

## First lady Nancy Reagan, winding up a two-state tour...

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First lady Nancy Reagan, winding up a two-state tour of drug treatment programs, said today she hopes her public appearances will draw greater attention to the problems facing many teenagers and their families.

Mrs. Reagan flew to Dallas from MacDill Air Force Base in Florida for appearances that included a working lunch with the Texans' War on Drugs Committee, financed by computer magnate H. Ross Perot, and a meeting with a half dozen parents active in a suburban anti-drug group.

On her way into the downtown hotel where the luncheon was held, Mrs. Reagan, dressed in a black knit Adolfo suit, was met by two dozen demonstrators organized by ACORN, a community activist group.

One sign carried by the demonstrators read: 'Is saving children in fashion?' -- a reference to the controversy the Reagans' lifestyle has sparked at a time when the president is cutting away at federal spending.

The demonstrators said they were concerned about cuts in federal programs to reduce the incidence of lead poisoning among children. Mrs. Reagan did not acknowledge the protest.

Talking with reporters on her flight from Tampa, Fla., to Dallas, Mrs. Reagan said she hoped her trip will 'make a difference' in drawing attention to drug problems among teenagers.

Asked if she plans more such trips, she answered, 'As often as I can.'

On Monday, the first lady heard firsthand about teenage drug problems during an emotional, confession-filled session at **Straight Inc.**, a controversial program in St. Petersburg, Fla., that seeks to wean teenagers off drugs through behavior modification.

Mrs. Reagan listened for several hours as teenager after teenager stood up in a sign-decorated, flag-bedecked auditorium to tell of experiences with drugs ranging from cocaine to insecticide. Several broke down as they spoke.

'I'm so proud of you and I love you, too,' the first lady told the teenagers, most of them white and clean-cut and who described themselves as 'druggies.'

Turning to the parents, the first lady said, 'Being a parent myself, I know how painful it must be for you ...' Her voice caught and she paused. 'There's nothing as awful for a parent, nothing as painful for a parent, as to have something happen to their child,' she said.

The crowd applauded her loudly and a teenage boy and girl presented her with a valentine. She hugged and kissed them.

'We feel like you are not only the first mother of the land, but also a member of our family,' Miller Newton, Straight's executive director, told her.

Straight Inc., a privately funded effort patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous, enrolls teenagers for an average of eight months. For the first several weeks, they spend 12 hours a day at the center and are given more time off as they make progress.

In January, the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against Straight's Georgia branch, saying five teenagers were being held against their will. The ACLU is now trying to work out an out-of-court settlement under which an independent panel would monitor complaints about the program.

Although some critics allege the program uses brainwashing techniques to indoctrinate teenagers, Carlton Turner, a White House drug policy adviser, said a Canadian expert recently studied the program and cleared it of such charges.

The Straight meeting began with patriotic song singing and a question-and-answer session between the teenagers and Mrs. Reagan.

'How many of you were high at the dinner table and your parents didn't know?' Mrs. Reagan asked the 300 teenagers.

Almost every hand went up.

Earlier in the day, Mrs. Reagan visited the Pinellas Park Elementary School, where she sat in on a class of third, fourth and fifth graders in the ALPHA program, that tries to catch youngsters before they start on drugs.

'Go ahead and do what you know is right and what's good for you,' Mrs. Reagan told the 30 youngsters and their parents.

On only her second major trip since her husband became president, Mrs. Reagan said in contrast to the 1960s, when there was confusion about drugs, 'I think permissiveness is over and I think children want it to be over.'

The first lady's press secretary, Sheila Tate, said the trip was the first in what will become a regular series of activities by Mrs. Reagan focusing on drug abuse.

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