

January 1, 1978

The following persons were appointed to a task force to investigate allegations being made against Straight, Inc.:

J. B. Holley, Chairman
Cliff Brockson
Mildred Parker
Sara Potter
Wallace Webb
John Bustle
Frankie Goldsby (part-time)

This report will be in three parts. Part I is Findings; Part II, Conclusions; and Part III, Recommendations.

PART I - FINDINGS

Forty-eight (48) current clients were interviewed, twenty-four (24) selected at random by the Straight Staff, and twenty-four (24) selected at random by the task force team. There was very little variance between the responses of the two groups. All interviewed were polite, outgoing, and cooperative. The following information was obtained:

1. Responses to the question on previous drug use ranged from one drug to as many as ten different drugs.
2. Thirteen (13) clients professed to have entered the program of their own free will. The remainder were put into the program either by their parents or by the court.
3. One client reported that she did want help, but that she would leave if she could. The remainder reported that they now consent to getting help from Straight.
4. Ten (10) clients felt that they were then, or had been, held in the program against their will.
5. Twenty-one (21) felt that they could leave the program if they so chose. The majority of the remainder felt that either the court or parents would see to it that they continue in the program.
6. All felt that they knew the program rules and that most remembered signing an agreement to this effect.
7. All Phase I and II clients receive organized periods of singing and exercise; however, there was no period of completely free time, other than when asleep.
8. Phase I and II clients do not attend academic classes during the day. Phase III and IV clients attend school, if appropriate.

9. One client stated that he had been slapped once, all others stated that they had not been physically abused.
10. Five (5) clients felt that they had been verbally abused, the remainders did not so feel.
11. No one reported a meal being withheld for failure to conform to program rules.
12. One client reported that he had been put in isolation for program violations. He was placed in the intake room for one full day and was checked on every five or ten minutes. All others reported no isolation.
13. All but one client reported that staff was fair, consistent, concerned, and knowledgeable.
14. All but one client felt that the staff was available for discussing their problems.
15. When asked if they received a copy of the foster home standards, twenty-five answered, "no," twenty (20) answered "yes," and three (3) answered "don't know".

Numerous clients expressed unhappiness over the recent publicity. Several clients expressed praise for the program and none expressed dissatisfaction with the program.

Thirteen (13) members of the current staff were interviewed, one was absent due to illness. Our questions elicited the following responses:

1. Only Jim Hartz held a college degree, Hartz has a Masters in Psychology. Two (2) had completed two years of college, two were attending college and the remainder had a high school education.
2. All staff stated that they had accurate job descriptions.
3. All staff seemed to understand the grievance procedures.
4. There did not appear to be any written personnel policies.
5. The senior staff meets weekly and the entire staff meets once per month.
6. No one felt that there was any job discrimination.
7. All staff felt that the Board of Directors was cognizant of the operation of the Center.
8. Three (3) of the staff have undergone on-the-job training, three have had JWB Listening Training, two received training from their immediate Supervisor. Several reported that they received training at staff meetings.
9. All felt that the Administration was supporting of their efforts.
10. No one reported any client being retained the program against his will.

11. No one reported any client being physically disciplined while in the program.
12. No one reported any situation involving verbal abuse of clients.

Nine members of the current Board of Directors were interviewed and gave the following information:

1. There seemed to be an awareness of the state licensing regulations, however, Board Members did not appear to be familiar with these regulations.
2. All were familiar with the Straight rules and regulations.
3. While it was reported that the Board met frequently, there was no set date or time for such meetings.
4. Most of the Board Members reported attending board meetings regularly.
5. There appeared to be functioning committees of the board.
6. Several Board members had a family member or a close friend in the program.
7. It was reported that the Board establishes or approves all program policies.
8. All Board members were deeply involved in the program.
9. The program does have an advisory board.
10. It was reported that there was no written formal procedure for the Board to handle grievances and/or complaints related to the program. Certain Board members have been involved in handling such grievances and/or complaints.
11. Only one Board member reported knowledge of any violations of program rules or regulations. This Board member felt that such incidents were primarily errors in judgment by junior staff.

Five foster home families were interviewed. All were extremely supportive of the program and praised the program for saving the lives of their children and, in some cases, credited the program with saving their marriages.

Five former Board members were interviewed with the following results:

1. Mr. Ray Bourgholtzer resigned due to a conflict of interest due to a new position with the City of St. Petersburg. He indicated that he was unhappy with the administration of the program. He felt that the program was excellent and he enjoyed working with the children. He did feel that Mel Sembler was autocratic in his position as president. This member resigned in September, 1976.

2. Mr. Bob Chapin was involved with the Seed Program and helped get Straight started. He resigned because he did not feel that he and his wife wanted to devote the time necessary to be members of the Board. He feels that Straight is a good program, and would place his child there, if needed. He personally feels that the staff supervisor, Helen Peterman, should be a younger person who could relate more to the children in the program. He feels that a follow-up program is needed for graduates from Straight, Inc.
3. Mr. & Mrs. Bauknight feel that the president, the executive director, and the staff supervisor make all of the important decisions without Board participation. They felt that the staff supervisor should be a younger person and that the incumbent was appointed without Board approval. They feel that the Board was a "rubber-stamp board" and did not, in fact, set policy. They reported that one of them (name to be inserted in final report) witnessed Helen Peterman actually kicking a client for a minor infraction of the rules.
4. Mr. Ted Anderson stated that the final straw that caused him to resign was when Jim Hartz reported on the establishment of what Mr. Anderson called a "kangaroo court" consisting of clients trying other clients who break rules and setting their punishment. He said that Hartz reported that one of the punishments imposed was to make the client clean the bathroom floor with a toothbrush; he further said that he heard that the client was forced to drink the bucket of washwater when the job was completed. He also disliked the practice of sending the staff to track down runaways, and felt that such clients should not be forced to return to the program. He feels that with the extensive, no-control, expansion of the Program, the original concept of one-on-one has been lost. He feels that a distance restriction should be imposed and the client census should be held to a workable level. He feels that clients are kept in Phase I and II, and thus out of school, for too long a period of time. He is concerned at the lack of any definitive standards on which a client is moved from phase to phase. He is also concerned about what he considers to be poor fiscal management. He claims that he had never seen a full and accurate treasurer's report. He feels that major decisions are made by the president and the executive director, rather than by the Board. He feels that Jim Hartz is power hungry and is asking for more and more authority to act unilaterally. He states that staff time records are falsified in that only forty (40) hours of work is shown, whereas fifty and sixty (50 and 60) hours are actually put in. The original intention of the founders of Straight was to bring the staff on board and train them before any clients were accepted. This did not happen. He feels that the staff supervisor should be a young person and that Mrs. Peterman is totally unqualified for the position.

