

Drug horror story: 3 sons in a family

By CHARLES VARKOLY

When a drug-related incident occurs within a family, it can be a harrowing experience. When it happens to three sons, it's a disaster. And it could happen to anyone—even you.

That's the warning of the Henry Smythe family of Redford Township, who recently weathered such a crisis involving three teenage sons. Smythe is not the family's real name, but the story is true. The parents described themselves as typical suburban dwellers who never thought drugs would affect their family.

The parents, Hank and Rita, prided themselves on keeping good discipline among their children. Moderate, middle-aged, and middle class, they attended church regularly. They described their children as "average" in school.

Their seemingly typical existence all came to a head within a matter of weeks, however. Their three oldest sons were involved in two serious drug incidents.

It shattered the parents' illusions. They hope their story will shelter others' as well.

It wasn't long ago, Mrs. Smythe related, that she received a call from an east side drug crisis center in Detroit. The couple learned their oldest boy, Pete, had tripped out badly on "acid" (LSD) the night before.

It was the first indication of a serious drug and family

problem, which later would involve two more sons. Pete survived the trip, but his parents knew something had to be done. So when the crisis center asked if they were willing to have Pete receive professional counseling, they agreed.

The east side center was too far, however, so the caller referred them to a local one in Redford. Located on Beech Dale just north of Five Mile, it is known as the Redford Information and Counseling Center on Drugs (RICCDD).

Not knowing much about drugs, the couple called the center. The director made an appointment and took the case personally.

"I still think at the time we weren't very knowledgeable," said Mrs. Smythe. "We weren't recognizing them. We weren't recognizing things. We thought this was a one-time thing. Our son probably had just gotten some pills the night before."

What seemed like a one shot affair, however, took a more serious turn five or six weeks later.

It was Hank's day off, and the family decided to spend it at a distant park. Relatives were included in the plans.

"We had a real family full," Hank recalled.

But disaster struck their trip shortly after they hit the expressway. While en route, a sister-in-law discovered something wrong with Joey, the couple's second oldest.

"I turned around and looked at him," Mrs. Smythe

"Not my little boys that got average grades and went to church every Sunday, never talked back, and weren't out late at night."

said, "and through some kind of intuition, I just knew he was high."

They pulled off the road and drove to a nearby gas station with a rest room.

"When we opened the door," the mother recalled, "Joey was absolutely zonked right out of his head."

The crisis deepened when they also discovered his younger brother, Willie, "was stoned out of his head, too."

Pete, the oldest, remained at home during the trip.

Willie, who took part in the interview, revealed he had acquired some marijuana the day before. He'd taken some before starting the trip.

"I just couldn't handle it," he said. "I was just sitting in the car. I could hardly remember what was happening."

"I didn't care. I wasn't really aware." All he recalled, Willie said, was his parents' difficulties with Joey.

"Then I got super-paranoid," he said, which is common when someone on drugs feels threatened.

The parents curtailed the trip and started the trek home.

"We put them in the back seat," Mrs. Smythe said, "and strapped them in with seat belts. Joey was really gone. He was just like jello."

The boys' pulses were OK, so the couple headed home instead of going to a hospital. Mrs. Smythe said she was thankful she had done some reading on drugs, though she then knew very little.

"I'm glad, very glad I had at the time," she said. "I remembered the most important thing when somebody is tripping is not to frighten them."

The parents made sure they did not, though Joey already displayed symptoms of paranoia.

"We got in the car and he was screaming and crying and doubling over, moaning and groaning," said Mrs. Smythe.

"He kept crying, 'You're going a million miles an hour. Slow down! Slow down!' I talked and cried all the way back."

The crisis later revealed sharp family problems below the surface. Already, Mrs. Smythe related, she was prejudging their oldest son for corrupting the others.

"I was just sure in my mind that it was the oldest one that had gotten it for Joey, given it to him, and had corrupted him, and I was going to kill him."

"She was out for blood," her husband said.

The parents learned later that each boy had been doing his own thing for some time.

"And can you imagine? Wham!—another double shock," said the father. "It was impossible—not them! I could figure the older one—but the other two—NEVER."

Mrs. Smythe also retraced her thoughts at the time: "Not my good little boys that got average grades and went to church every Sunday, never talked back, and weren't out late at night."

"We were pretty strict parents," she said. "They weren't out running around in the streets."

