

TAKE CONTROL OF DRUGS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

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I've lived here in Lake County for almost 45 years. I attended school in Mount Dora at a time when there was only one school, which is now Roseborough Elementary School.

During those years, there was no drug problem that was ever evident to me. This was a safe, quiet community where you could live without fear. The doors of our home were rarely locked to keep out intruders.

Unfortunately, this is no longer true, in large part because of the drug and alcohol usage of our teen-agers. Our homes are intruded upon and violated by our own sons and daughters or their friends. They steal from us, lie to us and openly defy us. themselves, property or others.

Many of us as parents bail them out of legal scrapes, cover up for them and lie for them in the name of love. We don't allow them to be responsible for their actions. We make excuses for them and lie to ourselves that this is a phase they will outgrow.

Yet they are controlled by a disease and are crying out for our help. This disease is chronic, progressive and terminal. Without help, many of our children will die prematurely. They will not grow to be healthy, happy and responsible adults. As parents, we need to take responsibility for our children's lives and stop lying to ourselves. There is a serious drug problem here in our community and our children are under its control.

Drugs invaded our lives through our 16-year-old son. He became a liar, a thief, a failure in school and in life. Our hopes and dreams for his future crumbled before us. We felt helpless and hopeless to control and stop the progression of his disease. Our lives became filled with fear for his safety and the pain of uncertainty. He rejected us, our home and our love.

However, our family has been in treatment for more than 10 months now, and we have real hope of rebuilding our family unit. We are working on honest, open relationships with each other, based on mutual trust and respect. Our lives are changing daily as we all grow and learn together.

We can now look at our son with feelings of love and pride for the person he is becoming. He has new values of honesty and respect for himself and others.

All we have learned and all we are gaining in our lives we owe to a drug treatment center called Straight Inc., based in Orlando. Straight is a non-profit organization of parents helping parents and kids helping kids under direction of professional staff to recover from drug and alcohol abuse and its effects on the family.

If you and your family are in need of help, call (407) 291-HELP. If you would like to keep this service available to other families in need, your tax-deductible donation would be greatly appreciated.

- Memo: Jan Duncan is a resident of Mount Dora.
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