5. Mr. & Mrs. L. A. Henson were interviewed together, with the following points being made by one or the other. Mr. Henson felt that important decisions were being made without Board action; e.g., certain aspects of the LEAA grant, hospitalization for staff, the decision to move from the Anderson Building, and the establishment of Straight court. He also said that for a time there were no written minutes of the executive committee or the Board. After the issue was forced the practice of writing up the minutes was resumed.

Mr. Henson had several concerns about safety; e.g., appliance left plugged in at the facility overnight, transportation of large numbers of clients in one car at one time, and foster home situations. He said that young, inexperienced persons do the investigations into foster home, and he felt that a great deal of professional expertise, experience, and judgment, is needed in visiting and evaluating a foster home.

There is no written accepted procedure for handling grievances and/or complaints, and he feels the present procedure is not responsive to complaints of parents or staff. Although there is an advisory board, Mr. Henson states that they do not meet and function regularly.

Mr. Henson feels very strongly that Mrs. Helen Peterman is not qualified to serve as staff supervisor. He said that the decision to hire her was made at a Board meeting which he could not attend. It was his feeling that originally no Board member would have been willing to hire her, and then the Board took action to hire, and it puzzles Mr. Henson that this reversal took place. He understands that Mrs. Peterman was fired from her position at the Seed. Mrs. Henson stated that she had observed Mrs. Peterman kick a client, and that there were other witnesses.

According to the Henson's, the clients were told they could not discuss the program, or even mention "Straight, Inc.", to outsiders or they would be started over again in the program. A staff member was told he could not visit the Henson residence.

Mr. Henson thinks the program will fail eventually because of mismanagement, poor staff, autocratic decision making, personnel problems, and lack of appropriate response to grievances and charges of abuse.

It was a critical issue with the Henson's that we interview persons who are no longer with the program. They felt we would get only a partial picture of the program if we interviewed only those persons currently involved in Straight, Inc.

Four previous employees of Straight, Inc., were interviewed: Mike and Diana Shanahan were interviewed on December 14, 1977, and Ron and Debbie Solanes were interviewed on December 20, 1977.

The following was reported by those interviewed:

1. None of those interviewed had received any in-service training at Straight. Only one had any previous experience in drug abuse rehabilitation.
2. None were aware of any written personnel policies.
3. Actual salary was less than promised salary.
4. Many times required to work in excess of 40 hours with no compensation.
5. Required to take clients home with them if no foster home available.
6. Were instructed that they were not to attend Board meetings or go to the homes of Board members. The reason given was that "there were some things the Board members did not need to know."
7. All felt that they were used to set up the program and then the administration's position changed to "you are not needed any more, there's the door."
8. Client at times were held against their will in that they were physically held until they had calmed down and were no longer upset and compulsive.
9. Two of the former staff members observed Helen Peterman hold a client named _____ by the hair and slap him repeatedly; when one of them attempted to stop her, he was told by Mrs. Peterman to "get out of here."
10. All felt that clients were verbally abused during "come down" sessions.
11. Two reported that the majority of the foster home inspections were written up whereas no visit was actually made to the home.
12. All reported that client records were falsified in that they were not accomplished timely and routinely, but that many were done long after the due date, based on memory. Pat phrases were used solely to make the records look complete.
13. Several clients who had extensive emotional problems were refused referral to outside professional treatment by Jim Hartz.

Two parents who earlier had children in the Straight program consented to interview.

Mrs. [redacted] entered her two daughters in the program shortly after it started. She reported that both of the girls completed the program (the list supplied by Straight lists only one of the girls as a graduate.) Mrs. [redacted] felt very strongly that neither Jim Hartz or Helen Peterman were qualified to conduct the Straight program. She stated that she had reported this and other matters to Dr. Garby and Dr. Leon Sellers in the hope that things could be improved, but that no change was forthcoming. She reported hearing of many instances where children were mistreated, lies and false stories were told about them, and malicious rumors were spread. She reported that the practice of "putting down" a client was conducted in a vicious and emotionally abusive manner. Jim Hartz and Helen Peterman reportedly practiced character assassination of parents who objected to any aspect of the program. She further stated that Helen Peterman's previous experience with the Seed program involved intake only, and that she was personally fired by Art Barker. Mrs. [redacted] supplied the letter of resignation of Misters Henson, Chapin, and Anderson, as Board members, and a letter by the same three, criticizing Mr. Melvin Sembler for his actions as president of Straight (copies attached.)

