

# Father drops suit against dr

By Nancy Berlier  
Post Staff Reporter

Despite strong feelings that his son has been "detained and restrained of his liberty," Thomas [redacted] has decided to drop all efforts to have the youth released from a Clermont County drug rehabilitation center.

[redacted] said Wednesday he would halt legal proceedings that began Jan. 20 when he filed suit in Hamilton County Common Pleas Court against his former wife, Winifred R. [redacted] Kessler and Jerry Rushing, director of Straight Inc., 6074 Branch Hill-Guinea Pike in Mt. Repose.

[redacted] said his son, David, became an adult on his 18th birthday Jan. 10 and has since agreed to remain in the Straight program. David has been released from a foster home where Straight placed him and returned to his

mother's custody at night, [redacted] said. **HOWEVER, [redacted] SAID** said he remains concerned about the admission process and treatment his son has received at the center.

[redacted] said he believes his son has been "brainwashed"—to some degree.

"Brainwashing to me is putting a person in an environment where they're under physical stress, mental stress," [redacted] said. "They also work on their emotions so that they become disoriented from their previous values. There are all kinds of things of doing that, and I feel that some of that has been done on David."

Straight opened the Mt. Repose center Jan. 6 by transferring 55 Greater Cincinnati youngsters from another Straight program in St. Petersburg, Fla. Flauntt said Mrs. Kessler removed David from his last semester of school and placed him in the center on Jan. 9.

[redacted] **LAWSUIT** charged that Ernest Karam, a referee in the Hamilton County Domestic Relations Court, "unlawfully issued" an order Jan. 2 permitting David [redacted] detention in the center.

The suit said Straight requires signatures of both parents when a youth enters the program and that David [redacted] was "wrongfully denied his freedom and liberty." [redacted] request for a temporary restraining order to release his son from Straight was denied Jan. 22 by District Judge Fred Gramer.

Rushing said both parents must agree to admit a child to the program, but in the case of a single-parent family, only the parent with custody of the child must agree. Youths must sign themselves into the program, he said. Parents are "encouraged" to sign waivers agreeing not to interfere in the pro-

gram, he said. **"MY SON WAS put in without my knowledge," [redacted] said.**

Rushing deferred to his attorney, Bruce F. Cincinnati, who refused to Kessler could not be reached for comment.

In a previous interview, said Straight uses intimidation and peer pressure to control youngsters and youngsters gain self-esteem through five phases of [redacted] said in that interview.

**YOUTHS ARE** removed from school and work during the year-long program, he said. They stay at the center day and spend their evenings at their homes of youths in high

# suit against drug center

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gram, he said.

"MY SON WAS put into the program without my knowledge or consent," ██████████ said.

Rushing deferred further comment to his attorney, Bruce Petrie Jr. of Cincinnati, who refused to comment. Mrs. Kessler could not be reached for comment.

In a previous interview, Rushing said Straight uses intense counseling and peer pressure to change the attitudes of youngsters in the program. Youngsters gain self-esteem and values through five phases of counseling, he said in that interview.

YOUTHS ARE removed from home, school and work during the first phase of the year-long program, Rushing has said. They stay at the center during the day and spend their nights in the homes of youths in higher phases of the

program. In higher phases, youths earn the right to go home, to school or to work. Many of the counselors are youths who have completed the program.

██████████ said Straight may have helped his son but that his son was not addicted to drugs or in need of drug rehabilitation.

"As far as I could tell, he was using alcohol and pot recreationally," ██████████ said.

██████████ SAID HE was not opposed to his son entering the program voluntarily.

"The problem with this program is knowing what voluntary means," he said.

Youngsters are pressured into entering the program, ██████████ said.

"It reminds me of an encyclopedia salesman approach," he said.