

A Mother's Pain Inspires Young People To Stay Clear of Drugs

A NOPE Task Force presenter explains how she came to volunteer for NOPE, and how her talks changed her life and made young people and their parents think twice about using drugs.

Sharon Kearns is a NOPE Task Force presenter. She has done many talks for us, but her decision to speak at schools didn't come easy.

She went through considerable pain when her son died of drugs. Eventually, she realized she had something important to tell – and show – young people and their parents. If her audience could see and feel her pain, hopefully they could make better decisions concerning drugs – and save lives.

Here is her story, in her own words:

My son, William Carroll Kearns “Will,” passed away on November 5, 2006, and through my on-line research, to deal with my grief, I found NOPE. I met with NOPE’s Karen Perry and MaryAnn Carey right away. However, I stayed in the back ground for a very long time. I knew I needed help, but I didn’t know how to move forward. I had too much anger to do anything.

I was asked if I would consider presenting, getting up in front of people and telling my story! After quite a long time, I decided to go through the training to be a presenter. Then, more time passed, and with the encouragement of (former NOPE employee) Laura Guelzow, I wrote my testimony. I was told many times by Laura that it was not the right wording for a testimony -- too much name calling, too much finger pointing. Unloading and getting angry was not what this was all about. Go back and try AGAIN, I told myself. Just doing that was an amazing healing process for me. Finally, I had my “story.”

I worked through my anger, my shame, my shock and so many emotions. I saw that my son made the choices and decisions. I felt that if I could speak to young people and students about choices; decisions about expectations and the realities of the choices and decisions; and about not sleeping it off, which my son did not, and about calling 911, putting their fear aside of getting into trouble...they could save a life.

Had the person who had been with my son called 911, maybe my son would be alive today, but that person chose not to call 911. I feel my story has the power to save a life. For the longest time, I felt hopeless, alone, that I was the only one who felt what I felt. Through NOPE, I know I am not alone.

After hearing my talk, I hope students know that they matter! They are in control of their decisions and their choices. They have the power to save a life. It could be theirs; it could be someone else's. They have POWER! They have KNOWLEDGE! I want them to remember in hearing my words, the pain I have lived with since my son has died. I want them to consider their parents, put them in my shoes. Would they want their parents to suffer every day as I do, because the most important person in my life has died? As parents, we do our best, but new drugs are popping up every day, tempting our young people, so they have to be strong and resist. Drugging and drinking are life stealers.....life enders. My life has changed forever; I don't want them to be a face on one of the boards behind me when I tell my story.

Addiction crosses all the lines. You can't sit back and think it won't happen to you. Don't be careless with where you keep your prescription drugs and how freely you place your alcohol around your home. Talk to your children. Taking things away if you catch them drinking or drugging just makes them hate you. It won't make a difference. Instead, take them to a meeting, show them the reality. Most of all, show them you care. Show them you love them. Talk to them. Listen!!!

If you support NOPE's mission, consider making a donation so we can expand our programs and get more speakers like Sharon Kearns. Learn more [here](#).