



**DIRECTOR DAVE TILLEY**  
Parents, Teens Not Informed

# ACLU, Drug Center In Court Thursday

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A hearing is set in Cobb Superior Court Thursday to determine if five area teenagers are being held against their will at a Cobb drug rehabilitation center, as a suit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union claims.

Judge Dorothy A. Robinson will preside at the 9:30 a.m. hearing in the Cobb Superior Court Building presiding.

Dave Tilley, director of the drug program, STRAIGHT, said he received five writs of habeas corpus late Friday and would be meeting with his

attorney today. He said he could not comment on any action to be taken by STRAIGHT, located at 2221 Austell Road, until after meeting with the attorney.

ACLU attorney Kathleen Wilde filed the writs of habeas Corpus — "orders to produce the bodies" on behalf of Travis [redacted] of Dunwoody, 18; Bill [redacted], no address given, 18; Allen [redacted] and Kathy [redacted] both of Marietta and both 17, and Janice [redacted] of Spartanburg, S.C., also 17.

"Neither the parents nor the kids involved in the writs initiated the action or were informed of the writs of

habeas corpus," Tilley said, adding he has spoken to the parents of the five teenagers named in the court action.

Tilley, formerly principal of J.J. Daniell Middle School in northeast Cobb, called allegations of physical abuse within the center "absolutely absurd." He added staffers use "cautious restraint" if an individual is misbehaving.

According to ACLU state director Gene Guerrero, the Cobb County STRAIGHT program is in violation of a 1978 state law requiring licensing of alcohol and drug rehabilitation agencies.

"As far as we know they have

made no attempt to license," said Guerrero this morning. "They have not complied with the letter of the law or the spirit of the law."

Guerrero said the ACLU has received several complaints about Cobb's program and was led to file the writs when a former resident claimed the five teenagers were being held against their will at the center.

"We tried to talk with the five Thursday," said Guerrero. "We were turned away."

Other complaints registered by former residents, said Guerrero, included charges they were held against their will, were locked in their rooms

at night and were not allowed to communicate with the outside world.

STRAIGHT's rehabilitation format calls for the young people, ages 12 to 21, to stay with families of advanced STRAIGHT clients, those who are close to overcoming their drug dependence. The facility, in a remodeled grocery store, has no residential quarters.

According to Tilley, STRAIGHT is "based on the concept that peer pressure gets children into drugs and peer pressure can get them out. The program calls for a strong commitment

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# STRAIGHT Is Sued

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and involvement by all members of the child's family. The idea is not simply to take children off drugs, but to replace the way of thinking that put them on drugs."

As a result of the ACLU inquiries, Guerrero said the state Department of Human Resources sent investigators to the STRAIGHT facility Friday.

When asked about STRAIGHT's licensing status with the Department of Human Resources, Tilley said the agency was contacted both before and after STRAIGHT opened its doors in Cobb Aug. 15.

"We have been in close contact

with the DHR and have completed the licensing application," said Tilley. "We are in the process of becoming licensed and are abiding by all regulations of DHR."

Tilley said he was disturbed that the names of the five teenagers were made public, calling the action "an injustice to them."

Tilley said conversation with the parents and the youths named in the writs show they share his sentiments about the disclosure of information and the ACLU's part in the allegations.

"All the parent sare angry and very upset," Tilley said. "They're asking, 'Where was the ACLU when my child attempted suicide or ran away from home?'"

Cobb County Board of Education member Carolyn Duncan, whose son has just recently completed STRAIGHT's program, said today the organization is a "life-changing, positive program."

"STRAIGHT works," she added.

The ACLU is "sticking their noses in where they don't belong," Mrs. Duncan said. "They are trying to come between parents and children. I don't think they have that right."

Mrs. Duncan said her son tells her none of the alleged abuses occurred while he was in the program.

"I'm angry with them getting involved at the request of a teenager," she said.