

STRAIGHT

TALK . . . to our friends

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NATIONAL EWS

Another first for Straight. Have you ever heard of an indoor groundbreaking? How about a groundbreaking in a bucket? Thursday, January 20 brought the long-awaited groundbreaking ceremony for the new National Development and Training Center. It also brought a downpour which started the night before and didn't let up all morning. By the 11:30 a.m. scheduled starting time, the 3001 Gandy Blvd. site was very muddy. Now an obstacle which might have stopped others-doesn't stop Straight. The groundbreaking moved indoors to the conference room—complete with a galvanized steel bucket of dirt and ribbondecorated shovel for each board member. Each director got a turn at breaking ground and then got to take his shovel (with a brass commemorative plaque) home. So if you are in any of our director's offices, be sure to look for a shovel hanging on the wall.



We probably don't have to tell you how excited we are about this step forward for Straight. Those present at the ceremony, followed Executive Director Bill Oliver's lead. Each person called another who had meant something special to him during his time spent at Straight. Lots of damp eyes and shared feelings later, board president Joe Garcia and executive director Bill Oliver wound up the best and most meaningful groundbreaking eyer.

The Practice Of The Seventh Step Having been given the gift of awareness...

Who gave you the gift? If you are like most of us, the gift was given when someone else talked to us honestly, lovingly but firmly about out families problem with drugs. All of a sudden, a small light began to glow in our personal darkness and we became aware of the real problem — chemicals-drugs.

There is, however, another side to this coin. There is no such thing as a "free" gift. Every gift costs somebody something. In your case, that somebody was the person who cared enough about you to confront and penetrate your fear, your anger and your denial. The price they paid for your gift was tremendous.

- They paid the price of risking their relationship with you.
- They paid the price of time, a portion of their life, just for you.
- They paid the price of facing your possible angry reaction.
- They paid the price of being rejected by you.

- They paid the price of being embarassed.
- They paid the price of the anxiety that you may laugh at their "over-reaction".
- They paid the price of what you might think of them. A tremendous price, more precious than money-and paid just to give you this wonderful gift of awareness.
- and to carry the message to all I can help.

Pay the price for someone elses gift. Run the risk. Take the chance. It's worth it.... Bill Oliver

You Might Like To Know . . .

You might like to read the article on teen age drug use by First Lady Nancy Reagan in the January issue of Ladies' Home Journal. She talks about Straight and her visit to the St. Petersburg program. If you can't find a copy of that issue, give Straight National a call (813-345-3932), or drop a line or contact the program nearest you. We'll be happy to send you a copy.

St. Pete's Sweets

St. Pete Staff has been busily involved in interviewing potential Executive Staff members. Also, we are enjoying the camarderie of our Executive Staff trainees, who spend several months with us in preparation for their new positions in their home programs. We have just graduated two Executive Staff trainees for the Greater Washington program and have three more trainees for other programs.

We are enjoying the additional office space and the "new look" in our lobby afforded us by our recent renovations:

The holiday season was marked by the addition of a STRAIGHT WINTER WONDERLAND. The Winter Wonderland Village consisted of a castle, church, two lakes, a covered bridge, Santa's tugboat, and a train and track, constructed entirely of gingerbread and "goodies." The project was conceived by Mrs. Mary Bowker, our coordinator of Food Services, and involved each one of the 260 young people in the program at that time. Photographs of the finished project have been submitted to the Good Housekeeping Gingerbread House Photo Contest.

GROWING IN — GREATER WASHINGTON

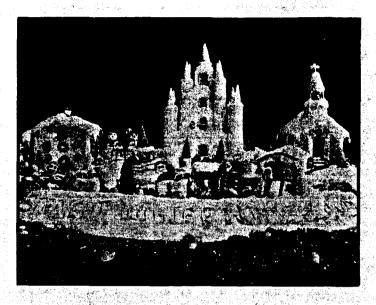
In October, our siblings and parents combined creative efforts with lots of elbow grease and many technical and human special effects. The result was a delightful Haunted House that was enjoyed by Group, Staff, Siblings and parents-

An Antique Show, run entirely by the FAIRFAX HOS-PITAL WOMEN'S AUXILIARY, was held in October. It included a gourmet lunch at a bargain price. The few parents who were needed to help move furniture were much appreciated and set a beautiful example of what Straight is all about.

Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners at the building were enhanced by contributions from the parents. Christmas lights, decorations, trees, garlands and door foil were also donated, as everyone wanted to be part of what was to be a beautiful experience. We all came together, complete with songs, tears and smiles on Christmas Eve to celebrate with very full hearts, our families together.

The Booster Club was started formally in October and November with election of officers.

We gratefully acknowledge St. Pete's "Straight Talk", from which we borrowed cover and format. Thanks to parents and free publishing we've no overhead, so our modest profits are free and clear, and the newsletter remains primarily as a service to parents.



The St. Pete Parent Booster Club has another dinner theatre show in the planning stages. If you are interested in purchasing tickets, call the program and get your name on the list.

We had a lot of fun at Chirstmas time with our "Adopt A Reindeer Program." Parents and siblings gave away attractive handcrafted reindeer. A modest legal fee was asked to cover "Adoption Papers".

We are still working diligently on our biggest fund raiser — the house raffle. We hope to realize a very healthy profit in April.

Constitution Hall resounded with the very best Barbershop Choruses, singing on behalf of Straight on February 5th. Parents have sold tickets and a considerable amount of money has been raised by selling advertising space in the programs.

This Saturday, January 29th, our parking lot was busier than usual as parents came by to pick up meat. The bulk meat sales, handled through a local firm, is expected to raise several thousand dollars.

Future plans include a Benefit Run around Burke Lake in the spring for Straight. Also anticipated is the Second Annual Siblings Horse Show, co-sponsored by a Maryland hunt club. Undoubtedly Spring will bring forth many yard sales as kids outgrow clothes.

Like saving the frosting for last, the very best news is our growth. The Greater Washington program now has 180 clients.

We're grateful to other programs for training and sharing our new staff members. The very best news is that since our program opened in Virginia **nine** people have made the Seventh Step!!

ATLANTA CTION

Parent-To-Parent: In order to spread the good news about Straight, Inc. and the help it has provided for many families in Atlanta, the Parent's group called "Parent-to-Parent" was organized. Through public service announcements, church bulletins, PTA Newsletters and newspaper, ads, the community will become aware of a 24 hour telephone number (404-434-HELP) for parents who suspect their child has a drug problem. Seven-Step parents will man the phones and share their own experiences related to their child's drug use and the help they found at Straight. They will then encourage the parents to meet them on a Monday or Friday evening and attend an Open Meeting.

********MORE*****ACTION*******

The Straight Atlanta Booster Club has complied a "Straight From The Kitchen". It has been a big success as a fund raising item.

The group and parents were treated to the Haunted-House for Halloween. It was designed and sponsored by the Seven-Step Society.

A large turkey was the highlight of our Thanksgiving celebration on November 25, 1982.

The second annual Straight Atlanta Talent Show was held on December 19, 1982. The show featured 50 class acts and was emcee'd by Dave Tilley and Dennis Buttimer. A large crowd attended and the show was a tremendous success and fun for all.

As usual, the Christmas season was a special and warm time for us. On Christmas Eve, much love was shared when the group sang "You Are My Child" to the tune of Amazing Grace to the group.

CINCINNATI COMMENTS:

The coming of the winter season to the Cincinnati area has brought not the anticipated cold and snow, but some very delightful weather. STRAIGHT, Cincinnati, has also enjoyed some warming changes. Jerry Rushing, who was on loan from Atlanta staff for our opening months, has returned as Cincinnati's permanent Director, bringing with him his bride, Betty.

