

DRUG PROGRAM 'INSPIRING' STOP IN BUSH'S TRIP

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Vice President George Bush spent Tuesday raising funds in Florida after visiting a drug treatment center to hear emotional testimonials from young people winning the battle to kick the habit.

"This is probably as inspiring a 20 or 30 minutes as Barbara and I have had in our lives," Bush told a crowd of 450 at Straight Inc. before heading with his wife to private fund-raisers in nearby Belleair, then across the state in Palm Beach.

Although he is not expected to formally announce his 1988 presidential bid until the fall, Bush's two-day swing through the state gives him an early start for the March 1988 Florida primary.

At Straight, four youths from their mid-teens to their early 20s told of personal battles with drugs, and talked about skipping school, falling grades, lying, low self-esteem and loss of communication with their families before they entered the program.

Now, they said, they are drug-free and have goals, pride and enough honesty to be frank with themselves and their families.

A few parents spoke publicly about their feelings, acknowledging being ashamed and angry, but pledging support.

"I don't see why there's a dry eye in the house," said the vice president after the half-hour program.

Families sat on one side of the room. Directly across were 108 young people, sons and daughters in various stages of treatment, plus some program graduates.

Straight Inc., which drew a visit from First Lady Nancy Reagan in 1982, works with the family structure to help those ages 12 to 22 get off drugs. It's a structured program, requiring student residency for the first stage which lasts two to six weeks. Then it tries to weave youngsters back into home and school environments.

On an average, it takes a year to complete the program. It began 10 years ago in Pinellas County with 10 families and today has eight facilities nationwide with 1,000 under rehabilitation.

Bush drew a loud round of applause when he talked about his efforts through the South Florida Drug Task Force to interdict drugs before they reach the country.

"Without sounding conceited about it, we have done a good job," he said.

But, he added, the drug problem won't be solved by interdiction, it will take faith, family and "young people determined to say no."

Bush came to Republican Pinellas County on Florida's Gulf Coast from the Space Coast. His Florida supporters hope to raise some \$600,000 during his two-day visit. Florida is a prime target because it has been a good revenue source for candidates of both parties and because it has been strongly supportive of President Reagan.

Meanwhile, the Secret Service said Tuesday it jailed a man in Orlando for threatening to kill President Reagan and Bush.

Donald Crocket, 29, was arrested prior to the vice president's arrival and held without bond in the Orange County Jail, charged with threatening to take the life of the president. Crocket appeared before a U.S. magistrate Monday and was ordered temporarily detained without bond, a spokeswoman in the magistrate's office said.

She said federal prosecutors were expected to file a motion to have Crocket examined by a psychiatrist. She said Crocket had been treated earlier on the mental ward of an Orlando hospital.

In court documents, Secret Service Agent David O'Connor said Crocket had made threats on the president's life before and had been under surveillance for the Bush visit. Crocket allegedly told Schmidt Sunday he wanted to kill Bush.

Crocket was arrested when he told O'Connor he was "going to Washington, D.C., to blow Ronald Reagan's head off," court records said.

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