

Dependency unit to leave site in Hebron

Kentucky Post, The (Covington, KY) (Published as The Kentucky Post) - October 8, 1993

- Author/Byline: Frank Main, Kentucky Post staff reporter
- Edition: Kentucky
- Section: News
- Page: 10A

A Northern Kentucky substance-abuse program is moving to Ohio, where it plans to expand its services.

In several weeks, Hebron-based Kids Helping Kids - the only intensive, long-term treatment program in the tri-state for chemically dependent adolescents - will move into a building in Milford, Ohio, with almost twice the space, Executive Director Peggy Walker said.

"We are leaving with some regrets," she said. "Boone County and the state officials in Kentucky have been very supportive of us."

The program's 21 clients currently in active treatment come from a 125-mile radius around Cincinnati, including Dayton and Columbus in Ohio.

"It will create problems for some of our clients who will travel farther," Ms. Walker said. "The losers will be the ones from Lexington and Northern Kentucky. The ones from Columbus and the eastern side of Cincinnati will be closer."

The move to Ohio won't affect the eligibility of clients, she said.

The 22,000-square-foot Milford building previously housed Straight Inc., a separate treatment center for chemically dependent children that closed in 1987.

Kids Helping Kids has operated from a rented 12,000-square-foot building in Hebron since 1981. Its lease expired this year.

The non-profit agency will move into the Milford building in a couple of weeks, Ms. Walker said. It scouted locations throughout Greater Cincinnati before learning of the vacant building at 6074 Branch Hill-Guinea Pike, she said.

Kids Helping Kids is planning to offer short-term assessment and after-school treatment in addition to its intensive, long-term treatment, she said.

On July 22, the agency bought the building in U.S. District Court in Cincinnati after submitting a high bid of \$301,000 for the property.

After Straight Inc. closed, the Ohio attorney general and local donors filed a lawsuit to prevent the agency from selling the building and taking the money out of state, Ms. Walker said. Straight Inc. agreed to maintain the building and pay for expenses with the proceeds of selling it. Half of the proceeds were to go to the Greater Cincinnati Foundation and the other half to Straight Inc.

- Record: KNP100800164050007
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