Mrs. [redacted] Jr., supplied the following information: She personally saw Helen Peterman kick a client, name unknown, very hard, in December, 1976. She stated that Helen Peterman was extremely crude and vulgar in her dealing with the female clients. Mrs. Peterman was reported as frequently speaking disparagingly about some parents in front of the clients. Mrs. [redacted] reported that her daughter, [redacted], was involved in actions that kept one of the female clients awake for approximately seventy-two hours. The girls involved would take turns in seeing that the victim of this action was awake. Daughter [redacted] also reported to her mother a case where a female client was tied hands and feet to a bed as punishment for some activity. Marcie Moore was reportedly the person who did this. Mrs. [redacted] feels that her daughter's treatment in Straight brought about an attempt at suicide and subsequent psychiatric treatment. She also reported that [redacted] witnessed Mike S., a counselor, beat up a client who insulted his wife.

clients were interviewed who, for one reason or another, had left the program prior to completion. The following statements were obtained from these clients:

1. [redacted] was in the program from October, 1976, to June, 1977, at which time she ran away. She was subsequently sent to the Juvenile Detention Home and then placed in the Pinellas Marine Institute where she is doing very well. Even though she reached Phase IV she maintained that she got nothing from the program, and that she "conned" in group just to get by. She feels that she was both physically and verbally abused when Helen Peterman grabbed her by the jaw, jerked her head around, and screamed abuses at her. At another time Robin (staff) threatened to hit her. She claims that she seldom had breakfast in her foster home and only had a dry sandwich for lunch and again for dinner on many occasions. She reported that Helen Peterman repeatedly "cut down" her parents, and that her parents were glad to see her out of the program.
2. [redacted] is a 17-year-old who was in the program for a short time in August, 1977. He ran away after 19 days, was returned to the program, and ran away again after 7 days. He was then placed in the Juvenile Detention Home until he was sent to the Boys' Village in San Antonio. [redacted] statements must be tempered by the fact that he is an extremely bitter young man and impressed the interviewer as one who would say anything that would cause trouble for Straight. [redacted]s father also stated that [redacted] was selling drugs and at one point was making \$250 - \$300 per week before he was caught. [redacted] stated that when he refused to run during exercise period two counselors took him by the arms and roughly forced him to run, leaving bruises on both arms. He also reported that he was verbally abused by Helen Peterman, who called him dirty and demeaning names while yelling at him. [redacted] reported that at one time he went approximately ten hours without water, even after exercising, as punishment for not cooperating with the counselors. He also reported that he did not always get breakfast at his foster home, and that he lost 15 pounds while in the program.
3. [redacted] is a 16-year-old who was in the program from May 13, 1977 to October, 1977, at which time he ran away. He was subsequently picked up on a breaking and entering charge, sent to the Juvenile Detention Home, and then assigned to the Pinellas Marine Institute. He is residing in the Fararo Group Home. [redacted] reports that he was not physically abused, but named several other clients that were abused to his personal knowledge. He cited the following incidents:
 - a. [redacted] was put into a makeshift straight jacket and was also held while her hair was cut short;
 - b. [redacted] was dragged across the floor by member of the staff when he refused to run;
 - c. [redacted] was reportedly taken into the clinic and beaten by staff and other clients. [redacted] was also put in solitary when he screamed and kicked trying to get out;
 - d. [redacted] was dragged along the floor for refusal to run;
 - e. [redacted] was dragged on the ground by staff, and his shirt was torn off;
 - f. [redacted] was forced to run until he was completely exhausted - other clients participated but staff watched;
 - g. [redacted] was put into a straight jacket and verbally abused;
 - h. [redacted] was held down and had soap put into his mouth;
 - i. [redacted] had her mouth washed out with soap, and was forced to chain smoke until she became ill as punishment for smoking without permission.

4. Straight Drop-out (C. D.)

Drugs involved - Pot, Alcohol, Hash, Hashail, Downs, Cocaine.

He did not go to the program of his own free will; his parents took him there and a month later he was ordered into the program by Court order. He was aware of the rules and signed a paper agreeing to follow the rules. He did not receive a copy of the foster home standards, but his Old Comer verbally told him. He did not have daily exercises, claimed he had sessions about twice a month. He attended academic classes after he reached Phase III. He feels that he was both physically and verbally abused. When asked to explain, he said that he had some money in his possession and that it was taken from him; he also stated that he had been grabbed by his hair by both staff and the other kids. He did not elaborate on the verbal abuse other than that both staff and other kids were involved. He claimed that food was withheld from him one night and one morning in the foster home. He was isolated (after he ran away) from 6:00 - 9:30 P. M., and the next morning from 8:00 - 10:30 A. M. This took place in the clinic and intake office, and other kids stayed at the door to watch that he stayed there. When asked if he felt the staff was fair he at first said "No," then changed to "Yes" as long as everything goes OK. He feels the staff is consistent and concerned, but not really knowledgeable. Staff was available to discuss problems when they had the time, but it was necessary to use the chain of command - if Old Comer didn't feel the problem was important it did not go any further. He said that the kids were required to run 50 laps and if they couldn't do it then they were dragged, and that the kids have to have staff permission before they can do anything.

He claims he left the program because they were bringing people in and beating them up if they were uncooperative. He does not currently want any help from Straight and states that he was held against his will (that he was taken into a room and held there by the other kids.) He had requested to talk to me away from home as his mother is still "high on the program" and he did not want to talk in front of her. I called Mr. Dunn (Seminole High School) several times, but he could not contact C's probation counselor in order to get permission for me to speak to C.

5. Straight Drop-Out (M. T.)

Drugs involved - Pot, Alcohol, Hash, Ups, Downs, PHC

He entered the program by Court order but claimed it was his idea. He knew the rules and signed a paper agreeing to follow the rules. He did not receive a copy of the foster home standards, but stated that the foster home he was in was "good." There were mandatory exercises, and he did not attend academic classes. He says he was both physically and verbally abused by both staff and kids. He claims to have seen kids kicked and dragged, kneed in the chest, and slapped in the face. Meals were not withheld, but drinks were if he was caught drinking from a faucet in the bathroom. He was never isolated but knows of a girl who was tied up for most of one day, and another kid rolled up in a sheet for several hours. He feels that staff is fair to some people, but not consistent, that half of staff is concerned, and some are knowledgeable. He stated he felt that Jim Hartz was not qualified, and that Helen Peterman was "two-faced." The staff was not very often available for discussing problems.

