

Gail and David Katz

David, Gail and Melissa Katz

“On June 15, 2007 we lost our beloved son, Daniel Lee Katz, as a result of a drug overdose. Every parent wants to believe this can’t happen to them. It can, and all too often it does.”

So begins the message of the SAVE A STAR Drug Awareness Foundation, established by David and Gail Katz following the tragic death of their only son, Daniel in 2007. At the young age of 25, Daniel died of a prescription drug overdose. Ironically, this Chicago family buried their son on the very day the DEA Educational Foundation held its Vigil for Lost Promise at Chicago’s Navy Pier. Weeks later, after hearing about the Vigil, the Katz family contacted us; looking for answers in their attempts to make some sense out of a senseless tragedy. The tearful early July meeting in Chicago with David, Gail and Melissa Katz, Daniel’s older sister, dealt with subjects ranging from enforcement to treatment and education. Yet, it also ushered in the beginning of a truly great friendship between the Katz family and the DEA Educational Foundation.

The link that binds the relationship is the mutual desire to educate children, families, teachers and civic leaders on the many costs and consequences of prescription drug abuse. With more than six million people abusing prescription drugs, and with more ER visits and overdose deaths caused by prescription drug abuse than by cocaine, heroin, hallucinogenic and inhalants combined, both the DEA Educational Foundation and the Katz family recognize that we are in the midst of a great threat to our nation. Prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in our country and it is why the Katz’s are leading supporters of our goal to reach millions of youth and families throughout the country on the dangers associated with improper prescription drug use.

When the Katz family came to the unveiling of the DEA Museum’s new exhibit entitled Good Medicine, Bad Behavior: Drug Diversion in America this past November, they saw what so many of us saw; the need to take the important message contained in the exhibit on the road; to have a truly mobile exhibit.

Following more meetings, the Katz family and their Foundation agreed to give the DEA Educational Foundation a Leadership gift to be used as seed money to conduct a feasibility study on such an undertaking. Through their generous gift in 2008, and two previous gifts in 2007, studies are currently being conducted and evaluated regarding the design, content, sponsorship, and timeframe of a mobile exhibit.

Once the project has been approved by the DEA Educational Foundation Board, Director of Development Bill Beach will work closely with the Katz Family, the SAVE A STAR Drug Awareness Foundation, and others, to raise the necessary funds that will be required for the construction and operation of what will be a first class traveling exhibit and education/resource center. The exhibit will leave the public with a meaningful experience, and reinforce it with the very compelling story of Daniel Lee Katz, and the loss of both promise and potential never realized.

For all that David, Gail and Melissa Katz have done, and continue to do, the Board of Directors of the DEA Educational Foundation offers its heartfelt and sincere thanks and appreciation.

“We are committed to working hand in hand with the DEA Educational Foundation in our shared mission to educate our communities about the serious and oftentimes fatal effects of prescription drug abuse. We believe that this interactive, hands-on exhibit will be an amazing tool to help aid our youth in their decision making regarding drug experimentation and use. We need to curtail the growing epidemic of prescription drug abuse, and we are confident that this extraordinary educational exhibit will, over time, save many young lives. It is now our lifetime goal to help as many families as possible to intervene and educate their young children who may be in need of help, and to spare loved ones the unbearable grief and pain that will be with us the rest of our lives.”