

Spartanburg Herald-Journal

Top O' The Morning
SUNNY

8 A.M.: Clear, 54 degrees
12 Noon: Sunny, 74 degrees
8 P.M.: Clear, 72 degrees
(Details On Page A2)

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Price 35¢

'The Seed' Helps Youngsters Get Off Drugs

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — For \$750, The Seed says it will turn a drug-wracked child into an ideal teen.

"The Seed gave me back my son — it gave me back somebody I could love," says Joe Lyons, whose son Tim was on drugs.

But some say that the unusual drug rehabilitation program

founded by an ex-alcoholic named Arthur Robert Baker, uses a form of brainwashing to take away a teen-ager's individuality.

"The Seed's methods are repugnant," says Dr. Raymond Killinger, a psychiatrist. "Seed graduates are like robots — they can't think creatively."

Dr. Killinger says that he and other psychiatrists have a doz-

en young people who have emerged from The Seed only to enter a psychiatric hospital.

Despite the criticism, Art Baker has convinced judges, civic groups and thousands of parents that his program can end drug addiction. A congressional subcommittee headed by Rep. Claude Pepper, D-Fla., once described The Seed as "imaginative, innovative and dynamic."

In Florida, there are Seeds in Fort Lauderdale and St. Petersburg. Another is to open in Orlando. If Barker has his way, outposts will spread into every major city in America. Plans are underway for Seeds in Lexington, Ky.; Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio; Charlotte, N.C., and Dallas, Tex.

Most youths attending The Seed are under 17. Some are as young as 9, and many come from affluent families.

Baker, 51, claims The Seed has a success rate of 90 per cent. In less than four years, he says, his program has straight-

ened Baker — struggling to make a living as a comedian in Miami Beach night spots — started The Seed in an abandoned house because of what he described as his interest in young people and his "special way" with kids.

The Seed's budget for the year ending Sept. 30, 1973, was \$613,979. Figures for subsequent years have not been released because Baker says there is no reason to make them public. Some of the money comes from United Way and part from the \$750 fee for each Seedling, as the young people involved in the program are called. City and county governments also have contributed and parents have donated such items as coffee, peanut butter, bread and toilet paper.

The National Institute of Drug Abuse put more than \$200,000 into The Seed in 1973, but declined to invest an additional \$700,000 unless Baker opened his books to federal inspectors. Baker declined. sav-

Messages of hatred, misery or love leave many observers deeply touched.

"The parents have to be involved," says Baker. "You can't just dump a kid off and let somebody do the babysitting. If the parents don't come the kids can't stay. These kids have to know their parents are interested and love them. For some parents, it's the first time they've listened to their kids."

Testimonials that the Seed's methods work are frequent and fervent.

But other teens compare The Seed program to an indeterminate jail sentence. Kate, 17, says she was taken screaming and scratching in her mother's car to the Fort Lauderdale Seed, a fortress-like

building surrounded by a 12-foot fence.

Most teens are taken to The Seed by parents. One in 10 is sent by juvenile court judges.

According to Kate, she first was searched by the staff, her personal possessions confiscated and then she was made to stand before a large group and tell her story.

"You think that the less you tell them you did, the sooner you get out, but they don't believe you," she says.

The Seed's 30 counselors are all ex-drug addicts whom Baker says can't be conned. He disdains professionals. "They can't do a damn thing with kids."

Kate followed the usual regimen. For two weeks she went to The Seed each day from 10

a.m. to 10 p.m. At night, she stayed with another Seedling — the foster home — where her door was locked and the windows boarded. She wrote a confession nightly.

The third week she returned to her home and attended 12-hour sessions daily at The Seed. The fourth week, she returned to school, and to The Seed three evenings a week, plus one full day each weekend. The \$750 fee covered all sessions and food.

Hour after hour, Kate was forced to evaluate herself. "I learned about myself and I found out other people have feelings," she said. Other teenagers said they had to agree with the group's morals in order to be allowed to go back home.

VALUABLE PROPERTIES

FORT MILL, SO. CAR.

FRI., MAY 2nd — 2 P.M.

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from ancient families.
Baker, 51, claims The Seed has a success rate of 90 per cent. In less than four years, he says, his program has straightened out 4,780 teens while failing to help 582.

The state Office of Drug Abuse says the success rate is closer to 40 per cent. Judges who refer young people to The Seed say they don't have the follow-up statistics to either support or refute Baker's claim.

It is hard to pin down why The Seed has ended drug dependence for some. What it attempts, through behavior modification, is to put teen-agers under intense pressure from their peers to change.

"Peer pressure put them on drugs, peer pressure will get them off," Baker says.

The Seed (the name symbolizes a new beginning) gets donations from parents and civic clubs and Baker has received laurels, including a Freedom Foundation award. It's a change from 1970, when

\$200,000 into The Seed in 1975, but declined to invest an additional \$700,000 unless Baker opened his books to federal inspectors. Baker declined, saying he doesn't want bureaucrats prying into his program.

Twice a week, some 700 parents take seats in a long, open room at the Fort Lauderdale Seed, cushioned for the long night with throw pillows from home.

Across the aisle are 500 teen-agers in jeans or weathered slacks.

Each teen-ager in the first two to six weeks of the program is required to stay in a foster home with another Seedling and his family. The youngster sees his parents only at these sessions.

Songs, confessions and chants ring out: "The Seed indeed is all you need, to get off the junk and the pills and the weed," is sung to the tune of "Green Acres." Then comes "America, the Beautiful," and then, one by one, the teens stand for their testimonials.



LINKED ARMS unite young participants at Fort Lauderdale Seed session — and indicates the fact that they are all "seedlings," involved with Seed's drug rehabilitation program. Most attending are under 17 and some are as young as nine. (AP Photo)