He feels that basically the program is OK, but that it is not being run right, that they should not expect so much of the kids, and should show more empathy. He does not want help from Straight, and felt that he was held against his will by both staff and the other kids.

6. Straight Drop-Out (R. P.)

Drugs involved - Pot, Alcohol, Ups, Downs, Hash, Acid, Cocaine.

He did not come to the program of his own free will; states that his mother tricked him, he thought he was going for counseling. He knew the rules but did not sign any paper or agreement to follow such rules, and he does not remember receiving a copy of the foster home standards. There were no daily periods of recreation, but there were sporadic exercise periods. He claims to have been dragged by the hair when he wouldn't run, and had his knees scraped; he fell over another kid and hit the side of his head. He claims he told staff that he was ill but they refused to take him to a doctor, and that they did not show any concern. Food was withheld from him, both in the program and in the foster home; he specifically named a "Mike" - a junior staff member. He was isolated the last day he was in the program for 3-4 hours in the intake room. He feels the staff is "not really" fair, not consistent, that they are knowledgeable in drugs, but not in psychology (they threaten kids with Trenton.) Staff were sometimes available for discussing problems.

He does not want help from Straight and managed to get himself kicked out of the program. He felt that he was held against his will, and his parents, the staff, and other kids would forcibly detain him. He ran away because he felt trapped and just didn't want to stay. He also called the paper, but did not divulge what he had talked to them about. He feels the general idea of the program is good, but "not what they're doing."

Ten graduates of the program were interviewed and supplied the following information:

1. _____ is a 17-year-old who entered the program on September 4, 1976, and completed the program on February 11, 1977. _____ was the first graduate of the program. He was put in the program by his parents, but after about four days realized that he wanted to be there. He was not physically or verbally abused, and did not witness any such abuse. He spoke very highly of the four counselors on the staff then. These four have since left the program. _____ no longer visits Straight or participates in graduates rap sessions because he does not approve of the way things are done there now. He made one very interesting observation - from reports he hears, things are a lot different now than they were when he was there, and he doubts that he would have been helped if the things reportedly going on now were going on when he was there. He was shocked in one of the graduate raps when Jim Hartz called one of the participants a "dumb ass." _____ stated that he tried to change things that he did not believe were right for the program, but to no avail. He finally gave up and has not visited Straight since.
2. _____ is a 16-year-old who entered the program on November 19, 1976, and completed the program in June, 1977. _____ was put in the program by her mother but soon came to realize that she needed the help available there. She was neither physically or verbally abused during her stay there, and did not report seeing anyone else so abused. She did report one case of possible abuse - at one time Helen Peterman asked _____'s sister if she (the sister) wanted to hit her brother, and when the sister answered "yes," Mrs. Peterman took the two of them out of sight of the group. _____ did not know for sure what happened then. She also reported that Helen Peterman refused to grant her permission to take some prescribed pain-killer medication that she was given by her doctor following a tooth extraction. _____ indicated a strong dislike for Helen Peterman, and reported that Mrs. Peterman's sex lectures were "gross." She stated that she has not attended any of the graduate raps, and does not plan to do so, as they were just "come down" raps.
3. _____, a graduate of Straight, was interviewed at Straight on 12/28/77. _____ had a history of multiple drug abuse, which he estimated was costing \$10.00 per day prior to his entering Straight 16 months ago. To obtain this money he stated he had to steal. In general, his responses conformed to those received from other Straight clients. One exception was that he received a copy of foster home standards. _____ also stated that his house was inspected prior to becoming a foster home and that he had participated in the inspection of other foster homes. He now does volunteer work at Straight when he is not in school. _____ feels he would now be dead had he not entered Straight. Prior to leaving Straight we met Helen Peterman. After a short conversation, _____ placed his arm around Helen's shoulders and said, "I owe it all to this nice lady."
4. _____, a graduate of Straight, was interviewed at his home on 12/30/77. _____ chose to have his father remain in the room during the interview. It should be noted that the father volunteered to leave; however, _____ encouraged him to stay. _____ had a history of multiple drug usage, including heroin, and feels he would either be dead or in jail without Straight. The _____ family expresses gratitude to Straight, not only for helping _____ but also for enabling them to keep their family together. All answers to questions conformed to those of other clients. _____ claimed to have been on drugs for six years, and having had to resort to pushing drugs to support his own habit.

5. _____ attended Straight From October, 1976, until the latter part of May, 1977, which would have been very early in Straight's short history. _____ estimated that the program had changed a great deal, since there were only about thirty (30) clients when he entered and about one-hundred-thirty (130) when he graduated.

For the first 5 days of the program he was a reluctant participant, but he soon became a very willing participant. He occasionally goes back to the graduate rap sessions. _____ never saw any physical abuse. He felt that the program helped him a lot and there appeared to be no complaints.

Mrs. _____ is enthusiastic about the program. She thinks many persons have given much to make it a good program, and she thinks it does much good. She thinks the current publicity involves half-truths, and she is concerned about the negative points aired in public. She also stated that Mr. _____'s niece had three (3) children in the program _____ and Mrs. _____ is reportedly 100% enthusiastic about Straight. Mr. _____ estimated that of all the parents he knows, 9 out of 10 are 100% enthusiastic. He had been told that some of the former employees tried to be buddies with the kids and they did not keep their leadership role clear. He feels the program has often been beneficial, even when the client did not complete the program. It is hard for him to imagine that there has been abuse and he does not know of any. His son was a C student, with an occasional D, before attending Straight; he made straight A's the first semester after he attended Straight, and he continues with A's and B's. Mr. _____ appears to be unequivocally supportive of the program.

