

Parents Founded Straight

Agency Mirrored Florida Program

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MOUNT REPOSE—Straight Inc. came to this small community near Milford in January, 1981, at the request of a number of Cincinnati parents whose children were dependent on drugs.

"There were about 50 families who had kids in our Florida program," said Pat Wellhausen, administrative co-ordinator of the local Straight Inc. unit at 8074 Branch Hill-Guilsea Pike. "They eventually found this building, raised funds, and brought Straight here."

The organization, founded in St. Petersburg in 1978, is a non-profit treatment program mainly for people between 12 and 22 years old. Officers claim a 60% success rate in getting teen-agers and adolescents who go through the program to stay off drugs.

STRAIGHT USES positive peer pressure, family involvement and long-term approaches to drug rehabilitation to help the young people.

Since opening, the local unit has counseled about 150 of them, Wellhausen said.

"Our program is tailored to young people," she added. "In fact, it was started by parents whose children were involved with drugs and had nowhere to go. The Cincinnati community has been marvelous with us. We're most appreciative of all the support we've received."

That support came, at first, from such determined people as Indian Hill school Superintendent Robert Boston and Thomas Markham, a parent from Anderson Township, who helped start a campaign to raise \$650,000 to bring a Straight program to Ohio.

Boston said at the time that he did not want to just take a young person out of school and put him or her on the street.

INSTEAD, DRUG-USERS are put into a three-phase, long-term program, which on the average lasts 12 months.

The program is loosely modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous, but provides a far more rigid structure. In the early phases, for example, the youth is removed from school and gradually wins the right to go home at night, after first staying in "foster" homes of others who are more advanced in the program.

Costs to the family are \$3,000, or \$4,000 if the family is from out of the Cincinnati area, plus \$50 per-month for food. The fees are constant, no matter how long an adolescent is in the program.



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NANCY REAGAN waves to the crowd Monday upon her arrival at Lunken Airport. Later in the day, she went to Clermont County to visit the Straight drug treatment facility there. Today, the First Lady will travel to Indianapolis.