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Disgruntled employee cited

BYLINE: By Diane Loupe STAFF WRITER drugs; alcohol; abuse; teenagers; care; facilities; regulations; violations; protests; conditions; history; closings

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Ms. Margolis and Ms. Hardman-Broder dismiss critics as disgruntled or dysfunctional parents and claim that all complaints come from a zealous, disgruntled former employee whose group is backed by two foundations that favor **drug** legalization and oppose **drug** treatment. But one of those organizations, **Drug** Policy Foundation, supports **drug** treatment and also has prestigious backers such as Carl Sagan and Baltimore Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke.

President Bush, who named two Florida **Straight** volunteers as his 656th daily "Point of Light" on Jan. 1, remains a staunch supporter, despite the criticism. Two wealthy supporters of Mr. Bush's campaign, Florida businessmen Melvin Sembler and Joseph Zappala, are founders of the **Straight** program.

Christine [REDACTED] parents, Kathy and Don, say **Straight** helped her stop abusing alcohol and prescription **drugs**. But they think **Straight** exploited their family economically.

For nearly two years, the [REDACTED] paid **Straight** about \$ 500 a month and operated a so-called host home, boarding up to six teenagers, adding \$ 600 to monthly grocery and utility bills. In addition, the parents raised about \$ 300 every month by selling candy and poinsettias and standing on street corners on weekends collecting donations for **Straight**, often in the rain.

"You're brainwashed and scared to question it," Mrs. [REDACTED] said. Mr. [REDACTED] added, "We were told that if you didn't like it, your kid would be dead in a couple of days."

"Well, it's been six months and she's not dead yet," Mrs. [REDACTED] said.

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