

Parents try to set youth str

By Jim DeBrosse

Post Staff Reporter

Like many parents, Roger and Patricia [redacted] of Terrace Park never suspected their teenage son had a drug problem.

When David began withdrawing from his family and friends and behaving like a different person, they accepted it as part of the rocky process of growing up.

"He spent all of his time in his bedroom," Mrs. [redacted] recalled, "and he had only the most superficial relations with his two brothers."

[redacted] remembered that he

the difference between reality and fantasy."

SENIOR YEAR, David was repeatedly given detention for problems at St. Xavier High School. Then, three months before graduation, he was expelled

from school. A priest caught him smoking marijuana during a religious retreat.

Once they came to grips with the problem, the [redacted] began to look for a drug rehabilitation program for their son. The programs offered here are geared more toward adults than teenagers, they found. More appropriate programs in other cities were too expensive, as much as \$12,000 a year, [redacted] said.

Finally, on the advice of a friend whose son was helped by the program, they sent David to Straight Inc. in St. Petersburg.

David is now working as a counselor at Straight, attending college part-time and making plans for a career in wildlife management.

"THE CHANGE in him was so dramatic. It was just incredible," [redacted] said. "He went from an

attitude of not caring about anything to one of caring about himself and others."

The [redacted] are hoping now to establish a similar program in Cincinnati. With Steven Katkin, executive director of the Clermont County Community Health Center, and Dallas and Judy Sandlin of Walton, Ky., they have formed a nonprofit seed organization, Straight-Midwest Inc.

Friday they will offer an all-day workshop at Northern Kentucky University for professionals on how to recognize, treat and prevent teenage drug abuse. A

also will be held Friday, from 8 to 10 p.m. Those interested in helping form a Straight program here will be invited to return Saturday.

Dr. George Ross, a consultant and counselor for Straight in Florida, will lead the workshop.

Katkin said the success of the Straight program is based on two things—positive peer pressure and family involvement.

MOST STRAIGHT COUNSELORS are young persons who have completed the program themselves. They work intensively with the teenagers in group activities for up to 12 hours a day.

"All adolescents are very caught up in groups. Trying to please the drug group is what gets them into drugs in the first place," Katkin said. Straight uses the same group pressure to get

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the people he sees most—his parents."

Katkin said teen-agers in the program are monitored closely for drug use. "It gets them off drugs first so they can know what they think and feel." Until then, he said, their feelings are being blocked and their maturity stunted.

STRAIGHT USES a modified version of the seven rules followed by members of Alcoholics Anonymous. It works to reinforce traditional, though non-denominational, religious values in its members.

teen-ager comes from a religious background. "It basically re-establishes values that were already there."

Belanger said the cost of the program is about \$750 to \$1000 per teen-ager for a year of treatment



Patricia and Roger [redacted]

and is adjusted to a family's income.