6. _____ had a history of pot, alcohol, hashish, hashail, Downs, and opium. He did not come to the program of his own free will, but stayed after a few days because he wanted to. He was advised of the rules, but did not receive a copy of the foster home standards. He stated that he had exercises but not every day, that no meals were withheld from him, he was never isolated for program violations, and that he was not physically nor mentally abused. He feels the program is fair and that no one was mistreated without cause (i.e., only in self-protection.) He feels the staff was fair, consistent, concerned, and knowledgeable. He was quite upset over the adverse publicity in the newspapers, and is still active in the program. He further commented that he was in the program with _____ and helped to try to contain him - said if the program was so bad, why was _____, sister still in the program and his mother so much in favor of it?

7. _____ was on pot and alcohol and did not go to the program of his own free will; in fact he was held there against his will the first night, so violent he had to be contained for protection of himself and others, but not after that first night. He did not remember receiving a copy of the rules, but later signed an agreement. He did receive a copy of the foster home standards. He stated that he was not abused physically or mentally, that he was never deprived of meals because of infraction of rules, and he was never isolated for program violations. He did not attend academic classes while he was in the program, and recreation was at night at Old Comers Home. In his opinion the staff was fair, consistent, concerned, knowledgeable, and were available to discuss his problems.

_____ is currently in the Army and feels that Straight helped him to learn discipline. He is very high on the program and attended meetings while he was home on Christmas leave. He believes the program is doing what is right and he was most upset over the publicity it is currently receiving. He said the program saved his life, and his mother said it saved her marriage and family. In his opinion, the staff should be composed of graduates of the program, supervised by professionals. He commented that he knew _____ and he feels that _____ would not have made it in any program.

The comments of two graduates reflected the general remarks of present enrollees. Both felt the program really put them "Straight." Both were interviewed via phone, but appeared, verbally, to be open and sincere.

Aug. 8th 1977

Mr. Melvin F. Sembler, President
Straight, Inc.
P.O. Box 40052
St. Petersburg, Florida 33743

Dear Mr. President:

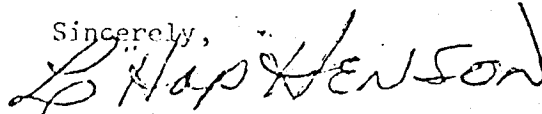
As president of Straight, Inc. you are bound by its charter and by-laws and said charter and by-laws do not confer upon you the authority to make unilateral decisions.

The by-laws provide that decision making authority rests only with the Board of Directors and/or its executive committee and that decision making grows out of a majority vote of said duly authorized decision making bodies.

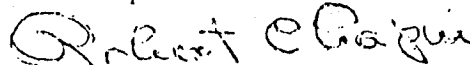
To the extent that you continue to make and implement decisions without majority approval of said governing bodies of Straight, Inc., I am becoming concerned that said unilateral acts on your part may expose me to loss or damage and/or expensive litigation. Hence, I am placing you on notice that should such a contingency occur I will then demand that you indemnify, defend, save and hold me harmless from the consequences of your unilateral acts. Should you then fail to do so I shall bring an action for indemnity against you.

Further, I disclaim any responsibility for your unilateral actions during your term as president of Straight, Inc. both in the past and in the future.

Sincerely,



L. Hap Henson



Robert Chapin

Theodore Anderson



August 8, 1977

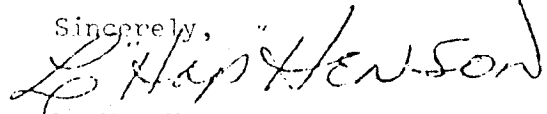
Mr. Melvin F. Sembler, President
Straight, Inc.
6539 Central Avenue
St. Petersburg, Florida 33710

Dear Mr. Sembler:

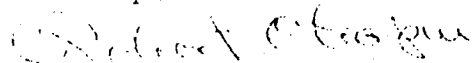
We, the undersigned, submit our resignation as members of the Board of Directors of Straight, Inc. for the following reasons:

1. It is our feeling and belief that as far as we are concerned, Straight Inc., by no stretch of the imagination, follows the guidelines we envisioned prior to it's inception.
2. We do not feel the present Executive Director or Program Director have the necessary qualifications to rehabilitate preteens or teens, who have a drug or alcohol problem. Furthermore, we feel we cannot recommend Straight, Inc. to our friends or citizens of our community.
3. There is no method whereby a member of the board can determine how effective or ineffective the program is being administered. Factual information is not available to us. Roberts Rule of Order has not been followed at board meetings as contemplated by the original By-Laws. Therefore, we cannot function effectively on a non-functional board, and hereby submit our resignation.

Sincerely,



L. Hap Henson



Robert Chapin

Theodore Anderson



Attachment I

Mrs. Lila L. Bauknight
6601 17th Street South
St. Petersburg, Fl. 33712

July 20, 1977

Mr. Melvin F. Sembler, President
Straight, Inc.
P.O. Box 40052
St. Petersburg, Florida 33743

Re: Resignation

Dear Mr. Sembler:

I submit my resignation as a member of the Board of Directors of Straight, Inc. for the following reasons:

1. Straight, Inc., in my opinion, does not operate along the guide lines envisioned by its founders.
2. The Board of which I am a member, is largely non-functional and exercises no control in the nature of establishing and enforcing rules and guide lines for the conduct of the purposes and functions of Straight, Inc.
3. There is no method whereby a member of said Board can determine precisely how said program is being administered or the program is being conducted. To the contrary, program direction is entirely in the hands of the Executive Director and his staff without the benefit of Board monitoring as contemplated by the original By-Laws.
4. Major decisions involving the operation of Straight, Inc. are made without consultation of Board members or their approval.

