

Run Date: 09/24/2004

Sister devotes time for 'Pete's Sake'

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A Norwalk woman who lost her brother to a heroin overdose has decided to devote all of her time to educating people about the dangers of using drugs.

Marci Davies has given up her full-time job as a computer consultant to head the non-profit For Pete's Sake Inc. The organization will hold an annual drug awareness rally, partner with community organizations to fight drug addiction and ask people who've lost loved ones to drug abuse to share their stories with others.

Davies started the organization after she launched a Web site in August containing the circumstances behind Pete Rinner's death, poems, family pictures and links to resources.

Pete, the son of Steve and Marcia Rinner, died on March 1, 1999, at age 24.

Davies has been sharing her brother's story since 2001 with school children and others. She tells them, among other things, that heroin can take the life of anyone -- even her brother, who was a straight A student throughout middle and high school and didn't look for trouble.

Now, Davies wants to take her awareness spreading a step further.

"We all just want to put our strengths together and make a difference," she said of the roughly 20 volunteers she's recruited for her organization. "I feel very strongly that we have an awesome team of volunteers."

Their goals in the next year are getting others who've lost loved ones to drug overdoses to share their stories and joining forces with the Heroin Prevention Steering Committee, comprised of local officials and civic leaders, and putting on awareness rallies.

The group's first public event is a rally from 4 p.m. until dusk Oct. 3 at Veterans Memorial Lake Park in Norwalk. Speakers will include Davies; Susie Suits, a recovering drug addict; Carol Anderson, who lost a daughter to heroin; Norwalk Police K-9 and D.A.R.E. officer David Pigman; and Maryann Geist, an emergency room detoxification nurse.

In addition, counselors and youth pastors will be present to talk to students and parents, while children's games will include a kid zone with a bounce house, a play area, clowns, balloons, pencils and stickers. Finally, a band from Sandusky, called Uncle Meat, will

perform in memory of a friend lost to drug use. Davies stressed the rally, which will become an annual event, is meant to raise awareness of the dangers of all drugs, not just heroin.

Davies said volunteers from For Pete's Sake Inc. also will be present at area events such as the Strawberry Festival and Huron County Fair and are preparing a quarterly newsletter.

The publication will contain information such as community drug prevention resources and information about the local drug scene, obtained from police and courts.

"I want parents to know what's out there right now," Davies said.