

DRUG, ALCOHOL CENTER DEDICATES NEW HOME

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Young people are suffering from drug and alcohol abuse, regardless of their social or economic status, Lexington Mayor Scotty Baesler said yesterday.

"No matter what side of town I walk on, what families I visit, their economic situation, what color they are or where they are from -- it doesn't make any difference," he said.

Baesler made the remarks at the dedication ceremony for a newly renovated 22,000-square-foot building at 4514 Briar Hill Road that houses Possibilities Unlimited Inc., a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center for young people.

About 500 people attended the ceremony, which included singing by the Possibilities Unlimited Choir.

Also included in the ceremony were candid talks by people who had been treated at Possibilities Unlimited. They discussed their dependence on drugs and their road to recovery.

George Ross, executive director of the center, said that the building, formerly the Old Briar Hill Elementary School, was purchased in October, with the financial assistance of Bank of Lexington, Bank One, Central Bank and Trust Co. and First Security National Bank & Trust Co.

Several anonymous individuals also made contributions, he said.

The cost of the building and the renovations, which are continuing, is estimated at \$150,000.

Baesler praised the center for demonstrating concern for other people.

"This facility offers a possible solution to a very difficult problem," he said. "This facility is important because it gives hope and encouragement to people who have had difficulty," he said.

"All of us, at some point in our lives, need a second chance."

Ross said that the program was about "kids helping kids."

"Kids get kids started on drugs, and they can help them get off of drugs," he said.

Possibilities Unlimited treats and provides temporary housing for drug and alcohol abusers who usually are between 12 and 25 years old. Members of the abusers' families also are treated in the program.

The center has about 17 employees.

The treatment usually lasts between four and 14 months, and there is a six- month follow-up. The center also has an outpatient unit.

In 1985, Ross and six members of his staff were charged with keeping young people in the program against their will.

Ross later was acquitted of three charges of unlawful imprisonment. Charges against the six staff members were either dismissed or dropped.

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