

BOWING TO FEAR

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In Hasbrouck Heights last month a municipal judge ruled that a family could not provide temporary shelter to a client of KIDS, a nonprofit center that treats teen-agers with behavioral problems. And last week intolerance spread to Lodi, where the building inspector cited a landlord and two tenants for running an illegal boardinghouse for KIDS of Bergen County.

The instigator of both these actions is a group that calls itself RAID Residents Against Indiscriminate Development. But development is not really RAID's concern. Its object is to rid a town of unwanted newcomers the same way its namesake gets rid of insects.

RAID's current target is KIDS, which treats young people 12-22 for drug, alcohol, eating, and other compulsive disorders. KIDS is a private organization that charges up to \$700 for treating a youngster. Youngsters who are accepted for treatment are initially housed with a host family usually one that has a teen-ager in a more advanced stage of KIDS treatment. This house-guest relationship lasts at least a week, and there is no charge. It is rare that there are more than two guests at a time in a receiving home.

But the people in Lodi and Hasbrouck Heights who are complaining refuse to acknowledge that. They are blinded by fear. RAID charged that there were at least eight kids in the Hasbrouck Heights house. Testimony at the trial established that as many as four youngsters had stayed overnight, but this happened during an emergency. One man testified that when he saw a black boy visit the house he knew he had to act. And one Lodi man, apparently afraid of kids who had been drug users, said, "The kids there are noisy. One of them ran away through my yard the other day. What if my wife or daughter had been out there when that happened? "

Judge Harry H. Chandless Jr. bowed to his neighbors fears. He fined the host couple \$500 and gave them suspended 30-day sentences for violating a town ordinance barring more than three unrelated guests from staying in a single-family home. The Lodi family must defend itself in court Oct. 17 on charges of running an illegal boardinghouse.

KIDS Director Newton Miller worries that this kind of provincialism might spread to some of the more than 30 towns in Bergen where host families live. What's worrisome is that the NIMBY (not in our back yard) syndrome seems as contagious as the plague.

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