

EX-DRUG USER REACHES OUT ON RADIO SHOW TO HELP OTHERS

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Joann [REDACTED] is a normal college student. The University of Kentucky sophomore dresses well, she speaks softly, and she is trying to decide between a computer science major and one in electrical engineering.

Three years ago, Ms. [REDACTED] seemed the perfect high school student. But she was secretly abusing drugs.

Today Ms. [REDACTED] is drug-free, and for that she thanks her parents and Possibilities Unlimited, a drug rehabilitation program. She entered the program in December of her junior year of high school and, after treatment, remained on staff for two years, using her experience to help other drug abusers.

Today and Friday her story will be retold on "Focus on the Family," a syndicated radio show with host James C. Dobson, a Christian family counselor.

Ms. [REDACTED] aims her message at parents. Children, she said, aren't going to listen if they have a problem.

"If I were going to give advice," Ms. [REDACTED] said, "I'd give it to the parents. My parents weren't divorced; I wasn't beaten as a child; I was only 11 years old (when she started using drugs). I had friends. I only wish (my parents) had watched me a little bit more . . . they might have trusted me a little less."

Her "Focus on the Family" broadcast was first aired last year. "Of all the speaking engagements that I've done," she said, "that was one of the most rewarding. Following the broadcast, many parents and some children called in for help."

When she was abusing drugs, Ms. [REDACTED] used alcohol and marijuana three to four times a week, often getting high several times in one day. She also used speed, cocaine, hashish, LSD and Quaaludes. Yet no adults knew of her drug problem. She attended church regularly, participated in the church youth group, dressed conservatively and brought home good grades.

"I cheated every chance I got," she said. "I wasn't learning very much."

The mother of a friend learned of the drug use and told Ms. [REDACTED] parents, who took her to Possibilities Unlimited. There two former drug users, also teen-agers, introduced her to her new environment. When she began the program, Ms. [REDACTED] had lost 30 pounds, and was plagued with guilt over her drug use.

"I felt so bad about myself," she said, "It's hard to believe how I feel now. It's like looking at a different person. Different thoughts, different feelings."

She met her boyfriend during the Possibilities Unlimited program. Now they share a drug-free life. "We're really good support for each other in just day-to-day things. It's not just the challenge of wanting to get high, but the attitudes behind it," she said.

Ms. [REDACTED] does not attend college social events. "I avoid it entirely," she said. "I don't go to any of the parties. If I go to anything at UK, it's the ball games."

Instead, she spends most of her time with her boyfriend and her parents. Her friends are drawn from her church and people she knew while in the program.

She continues to speak on drug abuse because of her gratitude to Possibilities Unlimited. "Once you get help like that," she said, "you want to help other people." "Focus on the Family" will be broadcast on these area radio stations:

Lexington: WJMM-FM 106.3 at 1 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 5 p.m.; WCGW-AM 770 at 12:30 p.m.

Danville: WDFB-AM 1170 at 10:05 a.m.

Richmond: WCBR-AM 1110 at 9:50 a.m.

Somerset: WTHL-FM 90.5 at 11:30 a.m.

Morehead: WMOR-AM 1330 at 10:30 a.m.

Nicholasville: WNVL-AM 1250 will broadcast a summary Sunday at 3:30 p.m.

- Caption: Color Joann ██████ featured on "Focus on Family."
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