

Some Straight talk heard by first lady

By Mike Kelly

Post Staff Reporter

Drugs brought Nancy Reagan and Robin [redacted] together.

Four years ago, Miss [redacted] spent her days high on marijuana, beer and speed. Tuesday, she accepted Mrs. Reagan's invitation to join her on a flight to Indianapolis and speak to a junior high class about the dangers of drug use.

Miss [redacted] a 18-year-old high school senior from Finneytown, is a former drug abuser. She's a successful graduate and staff member of the Clermont County center for Straight, Inc., a privately run, non-profit drug treatment program that has three facilities besides its center here.

Mrs. Reagan spent three hours at

the Mt. Repose Center Monday, listening to adolescents and their parents tell grim stories of drug abuse. Mrs. Reagan has made drug abuse among teens a personal crusade and has visited 29 cities in her campaign.

"I was shocked by how honest she was," Miss [redacted] said of Mrs. Reagan. "I didn't feel like she looked down on me because I was younger."

The story Miss [redacted] told Mrs. Reagan is a familiar one:

"It began when I started a new school and I just got overwhelmed," Miss [redacted] said. "I had a friend I thought was just great, you know, Miss Popularity. . . She did drugs, so I just followed her footsteps."

That was four years ago.

"By my second year, I started looking for it. I brought drugs and gave them to friends," she said. "By the last three months, I was doing some kind of drugs just about every day."

By that time, she was also skipping school often, cheating on tests and forging her mother's signature on report cards to hide her declining marks.

Robin's mother said she knew something was wrong, but she didn't know what. After picking up Robin from a hospital where she had been taken vomiting from too much alcohol and marijuana, she took her daughter to Straight.

A year later, after spending three months living with another family, isolated from her parents, and even longer cut off from friends and school, Miss [redacted] graduated from Straight. Like many other graduates, she became a counselor herself, working with other adolescents in group sessions.

Some, including the American Civil Liberties Union, have criticized Straight, and some veterans of the program have sued its directors.

But Robin [redacted] who credits the program with saving her from a certain tendency towards drug dependency and who swears she will never take so much as a glass of beer ever again, is a believer.