"However," she added, "you learn to eat your words. 'You learn not to become very judgmental.'"

The couple called RICCDD immediately after they arrived home. The director came right over. He determined the boys were physically all right, and advised the parents to let the effects wear off gradually.

The important thing, he said, was to let the boys feel reassured.

The director called for some extensive counseling sessions. They led the family to see its problems and open better communications.

Recalling their first appointment, Mrs. Smythe said, "We talked with each other. I think probably we really talked to the kids and listened to them for the first time."

"This time we really tried to understand what kind of kick they were getting out of drugs."

At the same time, the youngsters overcame a subtle fear of the parents. They became more responsive to parents' objections, fears and worries, Willie said.

"But it wasn't something that happened overnight," his mother added.

Before the crisis, Willie related, he had hated his father's orders and demands.

"We weren't communicating," he said. "My parents were always yelling."

The family started its own weekly conferences at home to close the gap. "It was no holds-barred—everything goes," Smythe remarked. "Everybody stuck their two cents in."

The conferences resulted in a new self-awareness for everyone, the father said.

His wife added, "I think probably we learned a lot. It was one of the best things that happened to us. We had a crisis, but we faced it and worked it through as a family."

"I think we drew a lot closer to one another through it," Smythe added. "The boys were afraid of me, and I can see why. I gave them every reason to be."

"I'd come home from work and bitch and moan and groan about everything underneath the sun. Now I come home and see stuff to do and I just ask them if they'll do it instead of screaming at them."

"I'll talk to them like human beings instead of possessions," he said.

The parents said they've come to realize the youngsters have their own lives to lead, too.

"Overall, we've come a long way together," said Smythe. "We've really learned to talk to one another."

Willie agreed. "Now my dad actually says he loves me. Little things like that are really important."

"There's more affection now," his dad added. "We're not afraid to touch one another. It's just the loving we have in the family now—more than we've ever had before."

"You've got to respect them," Willie said. "Now they listen."

Willie admitted he still smokes grass but has pretty much given up chemicals. He also understands his parents' objection because such acts are illegal.

He obeys their rules against smoking at home. He also realizes he must pay the consequences for his actions.

Willie said he uses drugs less now, simply because he does not have to lie about it. Better communications have lessened his rebelliousness.

Each offered advice for those who may be involved in a similar crisis, or those who may be creating one unwittingly.

Mrs. Smythe advised that every parent be fully acquainted with drugs, knowing as much as their children.

"Have really good factual information and not scare stories," she said. Most youngsters, she added, discount what adults say because they know less than the kids.

And keep the lines of communication wide open, she advised. "Maybe you're going to hear some things you don't want to hear, but that's the only way you're going to learn."

"You may not always understand them," she remarked. "Very probably may not always agree with them, but you must listen to them."

"Once that door of communication closes, it's hopeless."

Establishing better communications is not always easy for father, said Smythe, because of American hang-ups about masculinity.

He recalled his difficulty accepting the sons' longer hair. That was just one hurdle he had to overcome.

The chief difficulty for men, he said, is telling children outright that they love them.

Like others, the couple admitted they also had been concerned what neighbors thought of the youngsters.

"Well, our feeling now is to tell with the neighbors," Smythe said. "The neighbors aren't going to help them. The most important thing to us is our children."

The family has established common principle: "What transpires in the house, stays in the house."

The family also agreed it's often best to seek outside help.

"I don't think it's a sign of weakness to ask for help," said Mrs. Smythe. "Some-

times it's good for a third party who's not emotionally involved and can act as a referee."

"The thing is to admit the things you yourself are doing wrong," her husband added. Besides drug counselors, the couple said they met with school social workers, though they earlier disliked the idea.

"It's hard for a father to admit to himself what kind of a man he is," Smythe stressed. "And what kind of father he is."

Willie advised youngsters who cannot get along with parents to seek professional advice either at RICCDD or in school.

"If you're going to be afraid you're never going to get it all together," he said. Willie said he knows many youths from average families who string out on drugs because of emotional problems with their parents.

Often, the parents are completely unaware, he said.

Mrs. Smythe said it's time for adults to discard old stereotypes about drug users. It can happen to any family, she said.

"It really takes a lot of courage to start asking questions—to start really looking at yourself," she said.

Many parents, she explained, often take the attitude, "It's not gonna happen to me." Some find out too late it's already happened.

