

BRADENTON
PALMETTO
ONEGO

SECTION-B
Mon., Feb. 9, 1981

Sarasota Herald-Tribune
MANATEE REPORT

Advertising 748-4046
Circulation 746-6127
News 746-2178

SAMUSET
BAYSHORE
CORTEZ

p 2-B M

Straight Inc. Urged To Expand Nationwide

By KATHY TYRITY
Herald-Tribune Reporter

The founding director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse in Sarasota last week urged the directors of the drug rehabilitation program, Straight Inc., to expand to a national enterprise.

Dr. Robert L. Dupont, a psychiatrist and nationally recognized drug abuse research expert, has been following the path of Straight since his first visit to the St. Petersburg home facility two years ago.

"I'm down here to encourage the first expansion of Straight to communities nationwide," said Dupont at a press conference at the 1401 Cattlemen Road facility.

He toured the Sarasota branch, which was formed last fall.

"If I have anything to do with it, this program will reach many communities," the doctor, who has worked as a consultant in the White House under Nixon and Ford, declared.

Among his plans are for Straight to help begin other programs — "10 a year" — around the country and for Straight to parent a National Training Institute for Drug Counseling in the St. Petersburg-Sarasota area.

The ambitious plans were unveiled to an enthusiastic crowd, including county commissioners Beverly Clay and Mabry Carlton and City Commissioner Rita Roehr, who later made an emotional presentation of an anonymous \$1,000 check to Straight Inc.

"For most communities in this country," the doctor continued, "there is literally no place to turn (when children are involved in a drug culture). It is my hope to mobilize the parents of this country," he added with non-stop enthusiasm for anti-drug abuse conversation.

Straight is planning a new facility in Atlanta, where 35-40 of its children come from already, and may soon plan a Cincinnati branch to serve another large group which has been traveling to St. Petersburg.

"People here have what I call a 'technology' (for reversing drug habits)," and, said Dupont, he intends that a national training institute will bring counseling trainees from all over the country "to learn this technique."

The technique has to do with large-group methods of creating peer pressure to "turn off" the psychological need for marijuana, alcohol, cocaine and various other chemical intoxicants.

"Peer pressure is what gets kids into drugs, and it's peer pressure that gets them out," the doctor explained.



Dr. Robert L. DuPont

He is tremendously concerned that almost all the drug treatment centers this country has are for people past the age of 20. "This is one program of only a handful that deals with the adolescent."

And, he said, Straight is special because it involves the people closest to every drug problem — the families themselves. "There's an enormous sense of strength in this," he added.

Within the next few days, St. Petersburg Straight directors will meet with Dupont to consider the ramifications of his ideas and most likely get working on a plan to do what they can to spread the word of Straight to the country.

"The biggest problem Straight has is knowing how good it is," Dupont told its directors.

"And I have taken it upon myself to do what I can to expand it nationally."