

ANTI-DRUG GROUP LOSES ITS FOUNDER FAMILIES TOGETHER DIRECTOR TAKES JOB WITH - STRAIGHT INC.

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Barbara Dean, founder and director of the anti-drug group Families Together, has joined another drug abuse prevention agency, Straight Inc.

Dean began her job as community services director Monday, replacing Barbara Sarjeant, former associate director and community services director at the treatment center. Sarjeant, who has been with Straight since it opened in Orlando in 1985, will become executive director of the Children's Wish Foundation.

Dean, 47, founded Families Together, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing awareness among parents and teens about drug and alcohol abuse. The 3-year-old agency spawned a teen group to provide peer counseling and support.

She also was involved in the governor's Project Freeway, another drug prevention program aimed at youngsters.

"I don't think it Families Together will change it all," Dean said, adding that she and the board are looking for a replacement.

Dean's job with Families Together was unsalaried, but she said it can become a paid position.

"I had not been looking at all . . . they called me. Straight is an organization I've felt very strongly about."

Straight Inc. involves an intensive drug treatment program for teens and their families. Teens stay at the center for a specified period and much of the treatment involves peer pressure. The program, founded in St. Petersburg 10 years ago, has been under fire in the past for what were considered controversial treatment methods and charges of abuse.

Sarjeant said the Orlando program has run into very little controversy and has considerable community support.

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