



'Dear Marci' -- Students write heroin victim's sister about her story's impact

By CAROL HARPER – **Sandusky Register May 23, 2004**

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NORWALK

Marci Davies has spoken about the consequences of heroin use at 15 schools, several church youth groups and Students Against Drunk Driving chapters since her first talk Dec. 7, 2001.

She estimates she has reached out to more than 2,500 teens.

Marci's brother, Pete Rinner, 24, overdosed on heroin March 1, 1999, in Columbus where he was a student at Ohio State University. Marci, 31, Norwalk, and her family did not know Pete was using heroin.

After hearing her speak, hundreds of the students reached back with letters.

"Some of them are really sad," she said. "They say things like, 'My mom is doing heroin. What should I do?' Those go right to the counselors."

Other letters show students were willing to consider Marci's experiences when weighing their options. A Norwalk student wrote:

"To tell you the truth, I always read articles about this stuff. I never thought they were real. I thought they were just trying to keep you healthy. Now I understand that it's real and so close to me ...

"You could be saving my life. I know for a fact that whenever I'm offered, I will think of you and Pete and the awful consequences."

A Norwalk Middle School student wrote:

"After you came, now I'm scared of drugs. I don't think I'll ever try drugs."

One student said she sees her friends and family in a more tender way:

"I think today was a little hard. And I think that I'm going to appreciate people more and watch out for my friends and my sisters and brothers! And I feel upset, but in a way I feel better now that I know what it does. But I know that I'm not ever going to do that."

One student acknowledged the importance of knowing the consequences while making decisions:

"I saw that you can be the best person ever and still decide to do drugs and die. You can also have a good life and do drugs and die instantly. You make your own decisions, yes or no. If you want to do drugs and die, you hurt yourself, your family, friends, and other people who knew you."

Marci keeps the letters neatly tucked away in photo albums. Reading through all of them took her four hours one night, she said. The comments encourage her quest to bring meaning to Pete's senseless death to heroin.

Sometimes her message is delivered at just the right time:

"Thanks for coming to the Norwalk Middle School," one boy wrote. "I'm so glad you told me about your brother because that very next day I got offered drugs. I remember what you told us. If you didn't, I probably would have said, 'Yes,' to them."