

"FOUNDATION SEEKS TOP CURB TEEN DRUG USE"

By Joan Gaylord
Hour Staff Writer

August 20, 2008

The Courage to Speak Foundation will conduct a facilitator training program beginning the first week in October. The foundation seeks to curb teen drug use by empowering parents to develop lines of communication with their teenagers. Currently, 22 trained facilitators in four states including Connecticut, conduct the foundation's signature course, Courageous Parenting 101.

"I was in awe. They know what the need is," said Ginger Katz, president of the foundation, as she reviewed the activities of the current facilitators. "They work with parents. They work with children. They know."

Those currently trained as facilitators include middle-school teachers, licensed social workers, a school nurse, and a police detective.

Katz and her husband, Larry, created the Courage to Speak Foundation in the days following their son's death from an accidental drug overdose. After her son Ian's death, Katz said she would do everything she could to help prevent a similar tragedy from occurring in any other family.

Courageous Parenting 101 teaches parents the skills that will help them talk with their teenagers. Parents learn ways to support their youngsters' efforts to find alternate ways to cope with adolescent issues including stress and bullying.

Assignments during the course include listening to rap music and watching music videos. Parents learn about Internet sites and the availability of prescription drugs. They learn about parenting styles that "enable" children rather than discourage them from experimenting with drugs.

The facilitator training includes an introduction to the program and five additional training sessions. Participants learn about current trends in adolescent drug use including symptoms and effects, resources available to families, and how to effectively teach Courageous Parenting 101.

The training costs \$400 and application materials are available on the foundation's website. Those accepted into the program will receive Power Point-guided training sessions as well as the foundation's text book.

Facilitators will learn how to schedule and conduct their own workshops. At the conclusion of the training, graduates receive marketing materials and on-going support including updates on developing drug trends.

Though many of the people who enter the program have some background in substance abuse prevention, Katz said the training provided by the Courage to Speak Foundation will help to "refine" these skills, an effort that she said also maintains "the integrity" of the program.

"I've seen so much silence surrounding addiction," said Katz. "If we don't talk about it, we won't find solutions. If we don't talk about it, more kids will become addicted." Visit www.couragetospeak.org