

# Teen tells first ladies of her drug nightmare

From staff and wire reports

WASHINGTON In an emotional appearance before an international audience, 16-year-old Walnut Hills High School junior Robin ██████ told Nancy Reagan and 17 other first ladies Wednesday about her bout with drugs.

Robin was the only youngster picked to give testimony at The First Ladies Conference on Drug Abuse, the biggest event Mrs. Reagan has staged in her crusade against drugs.

In her presentation, Robin said that when she started using drugs she began skipping school and not doing her work. She report cards.

"I remember stealing a wallet, and my mother called the police and they came," she said. "I remember feeling ashamed because I never thought I would steal something."

Robin also told the group about an overdose incident.

"When I got to the hospital and my parents came, I felt so afraid and ashamed," she said. "My mom was holding my hand and I kept thinking 'Oh, God, don't let me wake up because I can't stand to see her face again.' I couldn't believe I'd

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# Teen

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overdosed."

Robin entered the Straight Inc. program in February 1983 and graduated in 1984. The family-oriented rehabilitation program operates in Milford.

"I prayed so many times and blamed things on God, on my parents and on my teachers," Robin said. "It never dawned on me that it was my fault or that it was because of drugs."

Eugenia Febres-Cordero of Ecuador congratulated Robin for "being so courageous" and said she was not ashamed to talk about drug problems in her country.

Robin flew to Washington Tuesday morning with Jerry Rushing, director of Straight Inc., and returned to Cincinnati following her testimony. She was back in classes today.

"I cried while I was talking about my experience with drugs," Robin said this morning. "And Mrs. Reagan cried, along with a woman from Jamaica.

"When I finished my speech, a woman from Canada came up and said, 'Please don't cry, you make everybody cry.'"

The Walnut Hills eleventh grader said her mother was very excited about the trip to Washington and very proud.

"It was a nice thing. Some of the ladies came up to talk to me and thanked me for my speech. They hugged me," Robin said. "We had lunch in the White House and then I got to see part of it. I thought the conference was very interesting."

Robin first met Mrs. Reagan when the First Lady visited Straight Inc. last September. Mrs. Reagan invited Robin to accompany her to Indiana the following day to speak to junior high school students about the harmful effects of drug and alcohol abuse.

Mrs. Reagan and 17 other first ladies traveled to Atlanta today for the last day of the conference.

In opening the White House session, Mrs. Reagan said, "Drugs rip right through the moral fiber of our countries."

But when she was asked about a 40 percent budget cut her husband is proposing for federal funding for drug abuse programs, Mrs. Reagan said, "I'm speaking mother to mother today. I don't get into the other."