The elegant Westin hotel was the scene of Cincinnati's First Annual Awareness Banquet. The talks by Dr. Robert DuPont and Dr. Miller Newton were well received by the capacity crowd of 700 persons. Dr. Bob Boston, Board Member and Co-Chairman of the Organizing Committee was recipient of a special award in recognition of his "contribution, awareness and excellent help" to Cincinnati Straight.

The biggest warming trend is with Straight itself as a Cincinnati program. As we celebrate our First Anniversary in January 1983, we are literally "bursting at the seams" with people.

SARASOTA SUCCESS . .

The Sarasota Awareness Banquet on December 1, was a rousing success. The Sarasota Hyatt House convention center ballroom was filled to capacity. In fact, people calling for tickets on the day of the banquet had to be turned away. The Hyatt House couldn't get another table in the room.

Featured speaker, Art Linkletter, kept us well entertained with his ancedotes on the "kids say the darndest things" theme, while touching us with his concern for young people and his earnest desire to help them recognize the dangers of drug use and thereby prevent them from becoming involved in drugs.

John Reaves, quarterback for the new Tampa Bay Bandits, was also in attendance. He spent 2 hours with the kids at the Sarasota program, relating himself to them and answering their questions. His story of his years of involvement with drugs, starting with alcohol in high school and ending with a \$1,000 a week Cocaine habit, followed a progression that was well understood by the young people in the program. His program, which he was required to enter in order to continue to play for the Vikings, enabled him to relate to the Seven Steps of our program. Hearing John speak to the kids, and seeing their response to him brought tears to the eyes of us "straight" adults present.

The day's activities also included a press luncheon honoring Mr. Reaves as well as Kansas City Royals MVP, Hal McRae and other sport notables from the area. Mr. Reaves also spent nearly two hours talking to the Sarasota/Manatee group during morning rap.

• ODDS & ENDS • ODDS & ENDS • ODDS & ENDS •

Being at Straight during the formation of a new branch is an exciting experience—but the excitement is overshadowed by sadness when staff and youngsters leave the parent program.

On Thursday, October 28, 118 kids and 12 staff members flew off to Washington D.C. to start the fifth branch of Straight, Ind. There were few dry eyes among the parents and staff waving goodbye on the runway of Tampa airport. The kids took off in a Boeing 720 donated by Skylark Travel Club of Atlanta and piloted by a volunteer crew from Delta Airlines. Those of us left behind waved goodbye until the plane was out of sight. In fact, we had a few false starts... and waved goodbye to a plane that wasn't even ours. At Straight, both parent and child learn to get in touch with feelings—we got in touch with a lot of feelings on that runway.

The plane took off at about 1:30 p.m. The kids sang and rapped and ate fig newtons and cokes, arriving at Dulles Airport and getting to the newly renovated building in Springfield, VA in time for afternoon rap... all working on changes in themselves so that they can rebuild healthy, drug-free lives. It offers a sense of fulfillment to everyone connected with the program to know that we have a part, no matter how small, in touching the lives of kids in trouble. And we know that we can go to any branch of Straight, Inc. and walk through the door and feel at home. Straight, Inc. is Straight, Inc. in St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Atlanta, Cincinnati and in our Nation's Capitol.

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OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Everybody knows that Straight, Inc. is growing by leaps and bounds. One of the problems created by this growth is the constant need for new Executive Staff. We need them to train both for new programs and existing ones. Once in awhile we meet people we think would really make good staff members. Straight would like to know about those people. Perhaps they would not fit in as well as we think, because we may not have a complete understanding of what it takes to be a staff member here — but it is worth a try.

If you know someone you think could do the job and love it—talk with them. Tell them about the program; and if they are interested, tell them to send a resume to: Laura G. Morgan, Director of Personnel; Straight, National; P.O. Box 40052, St. Petersburg, Florida 33743.

REMEMBER!!

Straight is not for profit — and privately funded. We depend on our friends and our community to keep our programs going and to fulfill our expansion plans. If you would like to make a tax deductible contribution which will help a young person become a productive member of his community — contact the program in your area or the National Headquarters, P.O. Box 40052, St. Petersburg, FL 33743.