Finally, I disclaim any and all responsibility for decisions which have been made outside of the frame work of the Corporate Chapter and the original By-Laws of Straight, Inc.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lila L. Bauknight

Mrs. Lila L. Bauknight

September 22, 1976
Arthur W. Bauknight
6601 17th Street South
St. Petersburg, Fl. 33712

Mr. Melvin F. Sembler, President
Straight, Inc.
P.O. Box 40052
700 43rd Street South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33743

Dear Mr. President:

This will confirm our conversation of Monday last in which I advised you that I would not serve further as Executive Vice President of Straight, Inc. I want to alert you now so you can handle my replacement.

I have advised you and others of the Executive Committee that said committee and board is not operating as required by Florida Statutes, it's Charter and By-Laws. It is the function of the Board of Directors to set guide line parameters for the supervision, control and direction of the affairs of the Corporation. On advise of Counsel I am advised, informed and believe that each member of the board has dangerous personal exposure to monetary loss for errors and ommissions in failing to adopt those rules and regulations for the conduct of it's corporate affairs that reasonable directors and officers would have under same or similar circumstances. Further, for failure to audit the operations of said corporation to the end that it functions as intended.

There are voids in your insurance coverage. Money is being handled by non-bonded employees and officers. The value insured on the building is understated. There is no coverage for Director's and Officer's errors and ommissions. There is no coverage for Malpractice and as simple a thing as cutting hair, (malpractice item) is excluded under the General Liability policy. This is not intended to be a full list of your insurance needs. I suggest you employ an agent to survey your needs. Until Monday last I have not been requested to do so and now I would prefer not to do so.

We have not promulgated basic safety rules to protect others from unreasonable risk of bodily harm, loss or damage. This failure exposes the Board to possible claims for damages.

The Executive Committee has not functioned as required by Florida Statute. It has not been in executive session since August 18, 1976, and this despite the fact that you have been urged to comply with the By-Laws and hold such meetings. The By-Laws require weekly meetings or meetings as deemed required by it's members (plural, not singular). To the extent we have not

September 22, 1976

Page 2

met and errors and omissions have occurred I believe that the Executive Committee is guilty of misfeasance, malfeasance and nonfeasance. I disclaim any responsibility for the unilateral actions of any officers or board member of Straight, Inc. which are ultra vires and without color of legality under Florida Statutes, the corporate charter or the By-Laws of the Corporation.

On further consideration I respectfully tender my resignation as a member of the Board of Directors of Straight, Inc. as of the close of it's special meeting on September 22, 1976.

Cordially,

ARTHUR W. BAUKNIGHT

"CONFORMED COPY"

STRAIGHT, INC.

(A NON PROFIT CORPORATION)

JAMES E. HARTZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

POST OFFICE BOX 40052
St. Petersburg, Florida 33743
Phone: (813) 823-2553

April 30, 1977

TO: Deborah Solanes
FROM: Jim Hartz

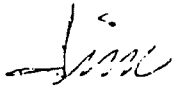
Dear Debbie:

Enclosed please find your payroll check for period ending April 30, 1977. Also included in this payment you will find one extra weeks pay. This covers any vacation time accumulated during your past employment.

We wish you the best of luck in the near future, and hope you will come visit.

From all the staff and kids at Straight,

Best wishes,



James E. Hartz
Executive Director
STRAIGHT, INC.

JEH/eah

STRAIGHT, INC.

(A NON PROFIT CORPORATION)

JAMES E. HARTZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

POST OFFICE BOX 40052
St. Petersburg, Florida 33743
Phone: (813) 823-2553

April 25, 1977

TO: Deborah Solanes
FROM: Jim Hartz
RE: Resignation

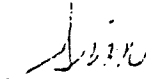
In view of the situations past and much careful consideration, I have decided to accept your resignation dated April 22, which is effective April 30, 1977.

I thought that several statements in your letter of resignation were out of context or misrepresentation of facts. However I hope that you will continue to strive for your full potential and be willing to exhibit those qualities necessary for such fulfillment.

I feel that your decision is in the interest of the program, and only hope the most for your future and future employment.

Again, good luck in the near future and visit us as you can.

Sincerely,



James E. Hartz
Executive Director
STRAIGHT, INC.

JEH/eah

STRAIGHT, INC.

A Non-Profit Corporation

JAMES E. HARTZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

POST OFFICE BOX 40052
St. Petersburg, Florida 33743
Phone: (813) 823 2153

April 22, 1977

Mr. James Hartz, Executive Director
STRAIGHT, INC.

Dear Jim:

Please accept this letter as my resignation as a staff member of Straight, Inc.

While I do appreciate some of the opportunities I've been given at Straight, Inc., I feel that it is in my own best interest and the best interests of the program to leave rather than to support some of the policies that have been in effect for some time now.

In order to better clarify my position, I would like to list some of my reasons more specifically:

1. A health insurance package was promised and not delivered.
2. Initially I was offered an annual salary of \$6,500.00. After 8 months my salary is \$6,350.00
3. The original staff members were told there would be promotions from within. To date this has not happened.
4. Putting adult staff members in positions of authority, I believe has undermined the effectiveness of the younger staff members.
5. You've objected to my off-duty friendships with other staff members. I feel that I have the right to associate with whomever I please, provided my choice of friends do not reflect unfavorably on the program.
6. After working 50 to 60 hours per week for a prolonged period of time, my dedication to the program was questioned; an attitude that hurt me personally and that I find unacceptable.
7. I feel that you, as Director of the program, has relinquished your authority to adult staff members and your relationship with the younger members, like myself, has suffered accordingly.
8. In a recent staff meeting, my effectiveness as a group leader was questioned; I believe, unfairly. You appeared to agree with the unfavorable comments.

