

# Center awaits first lady

By Nancy Berlier

Post Staff Reporter

Nancy Reagan's visit to Straight Inc. Monday won't put an official stamp of approval on the controversial drug rehabilitation program, but it won't hurt, says Bill Oliver, national director of the organization.

"I think the people who place the official stamp of approval on Straight are the parents and the kids who come," Oliver said in a telephone interview Tuesday from the organization's headquarters in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Of the first lady's visit, Oliver said, "I'm glad to have her."

Mrs. Reagan will attend a meeting Monday night that will include parents and about 160 young people in Straight's center near Milford in the Clermont County village of Mt. Repose. It is one of five stops she will make in two days to promote drug awareness.

Between 3000 and 4000 young people have been treated in Straight's programs since the first center opened in 1976 in St. Petersburg, Oliver said.

But Straight has a history of complaints from parents and from youngsters who quit the program claiming that Straight has violated their rights.

"Straight is controversial," Oliver said. "Straight is a pioneer."

There are no standards for how chemical dependency should be treated, he said. Straight's method is to use peer pressure to turn young people away from drugs.

Youths lose basic privileges in the program—such as living at home, going to school and talking to anyone outside the organization—and earn them back by demonstrating to each other that they have changed their attitudes toward drugs.