

RIGID APPROACH GETS KIDS ON TRACK

Columbus Dispatch, The (OH) - November 4, 1986

- Author/Byline: Julia Keller, Dispatch Accent Reporter
- Edition: HOME FINAL
- Section: NEWS - Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Page: 9

Stop kidding yourself, Columbus: Your children have a drug problem.

"Usually kids tell parents about one-tenth of what's actually going on," said Linda Pope, executive director of Kidscope, a long-term treatment facility for the drug-dependent young.

"The supply and demand of drugs in Columbus has definitely increased in the past year."

To fight that insidious growth, a group of concerned parents established Kidscope in June. Patterned after a facility in Cincinnati, called Kids Helping Kids, the non-profit facility operates on a multistep recovery model like that of Alcoholics Anonymous. Responsibility is first stripped from, and only gradually returned to, young people with drug problems. Peer counseling is a major component.

IT'S A rigid, regimented approach to help kids resume a drug-free life, Pope has noted. Emotionally charged, face-to-face confrontations between parents and children are encouraged.

Kidscope is one of only nine such programs in the nation, Pope said. There are several local short-term treatment facilities for young people, but for long-term care, "there's a dire need for this in the Columbus community."

For young people, short-term treatment rarely works, Pope said. The environment in which most youths first start using drugs - and to which they must return - makes short-term treatment only temporarily effective. Only a lengthy, disciplined method that forces young people to accept responsibility for their actions can really work, Pope and her staff members believe.

A NEW facility for Kidscope will be constructed in about two years, Pope said. Its present and future locations are confidential.

"Drug problems haven't hit as hard in Columbus as they have, perhaps, in New York or Los Angeles. But drugs are far more accessible everywhere than ever before. They're an arm's-length away in our schools. You don't get them from some dirty old man in a raincoat anymore."

Because Columbus is a stable, serene, family-oriented area, Pope said, many parents refuse to believe that a problem such as drug abuse really can exist here - and can affect their own children. "Kids try to talk to their parents, and their parents just don't believe them. We get a lot of our calls from the kids themselves."

BUT IT'S here, Pope said. Fifteen young people already are enrolled in the program. There could be many more, but Kidscope's multiphase approach that relies heavily on peer counseling requires a certain number of young people in each phase of the program. Hence the number can be increased only gradually and proportionately.

"We're getting a very great geographic and economic distribution" among clientele, Pope reported. Drug problems, it seems, can affect young people from all backgrounds.

"No one," she says, "is really free from this."

For information on Kidscope, call 231-5437 .

- *Index terms: COLUMBUS CHILDREN DRUG ALCOHOL ABUSE ANALYSIS*
- *Record: 8602020400*
- *Copyright: THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH Copyright (c) 1986 The Dispatch Printing Co.*