In view of the above, my decision to resign is the only logical course of action to take.

Please understand that this decision is being made only after a great

deal of soul searching. If my criticisms seem harsh it is only because I sincerely want Straight, Inc., to be around for a long time.

I've gained a great deal of personal satisfaction from whatever contribution I've been able to make to the program. Regardless of your personal evaluation of my performance, I feel secure in the knowledge that I've done my very best to help and support the program. Hopefully my efforts will not have been in vain.

Sincerely,

Deborah Solanes

February 20, 1977

TO: Board of Directors and Advisory Committee
of Straight Incorporated
St. Petersburg, Florida 33710

FROM: Mr. and Mrs. _____
St. Petersburg, Florida 33705

Dear Members of the Board:

This letter is to inform you of the recent removal of our daughter, _____, from the program of "Straight", on January 30, 1977, and some of the reasons for this removal.

First and foremost in our minds at this time, is the most urgent need for a "drug rehabilitation" program for our children in this area. I also want it clearly understood that I am now and always will be grateful to Gail's foster parents, her oldcomer and the children on the program to whom she related. We feel all the credit belongs to them alone, along with _____ own desires to become "Straight" and this is the reason she is straight today.

When we first made application for _____ to join your program, we were very desperate parents. We found Straight through a nun, Sister Mary. After talking to Helen Peterman, Jim Hartz, Carolyn Henson and a staff member, we were very impressed and decided to place _____ on the program. It was not until a few months later that we realized that we had been lied to. Straight was not being run by the staff and its administration with love, empathy, and sensitivity, but with cruel Gustapo tactics. They are as follows:

- (1) Tying certain children's hands over their heads to the top of the bed and their feet to the bottom.
- (2) Pouring ice water over their heads.
- (3) Taking girl's clothes and making them run naked thru the house to the bathroom, when there were 18 and 20 year old males in the house. (My daughter, _____, refused to take a shower when she was at this staff members home, namely, Marcie Moore.)
- (4) _____ was told to tell how she felt and when she did, she was put down for doing so.
- (5) Being lied against by a staff member and then being put down for trying to defend herself.
- (6) Name calling: Such as calling the girls, sluts and whores.
- (7) Punching, shoving and slapping of the boys on the program.
- (8) Keeping a child up 40 hours without sleep. (I would not have tolerated such treatment but was told not to interfere.)

It finally came to a point when _____ would not relate and if she had a problem she called her oldcomer, _____. She could not depend or rely on staff, she hated the thoughts of going into the building and she would leave home in a good frame of mind and come home from the building deeply depressed.

I talked with Helen Peterman in her office about a few of these problems. After an hour, the final essence of the conversation boiled down to Helen telling me to, "Accept the things we can not change."

The day before we withdrew _____ from the program, she had a "one to one" with Marcie Moore and after 2½ hours of raking _____ over the coals, tearing her apart, the only thing they could come up with that _____ had done wrong was, the selling of donuts within the school building, for her Speech class without permission of Staff. It was part of her course and she was getting her credits for this.

We talked with Ron Solanes, head staff, about this problem, but to no avail. Marcie Moore had already talked to him.

Another complaint I would like to voice to the Board, concerns the conversation I had with Jim Hartz and Helen Peterman. I was informed by both of them to stay away from the "Hensons." (Map, Carolyn and Toni) Members of the Board were not allowed to associate with us parents on the program. They went on to say that, "People like the Hensons were nothing but trouble and they did not know what they were doing." Also, that we would be real sorry if we associated ourselves with the likes of them. By telling me these things, Helen Peterman said, "They were just trying to keep me from being hurt and degraded."

I also remember another incident in which my daughter, _____, was involved personally. She had been in an auto accident and had found out she was pregnant. Because of this accident, she was trying to abort. When Helen Peterman was told that _____ should be seen by a doctor, Helen's first response was to get a scrub bucket and then went on to say, "That is all she needs, let her sit on that."

On February 4, just 5 days after _____ had left the program, she was told by Debbie Solanes to call her if she had a problem or just wanted to talk. _____ called Debbie on the 14th of February and asked if she could sit in on a rap at the building with the kids. Debbie thought it was a great idea. The kids could see that _____ was still straight and strong as ever. Debbie then told _____ to call Mrs. Peterman. She did and in turn Mrs. Peterman referred her to Jim Hartz. His reaction was, "absolutely no." She could not come in the building because she was back on drugs. _____ again denied this and Jim said, "It did not matter whether she was or not because the kids thought she was." _____ wanted to come in to show she was straight and possibly she might be able to help answer some questions the kids on the program might have concerning how they may feel after they have graduated from the program. _____ was upset at Jim's refusal especially since Debbie Solanes thought it was a good idea. I personally feel that this was a very selfish move on Jim's part.

I could go on and on but I do not think that it is necessary. I am positive, you, the Board members, have received my message. We would also like it understood that we were not talked into, urged or coerced by anyone to remove _____ from the program.

After reading this letter I am sure it can be understood why we removed . We also feel that if we had not removed when we did, she probably would have split. Later she told us that she had been thinking about running.

I hope this letter helps to enlighten you as the way we feel "Straight" is being run. If this letter has helped just a little, then I am glad I wrote it. If you wish to contact me, I will be glad to answer any and all questions personally. Thank you for your time and your attention pertaining to this subject.

Sincerely,

A rectangular area of the document is completely redacted with a thick black marker, obscuring the name of the sender.

Jr.

