

Straight brings its drug fight to county

[CITY Edition]

St. Petersburg Times - St. Petersburg, Fla.

Author: WENDY WEYEN

Date: Feb 20, 1987

Start Page: 17

Section: TAMPA

Text Word Count: 350

Document Text

TAMPA - Straight Inc., a nationally known drug program based in St. Petersburg, announced Thursday it has opened an office in Hillsborough County.

The office, at 4819 E Busch Blvd., will make it easier for residents of Hillsborough County to find out more about Straight, said Joan Street, director for community services for the drug-treatment program.

Some follow-up counseling will take place in the new Hillsborough office, which has been open for about two months. Most of the treatment for bay area young people, however, will continue to take place in the Pinellas Park office, Street said.

More than 60 percent of the young people treated at Straight's Pinellas County office live in Hillsborough, Street said.

"We wanted a facility that would be more convenient to families in Hillsborough, especially the northern part of Hillsborough County," Street said.

Straight describes itself as a family-oriented drug rehabilitation program for drug users between the ages of 12 and 21. The program has been controversial, because Straight accepts children against their will.

The 1st District Court of Appeal in Tallahassee ruled in support of that practice in January. The court declared parents can force their children into drug-treatment facilities without their consent or a judge's order.

Officials with the Hillsborough County schools said Thursday they did not think Straight had received approval to give presentations in county classrooms.

"As long as it's a quality program and meets the standards and guidelines that we all must follow, that's fine," said Bob Patterson, coordinator for the elementary health program, which includes drug-awareness programs such as those through the C.E. Mendez Foundation Inc.

"We need all the resources available in this area," said Okie Fletcher, supervisor for the district's health education.

Fletcher added, however, that he did not want to use the school system as a referral agency.

"I'm somewhat reluctant to open up the classroom for agencies whose objective is a commercial venture as such," Fletcher said.

Street, however, said Straight already has made some presentations in Hillsborough schools. She said she was scheduled to give three half-hour assemblies at Plant High School next week.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

Abstract (Document Summary)

TAMPA - Straight Inc., a nationally known drug program based in St. Petersburg, announced Thursday it has opened an office in Hillsborough County.

The office, at 4819 E Busch Blvd., will make it easier for residents of Hillsborough County to find out more about Straight, said Joan Street, director for community services for the drug-treatment program.

Some follow-up counseling will take place in the new Hillsborough office, which has been open for about two months. Most of the treatment for bay area young people, however, will continue to take place in the Pinellas Park office, Street said.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.