

“Tears of Sadness” Led Mom To Action

One of our school presenters Susan Korabek tells young people that wrong choices about drugs can have fatal consequences. Her 17-year-old son learned that after experimenting with drugs and dying of an overdose.

A night of experimenting with drugs ended the life of Susan Korabek’s son, Landon, who was just 17.

Like any mother living with the loss of a child, Susan struggled deeply with Landon’s accidental overdose. Eventually, she found an outlet to dealing with her grief: educating young people about the dangers of using drugs -- even once. She connected with NOPE Task Force and has been a powerful speaker at our school presentations. Her “tears of sadness” led her to take action.

Her talks are changing the lives of students. She explain here:

1) Describe how you got involved with NOPE.

Susan Korabek: My son Landon died unexpectedly at the age 17 from an accidental overdose of prescription drugs. Just 3 months prior, a 14 year old died from the same high school, and a year prior a young girl died from another high school in the county. In the wake of too many young deaths and my own ignorance of how teens were experimenting, I wanted to find a purpose to help this community issue so others would not feel the pain of loss that my family felt when Landon died.

Within days of Landon’s passing, NOPE came to the high school for a parent meeting and it was the first time I saw the presentation. As I sat and listened to the presenters explain the dangers and I heard the heartfelt stories of loss from parents, my tears of sadness led me to want to help and take action. I wanted to be part of NOPE to tell Landon’s stories to show that from one night of experimentation a life can be taken.

2) How has doing NOPE presentations helped you cope with your loss?

Susan Korabek: Speaking for NOPE has allowed me to share Landon’s story starting by describing the wonderful young man that he was, but how one night cost him his life. I want Landon’s story and his picture to resonate in the students’ minds so they remember his outcome when they are making choices to partake. At schools where I’ve given the presentation more than once, I’ve actually had students approach me to say that they remembered Landon when they were at a party and they chose to say no. For parents, my story and my admission that I didn’t know about prescription drug abuse gets them to realize that they need to have a heightened sense of urgency to understand the dangers. Finally, people that have heard the NOPE presentation have allowed them not to be alone to share their own story and

struggles so they know that they are not alone in seeking help or advice for their situation. Sharing Landon's story is not easy, but the hugs, tears and "thank yous" help me to believe that my son is thanking me for getting others to learn from his mistake.

3) What do you hope students will remember after hearing your story?

Susan Korabek: After a NOPE presentation, I want students to remember Landon's story, his picture and how his mistake impacted his family and friends. I want them to remember the risk-taker that he was and that one night of taking prescription drugs was the biggest and last risk that took his life. I want them to remember that he was a kid who is just like them -- happy, fun and athletic -- but wrong choices have their consequences. Most importantly, they need to remember that calling 911 will save a life and they must make that call.

4) What advice would you give parents of teenagers as it relates to drug prevention?

Susan Korabek: In speaking with parents, there are 3 points that I want them to take away.

First and foremost, tell your children that you love them every single day and tell them with direct eye contact so they see the sincerity of your message.

Second, talk to your kids about all drugs and alcohol regularly. Constantly stay ahead of what drugs are prevalent because your kids know more than you do.

Finally, I tell parents that you have to trust your gut feelings. If you sense or see signs of behavior that are not normal, don't wait to take action. Get help or get a drug test. You may get resistance but it is only because your child deep down wants your support.

Read a story [here](#) of another NOPE presenter who too lost her son to drugs and is educating young people in her community about the dangers of experimenting with drugs.

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