25 copies - To all Board Members

PART II

CONCLUSIONS

1. Straight, Inc., is providing a much needed service in this community. There are, however, areas of serious concern within the program.
2. From the sample available, it would appear that many, if not most, of the graduates are maintaining a drug-free life.
3. The program is very poorly administered, both by the Executive Director, and the present Board of Directors:
 - a. Program rules are not in compliance with regulations (see Florida Rules for Drug Abuse Program.)
 - b. Personnel practices are not in compliance with regulations (see Florida Rules for Drug Abuse Program.)
 - c. It appears that the Advisory Board is not being effectively utilized.
 - d. A review of the Board of Directors minutes of Board meetings indicates that Robert's Rules of Order are not being followed, as required by the by-laws.
4. Supervision of the treatment staff by the Executive Director is inadequate.
5. When the Executive Director is absent from the program there is no other professional leadership available within the physical confines of the plant.
6. Based on available evidence, in-service training of the para-professional staff is totally inadequate.
7. The majority of the complaints focus upon the Staff Supervisor, Mrs. Helen Peterman. More specifically, complaints allege that she is not qualified, that she has been both verbally and physically abusive toward some of the clients, that she is crude and vulgar, and does not appear to have the temperament necessary to discharge her responsibilities.
8. Section 10E-7.11, Paragraph (13) of the State of Florida rules governing all drug abuse treatment and education centers, requires that a written consent for treatment by the program be obtained from any person, or his/her guardian. This applies to all clients. This requirement has not been complied with by Straight, Inc.
9. Section 10E-7.11, Paragraph (14) of the same rules, and Section 397.041 Florida Statutes, require that no person who voluntarily submits to treatment may be retained in an approved program against his/her will. Evidence indicates that the program is not in compliance with this regulation.
10. There appears to be a lack of concern for client safety, both in the foster homes and in the transportation of clients to and from the program.
11. The task force feels that the food supplied to the clients is totally inadequate. Sandwiches, sometimes without any form of dressing, are furnished for lunch and dinner. Several of those interviewed maintained that they did not always get a breakfast at the foster homes.

A review of the records and files revealed the following:

1. Client records were in good shape with one significant exception. The program had been having the client sign the completed intake form and considered that as meeting the requirement for consent to treatment. The program was advised that this was unacceptable, and that a form specifically consenting to treatment must be signed by each and every client. A sample consent form was given to the program.
2. Incidents of discipline were recorded, as were signed receipts for program rules and foster home standards.
3. Records of follow-up attempts were not complete. The program sent out twenty-seven (27) follow-up letters at six months after graduation. Eleven (11) replies had been received to date, and all reported as drug-free. The program was advised that follow-up attempts must be made at three (3), six (6), and twelve (12) months following graduation.
4. Foster home records were complete with one exception. Regulations require a foster home inspection each six (6) months. Several of the homes were slightly overdue for inspection. The staff advised that one member of the staff was being assigned primary responsibility of insuring that inspections were made as required.
5. Staff personnel records were incomplete. They failed to provide such basic information as date of employment, basis for employment (letters of recommendation and/or statement of qualifications), record of in-service training, pay data, record of grievances, reports of evaluations of employees, termination documentation, including exit interview.
6. Board minutes were considered inadequate in content and format. There are no Board minutes prior to November 11, 1976. Considerable activity took place prior to this date that is not recorded.

Talk to Furlough

PART III

RECOMMENDATIONS

immediately
immediately

45 days
site req.

30 days

Site Rule
30 days

1. Reference Section 397.041, Paragraph (5), Florida Statutes. It is recommended that no client be held in the program against his/her will under any circumstances.
2. Reference Section 10E-7.11, Paragraph (13) State of Florida Rules for Drug Abuse Program. It is recommended that the program secure written consent from each client, or his/her guardian, for treatment to be rendered by the center.
3. It is recommended that the Board of Directors establish necessary written policies covering such items as program rules, strip and search procedures, foster home placement procedures, and personnel policies, and make them available to all employees. Board minutes should be more complete and accurate and signed by the appropriate authority.
4. It is recommended that program rules and personnel practices be brought into compliance with the Florida Rules for Drug Abuse Program.
5. It is recommended that the Advisory Board as a whole body become more active in the conduct of the program, and that minutes be kept of all meetings.
6. It is recommended that a Departmental review of the fiscal management of the program be accomplished.
7. It is recommended that the Board of Directors review the management practices of the Executive Director, and submit a written report of the results of such review to the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, District V.
8. It is recommended that Straight, Inc., provide the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, District V, with a written schedule of proposed training activities for the coming year.
9. Due to the numerous allegations and complaints relative to the Staff Supervisor, it is recommended that the Board of Directors carefully evaluate her job performance and qualifications. A written report of such evaluation should be forwarded to the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, District V. The task force has a deep concern over the serious implications raised by the allegations and complaints as they pertain to the Staff Supervisor.
10. It is recommended that a written policy be promulgated by the Board of Directors, limiting the number of clients being transported in one automobile to the normal capacity of the vehicle. It is also recommended that the Board of Directors review the foster home placement practices and develop a written policy to preclude overpopulating a foster home. This written policy should be made available to the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, District V.

PART II
RECOMMENDATIONS
(cont'd)

11. In recognition of the limited food preparation facilities available, it is recommended that a nutritionist be consulted in order to assure maximum nutritional value of the meals furnished to the clients. These services are available through the Pinellas County Health Department and the Department of Agriculture Extension Service.
12. It is recommended that serious consideration be given to augmenting the paid treatment staff with another qualified professional person to insure professional coverage of the program activities at all times.
13. It is recommended that the existing practice of treatment staff "voluntarily" working up to sixty (60) hours per week be discontinued immediately in order to assure maximum efficiency from the staff.
14. It is recommended that the existing practice of treatment staff taking clients to their homes as newcomers be discontinued immediately. This practice can lead to serious complications for both clients and staff.
15. It is recommended that a ninety (90) day interim license be issued to the program in order to allow sufficient time for compliance with the Florida Rules for Drug Abuse Program, and for consideration of the other recommendations made herein.