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HEADLINE: THE KIDS CONTROVERSY

COLUMN: LETTERS

BYLINE: The Record

BODY:

Editor, The Record: We find the recent accusations against KIDS of Bergen County ridiculous.

My husband and I traveled 2,500 miles from Salt Lake City to place our 15-year-old son in this adolescent treatment facility. Bergen County should feel fortunate to have a nationally acclaimed facility that is being run by nationally acclaimed Dr. **Miller Newton** in its backyard.

We found KIDS of Bergen County in the past year after placing our son in a seven-week hospital almost two years ago that cost \$ 17,000.

Since that time, our son has accumulated 39 charges against him, ranging from petty theft to car theft and breaking and entering, all drug-related.

To our dismay, our parental rights have been overridden by the judicial system, which also boasts of protecting the rights of kids. We, the parents, are morally and financially responsible for our children until the age of 18. We are responsible for their actions, but they are not accountable for their actions. We lived in constant fear after he made threats of killing us in our sleep. He broke into our home on a regular basis and stole us blind.

After much investigation, we found KIDS. For the first time, our son is beginning to put on weight and looks better than he has in two

years. Because of his out-of-control behavior, the state, county, and other medical facilities restrained our child on numerous occasions in an effort to protect others.

The people of Salt Lake City are in the process of putting a program together with the help of Dr. Newton. If the people of Bergen County do not want the most successful adolescent treatment facility in the country today, then we would gladly welcome Dr. Newton and his staff to "brainwash" the kids of Salt Lake City into becoming responsible adults!

WILL and SUSAN McCOY
Salt Lake City, Utah

Editor, The Record: Dr. **Miller Newton**, by his own admission and with the assistance of a marketing firm, situated his program in an area that lacked a program for drug and alcohol dependency for adolescents and lacked licensing requirements. Unfortunately, the continued lack of licensing requirements has given **Miller Newton** the right to do as he pleases, with the permission of parents who are desperate to prevent their children from killing themselves.

The program spends much of its time convincing parents that it does whatever it must in order to save their children and demands an unconditional no-questions-asked behavior from parents. It also permits no discussions with people outside the program, thereby allowing the secrecy to continue. Most parents would agree to any terms and conditions to save the lives of their children.

Although the program claims that it follows the guidelines of Alcoholics Anonymous, it does not. One of the major differences is that this program adds its own element, which is fear and intimidation.

I maintain that those parents whose children have survived the program and who are still in favor of it continue to be under the influence of Dr. Newton, and their children still live in fear of having to go back. Continued support of this program is clearly a defense mechanism to override any guilt in subjecting one's children to the type

of mental and physical abuse that takes place in this program.

I am one of the parents who removed a child from the program after seeing the physical deterioration of my son. I was not being permitted to speak with him or question the program's staff for fear of repercussions.

One would think that with all of our concerns about human rights, we should most certainly consider the rights of the children who are still in the program.

When are officials going to stop ignoring the numerous complaints about the KIDS program and do a thorough investigation? That would most assuredly lead to some strong licensing requirements and put programs of this nature out business.

MARY KEMPKA
Saddle Brook

LOAD-DATE: April 3, 1996
