

*Kim Farinick:  
My Daughter's Story*



My name is Kim Farinick and I live in Edison. I lost my daughter, Dana Reisman, to an accidental fatal drug overdose. Dana was an amazing woman and a great daughter. She was a member of her school swim team, a cheerleader in both junior high and high school, and had her whole life ahead of her, but she died when she was only 22 years old.

Before Dana passed, she was stuck in a cycle of addiction, treatment and relapse. As a mother, I did my best to help my daughter. My husband and I helped Dana get into a number of well-respected treatment facilities throughout the state, including Princeton House, Daytop Village, and Discovery House. Despite maxing out my credit cards on treatment costs, educating ourselves about drug awareness, and trying everything from “mother love to tough love,” I had no success. After a very tumultuous year in which Dana disappeared, got into legal trouble, and served time in juvenile detention, she finally came home.

Dana detoxed at home, got clean for a while and we even took a family vacation to Wildwood. I remember this trip like it was yesterday because, for that week, I felt like I had my daughter back. Shortly after returning home, Dana and I had a heart-to-heart in which she spoke positively about her future, making me hopeful that she was on the road to recovery. The next morning, my husband and I went to work and when we got home we found Dana on the floor of our hallway. She was face down, cold and blue. This horrific image still haunts me today. I immediately started CPR and my husband called 911, but it was too late—we had already lost Dana. I remember wishing that I had naloxone, the opioid overdose antidote, in the house so that I could have tried to save my daughter.

I know society doesn't like to talk about drugs, addiction and overdose, but this is a problem that we can no longer ignore. In New Jersey, drug overdoses are the leading cause of accidental deaths. At Dana's wake, a half-dozen people came up to me and told me about someone in their families or someone they knew who died of an overdose. I know I'm not alone and there are many parents like myself who have sons and daughters who have battled with or are battling addiction—children whose lives are at risk due to potential overdose. That's why I'm speaking out.

In memory of Dana, I want to prevent future overdose deaths. One way to address this problem is for the State of New Jersey to expand access to naloxone so that it is not only available to emergency personnel, but also to laypeople such as myself who may witness an overdose and therefore have the opportunity to administer life-saving naloxone to a peer or loved one. Six states have enacted laws providing legal protection from civil or criminal liability for medical professionals and laypeople who prescribe or administer naloxone to those at risk for drug overdose death. Community-based programs across the country report that more than 10,000 people have been saved after an overdose by laypeople who were trained to administer naloxone. Please remember my daughter, Dana, and help prevent other overdose deaths by supporting Assembly Bill 3095/Senate Bill 2082.