

**Open communication is the key to helping our children with addictions.**

My son Justin began experimenting with alcohol at the age of 15, as do many young adults. I became an advocate for our township for alcohol abuse and underage drinking. I was successful in having our school superintendent send to all high school parents a letter regarding the dangers of drinking. Justin had difficulties when he reached college due to his behavior. His grades were good, but we could not understand why he was exhibiting aberrant behavior during his freshman year of college. I was informed in 2012 that my son had become addicted to Percocet and later learned, upon his demise, that he was addicted to heroin for at least a year and a half prior, which began with Percocet and Oxycontin abuse. It is my goal and intention to forge ahead to bring awareness, education and prevention of opiate abuse to our community. I have testified before a Congressional Subcommittee this year regarding changing the HIPAA laws for mental disorders and addiction in hopes of raising even greater awareness and advocating for parents of drug-addicted children across the country.



**Gregg B. Wolfe**

**Signs & Symptoms of Heroin Abuse:**

Shortness of breath	Dry mouth	Constricted (small) pupils
Sudden change in behavior/actions	Disorientation	Cycles of hyper-alertness & dozing off
Droopy, heavy appearance	Paraphernalia like needles	Burnt silver spoons
Straws/foil/gum wrappers with burn marks	Missing shoelaces	Increased or new anxiety, depression, ADD and/or ADHD
Small plastic bags with white, powdery residue	Water or other pipes	Lying & deceptive behavior
Avoids eye contact; distance	Increased sleeping	Garbled or slurred speech
Sudden worsening of performance at school/work	Decreasing attention to personal hygiene; Weight loss; Runny nose; Needle marks; Infections	Withdrawal from family and friends and instead spending time with new, lesser known contacts
Loss of motivation; lack of interest in normal hobbies	Repeated theft or borrowing funds from family & friends	Hostile behavior towards loved ones; blame, paranoia, hypersensitivity; irritability

**Contact Us:**

**Squash the Secret**

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**Mission:**

The mission of our group, Squash the Secret, is to create awareness among the parents in our community regarding the dangers of heroin/opiate abuse, which includes being able to identify visual as well as the subtle signs; the imminent threat to addicts, their families, friends and our society.

Another aspect of our mission is education for the purpose of saving lives. Our children and loved ones should not be taken from us by surprise. It is critical that we do a better job in educating people about the fact that addiction is a disease, and it should never go unnoticed.

Ultimately, our objective is prevention so that another life is not lost or harmed; that our children are able to live fulfilling lives and keep the disease contained to the fullest extent possible.

For more information, please visit:

[www.JustinforJustice.org](http://www.JustinforJustice.org)

**Squash the Secret**

A coalition of parents helping our addicted sons and daughters

[www.squashthesecret.net](http://www.squashthesecret.net)



## About Us:

Addiction has been in my family since childhood. My father was an alcoholic and my cousin who lived in the same household had a drug addiction since the age of 13 years old. More recently, Justin, who was like my stepson, became addicted to Percocet and Oxycontin his freshman year of college unbeknownst to our family. It was later discovered upon his demise that he was addicted to snorting heroin for a year and a half prior to his death. I am very aware of the frustration and challenges of rehabilitation and the destruction that occurs within the family unit. The focus, in my opinion, should be on the prevention and the community awareness that is desperately required in order to bring about any meaningful assistance to halt this epidemic.



Vivian Bush

I am a parent of a child who passed away from a heroin overdose on 2/12/10 at the age of 19. My Son, Mark, started using marijuana at the age of 14 and within a five-year period his addiction progressed to cocaine and pills and then heroin, which ultimately took his life. My goal for this new program is all about prevention - helping parents and their kids be informed of the dangers of drug use. I have written and self-published a book titled, "Why My Son," in 2011 which shows how a beautiful life was taken by this horrible disease of drug addiction. I have spoken at a retreat, an outpatient rehab, and at a parent meeting at Williamstown High School. I will continue to speak at schools as I am determined to help eliminate drug abuse. I proudly lobbied for the Good Samaritan Law in my town of Voorhees, which was signed into law by NJ Governor Chris Christie. The Good Samaritan Law is in effect and saving lives.



Susan D'Ambrosio

## How to Help:

- **Never think: "drug addiction can't happen to my son or daughter."**
- **Pay attention to physical, emotional, behavioral and social changes; changing friends; trouble in school; staying out all night; loss of interest in usual activities. Behavioral signs precede physical ones.**
- **Watch for bouts of nodding out and exhibiting euphoria; becoming reclusive.**
- **Do not dismiss changes in behavior as this be a warning sign of drug addiction.**
- **Be aware that heroin, Percocets and Oxycontin can be snorted, injected and/or smoked, and that heroin is actually cheaper -- only \$5-\$10 a bag-- than pills.**

## How to Help Continued

- **Keep alcohol and drugs locked away.**
- **Be aware of "pharm" parties.**
- **Consider genetics; addiction runs in families.**
- **Teach your children the dangers and outcomes of drug abuse, but also, about "out" techniques to use when peer pressure is a factor.**
- **If you fear drug abuse, have a recovering addict talk with your son/daughter.**
- **Treat addiction as a disease, not a moral issue.**
- **Be aware of missing items within the home, selling or pawning personal items, stealing.**
- **Keep the dialogue open with your children; instill a relationship of trust so they know they can confide in you when they or their peers are involved in drug use.**
- **Be involved in your children's lives and activities.**
- **Notice lethargic behavior; little or no drive.**
- **Stay updated on their school work and progress.**
- **When drug use is suspected: Demand urine testing in your presence. Don't be quick to trust an addict; they manipulate and lie to get a needed "fix".**
- **Keep communicating**

## AWARENESS EDUCATION PREVENTION

*"Squash the Secret" offers parental, staff and student education indicative of our Mission Statement. The resources our group provides to parents is through Drug-Free America Partnership at: [Drug-Free.org](http://Drug-Free.org) and [SteeredStraight.org](http://SteeredStraight.org). Additionally, you can visit the Living Proof Recovery Center in Voorhees, and the web site, [Justinforjustice.org](http://Justinforjustice.org), among other such sites sharing our mission.*



