.** Seventh Day Adventist Church – (6/02).
- **"Celebrate Women" Award.** Honoree of Norwalk Women's Professional Organization
- **Board Member, Connecticut Communities for Drug-Free Youth** – (1997-2003).
- **Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.** Partnership Council and Standing Committee of Connecticut – (2000-2002).
- **Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), Columbia University Task Force Member** – (1999-2000).
- **Community Service Award.** Toughlove International – (1/99).
- **Member, Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)** – (1997-2006).
- **Member, Mid-Fairfield Substance Abuse Coalition** (1997-present).
- **Member, Community Prevention Task Force of Norwalk** – (1997-present).
- **Member, Kiwanis Club of Norwalk** – (2001-04).
- **Norwalk Planning Commissioner** – (1994-02).

Athletic Achievements

(Note: The Courage to Speak Foundation empowers young people to find their passion in life as an alternative to using alcohol and other drugs. Ginger Katz models this through her athletic achievements and *very positive, motivational presentations*).

- **Second Place, Silver Medal, Camden, NJ, US Masters Nationals, Women's 8+ Boat**
- **Second Place, Saratoga Springs, NY, Head of the Fish, Women's Four Boat**
- **Gold Medalist, Narraganset, RI**
- **Silver and Bronze Medallist, U.S. Rowing masters national Championship, Cherry Hill, NJ**
- **Gold Medallist, Narraganset, RI**
- **Gold and Silver Medallist, US Rowing National Master's Championship**
- **Gold Medallist, Carnegie Lake Regatta, Princeton**
- **Invited to the Head of the Charles Regatta Boston, MA – second place grand masters women's four boat**
- **Bronze Medalist, Naragasset, MA Sweeps and Sculls, RI**
- **Gold Medalist, Howard Diamond States Regatta, DL**
- **Silver and Bronze Medalist, U.S. Rowing Masters National Championship, MA**
- **Silver Medalist, Mystic Seaport Regatta, CT**
- **Invited with her crewing team to the "Head of the Charles Regatta"**
- **Founder and Captain, "The Hot Shots," CT's Senior Olympic Women's Basketball Team, ranked 7th in U.S.**
- **Gold Medalist, Connecticut Senior Games** – basketball, tennis, running
- **Silver Medalist, U.S. Rowing Masters National Championship, KS**

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