

Class action sought in drug-center suit

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Disappointed donors and Straight Inc. will take their fight over the defunct drug and alcohol treatment program into U.S. District Court Friday.

Supported by Ohio's attorney general, Gerald W. Simmons and other lawyers want Chief Judge Carl B. Rubin to certify the donors' suit as a class action. They also want him to give Straight's vacant Clermont County building to the Greater Cincinnati Foundation for programs treating juvenile and adolescent abusers.

Straight came to the Cincinnati area in 1981-82. It raised at least \$1.5 million, most of which was spent on the building and 6.5 acres at 6072 Branch Hill-Guinea Pike, in Miami Township.

Straight drew favorable attention from Nancy Reagan in 1984, but its local branch closed last year amid failing fund-raising and litigation over its treatments.

Now the 22,000-square-foot office and meeting facility is for sale for \$1 million.

And that's the problem.

Local contributors say Florida-based Straight might spend the

sale proceeds elsewhere, violating its promise to use the money here.

"That's not necessarily true," Straight attorney W. Breck Weigel countered Monday. "And no one knows what's going to happen."

Weigel said there is no reason to take the property or sale proceeds from Straight.

"We've done exactly what we promised to do. All of the funds raised in Cincinnati were used for Cincinnati." Further, he said, "there are parents who want the money to stay with Straight" for at least three reasons:

■ If the proceeds of the proper-

ty sale are retained, Straight might reopen in the Cincinnati area.

■ Cincinnati-area families who moved their youngsters to Straight near Detroit want the money spent there if it isn't used by Straight closer to home.

■ Some money came from Michigan donors when the Cincinnati-area program was the nearest Straight facility in the early 1980s.

Moreover, Greater Cincinnati Foundation is not a disinterested party. It donated at least \$110,000 to buy, expand and renovate the Straight facility and is a party to the suit.