

TELETHON MOVES STRAIGHT AHEAD FOR CHARITY

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- Author/Byline: SUE REILLY Daily News Staff Writer
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You will be able to spend Christmas Eve with David Crosby, Brian Wilson and Sheena Easton, and do a holiday good turn as well, thanks to a unique and last-minute bit of television Christmas programming.

Home Shopping Network (Channel 46 in the San Fernando Valley) usually provides a way for viewers to sit in their living rooms and phone order what is touted as bargain, brand-name merchandise.

On Christmas Eve, on Home Shopping Network, in addition to being entertained, viewers will be able to phone in donation pledges to help rehabilitate young drug offenders.

"From noon until 6 p.m. Dec. 24, we will turn the facilities of the national network over to fund-raising for **Straight**, a drug rehab program," said Ken Yates, president of HSN Entertainment Inc.

Yates, who received an Emmy nomination for the philanthropically motivated "We Are the World: A Year of Giving," will produce the telethon that will include taped and live segments with Gary Collins, Tim Reid, Carole King, Easton, Wilson and Crosby, as well as taped messages from President and Mrs. Reagan and President-elect and Mrs. Bush.

Cast members of "Newhart," "Empty Nest" and "Growing Pains" also will participate.

Yates said the money from the telethon will be used by Straight to assist in expanding its program across the country. "They currently have facilities in five states, and this will help to expand it nationwide."

He said the idea for the coast-to-coast broadcast, using the in-place facilities of the home shopping service, including its hundreds of phone operators and toll-free number (800-284-3200), came from above: his boss.

"Home Shopping Network's chairman, Roy Speer, called me in Los Angeles and asked me to come down to Florida for a meeting," he recalled.

At the meeting were representatives of Home Shopping Network and two representatives of Straight.

"He (Speer) told us that he was very impressed with the work that Straight had been doing with young people and that he wanted to help," Yates said. "He suggested that because of our facilities for calling in, and because of my past fund-raising experience, a telethon would be appropriate."

Speer said he was particularly anxious to help the family-oriented Straight because Home Shopping Network is a family-oriented network, Yates said. "He said the synergy just worked."

Yates knew he was being asked to do a job in six weeks that should have taken six months. He also knew, he said, that after visiting the Tampa Bay Straight facility, that it was something he wanted to do.

"I saw a Straight facility that was similar to the one that Mrs. (Nancy) Reagan took Princess Diana to when the princess was visiting Washington," Yates said. He added that his visit had the same powerful impact on him that it had had on the two international figures.

"I went back in with a camera crew and talked to the youngsters and their families, and to the Straight professionals," he said.

"I knew that the telethon would not only be a way for people to help in the battle against youthful drug abuse, but would also offer hope to families who were experiencing the problem in their own home."

Toward that end, a yet-to-be-installed phone help-line number will be flashed on the screen, so young people and their parents may call for Straight information and assistance, Yates said.

The next step was to round up stars who would be willing, on such short notice, to talk on camera about their experiences in getting straight themselves, or in helping others get straight, or to perform.

"We just didn't have the time to go through usual channels, so our talent coordinators did ingenious things like attending a recent songwriters' conference where they put out a general announcement about what we were doing. We just asked people to help if they

wanted to."

That's how the program got the assistance of people like the elusive Wilson and Crosby, both recovering alcohol and drug abusers, and King.

Other people, according to Yates, just volunteered.

"Entertainers know how insidious drug use can be, especially with young people," Yates said. "It has ruined careers, killed people. They want to help. It's really gratifying."

- **Caption:** 2 photos (1 - 2) David Crosby and Carole King are among the performers who will appear on Home Shopping Network's Christmas Eve fund-raising telethon for Straight, a drug-rehabilitation program.
- **Memo:** Focus
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