

# Teen-ager tells Rotarians about his past life in the world of drugs

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He is a former drug user and abuser who has survived the ravages of mind-altering chemicals through the help of his family and a program called Straight, Inc. However, Scot [redacted] is not a convicted criminal, but a 16-year-old member in the drug rehabilitation program.

Scot has found new meaning to his drug-free life in the program. Straight, Inc. which originated in St. Petersburg, Fla., in 1976 was founded by concerned parents and now has branched to such cities as Atlanta, Cincinnati and Washington, D.C. at Springfield, Va.

The \$4,000 fee into the non-profit drug-rehabilitation program is raised by parents and generous sponsors and donors. The five-phase instruction helps the drug-dependent person achieve liberation from mind and mood altering drugs, through professionals and volunteers.

One parent volunteer is Scot's mother, Carolyn [redacted], who brought her son with her to speak before the Frederick Rotary Club, Wednesday.

"We are here to show you the potential threat of drug abuse in your community," said Mrs. [redacted], whose son once almost took his and his brother's lives. "They do not know what in the world is going to happen to them . . . they do not know the trap that awaits them

"If I had \$50, assuming I still was

dependent on drugs, I could probably find a connection within 15 to 20 minutes," said Scot. "Our major communities are flowing with a variety of drugs on the streets."

Among the information Scot disclosed to the audience was that drug culture was so prevalent that three-quarters of our high schools were probably in contact with some form of mind or mood altering drugs.

"I've been 246 days in the program and this is the first opportunity I've had to visit outside the program," said Scot, who now lives at home with his family in Springfield, Va.

Family participation is crucial to the program, thinks Mrs. [redacted], who devotes many hours to helping her son cope in a drug-free world. Daily contact, rap sessions and seminars and classes are all activities Scot participates in.

"We are attempting to let parents and adults get involved in the program," explains Mrs. [redacted]. Already she and about 350 parents are involved in Straight, Inc.

While family-orientation is stressed in the program, the organization which is staffed by approximately 30, mostly drug-rehabilitated people, emphasizes peer pressure.

Peer pressure is what gets kids involved with drugs and Straight, Inc., which specializes in 12 to 21-year-olds, believes the right kind of peer pressure may get the drug abusers off the habit.

Scot has made new friends with Straight, roughly 180 friends. Scot's

former "druggie" friends are seen in a different light by Scot today.

"When old 'druggie' friends come up to me, I don't want to associate with them any more," he says. "I've found a new a new and better life."