

Nancy Turns Spotlight On Drug Abuse

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Nancy Reagan turned the White House spotlight on projects that fight teenage drug abuse with a trip today to various drug centers.

It was Mrs. Reagan's second major trip since her husband became president — the first was to the royal wedding in England last summer — and the first lengthy swing devoted to a substantive issue. She returns to the White House Tuesday night.

"It gives her a chance to look at some of these programs that have been recommended to her ... to learn about the whole spectrum — in prevention, in rehabilitation, in the parents' movement and a statewide effort to deal with the drug problem," a White House aide said.

Her Florida trip includes stops at an elementary school in St. Petersburg that runs classes for 9 to 12-year-olds with potential drug problems, and a behavior modification program for teenagers.

Her first stop called for a visit at the Pinellas Park Elementary School in St. Petersburg, to visit one of 10 ALPHA drug programs in Florida, which offer special classes for preteens who show signs of future problems.

She then scheduled a visit to Straight Inc., a behavior modification program for teenagers that includes patriotic song-singing and emotional encounter sessions. The teenagers live with foster families, and for several weeks spend 12 hours a day at the center. As they make progress, they get more time off.

In Texas she planned a lunch with the Texans' War on Drugs Committee, a privately funded group that helped pass a package of tough anti-drug laws, including one outlawing "head shops" and drug paraphernalia. She also scheduled a meeting with Richardson Families in Action, a 250-family group in a Dallas suburb involved in lobbying and education.

"I hope it draws attention to the real problem that exists out there," Mrs. Reagan told a Westinghouse Broadcasting Co. interviewer last week. "I'm a big believer in the parents groups that have sprung up. I think that's wonderful."

She said she is not trying to create any new image for herself.