Drug users don't necessarily come from impoverished, broken homes, she added.

But saying you are going to do something about a problem still is not enough, they stressed.

"Your head can say one thing, but to get your gut to do along with it—that's what takes a long time," Mrs. Smythe said.

The couple admitted not all their problems have been solved "because living is a problem." But now she said it as a family. Mrs. Smythe said.

"It's like being a good ship in a storm," she explained. "You don't sink. You just keep sailing along."

Natural living for natural life

By JACKIE KLEIN

Six years ago, Dr. Jack Goldstein was given two grim choices. His doctor told him he must undergo a total colectomy or face certain death.

Today, Goldstein is a walking testimonial to better living through natural hygiene, a way of life he wishes everyone would adopt.

"When I was 28, I began to get symptoms of colitis. I went to three different doctors for treatment and kept getting progressively worse. Six years ago, I had a full blown case of chronic ulcerated colitis, triggered and kept burning by emotion."

The 42-year-old foot doctor reached the point where he couldn't work or enjoy family and social life because of the debilitating effect of his illness. His doctor recommended a total resection of the large bowel.

"A friend told my wife about natural hygiene, a way of living in harmony with natural law. This involves proper exercise, maintaining emotional poise, fasting and a vegetable diet, basically raw."

Goldstein bought everything ever published on the subject and decided to try it as an alternative to the dreaded surgery. He went to the Hygienic Institute in Hyde Park where he fasted for six weeks and lost 30 pounds.

"The idea was to give the body an environment in which to heal itself in a physiological rest. Biochemical, physical and emotional changes began to take place. I was weak, but found a certain strength in that weakness."

"My body was eliminating its toxic load so I felt good mentally and physically. The more chronic the illness, the longer you have to fast."

Goldstein broke his fast carefully, drinking clear vegetable broth and juice, diluted orange juice, blended and pureed fruits. When he returned from the Hygienic Institute, he was eating fresh fruits and vegetables and nuts.

His doctor considered this way of life "abnormal" and attributed his improvement to "mind over matter." After that, Goldstein said goodbye to his doctor and has been living naturally without medication.



JACK GOLDSTEIN

Progress has been slow because of extensive damage to the large intestine. But after six years, Goldstein says he is 95 per cent healthy.

Goldstein is a director of the American Natural Hygiene Society of Detroit and lectures all over the country. He has written articles for health journals and has appeared on television and radio locally and nationally.

The Natural Hygiene Society is a non-profit organization which promotes knowledge of natural living to maintain and restore health.

"People from all walks of life say they are reborn because of natural living," says Goldstein. "After repeated fasts and a natural diet, a woman who has multiple sclerosis can put in an eight-hour day and jump rope 25 times."

Goldstein fasts periodically throughout the year. His wife was so impressed with his progress that she said: "That's it, we're changing."

She got rid of all the meat, processed and canned foods and the whole family is on a natural diet.

Goldstein says his two boys, 9 and 12, haven't any cavities and their illness rate has declined remarkably. After two weeks of a vegetable diet, his 12-year-old got rid of his allergies.

Goldstein doesn't eat breakfast and disagrees with the belief that it's the most important meal of the day. His wife and children eat

grapefruit, oranges, raw nuts and seeds.

Milk and eggs are taboo, but some natural cheeses are allowed. For lunch, Goldstein eats a variety of fresh fruits. Dinner is a huge raw vegetable salad with homemade dressing, baked potato or natural rice casserole and steamed vegetables.

Other "no-no's" are drugs, coffee, tea, pop, tobacco, alcohol, chocolate, processed foods with chemical additives, white sugar, condiments and bleached flour.

Meat, says Goldstein, is highly putrified and gives off poisonous products. "The American diet is filled with stimulants and that's why people are nervous."

"Youth is more aware of natural living, but aren't doing it right. Vitamin supplements aren't the answer. You can't buy health, you have to earn it. People take poisons into their body. These poisons interfere with cell metabolism and have an accumulative effect."

Goldstein, who is disenchanted with the medical profession because of his unhappy experience, says people get well despite doctors. "You can live a long life if you use the best of what it takes to restore and maintain health."

"You can enjoy good health longer, can become calm and serene, and cope better with situations. It's a shame to use natural living as an 11th hour crisis measure instead of a preventative."

Goldstein at 43 is more active than he has ever been. He feels great physically and participates in a number of active sports. "I play ball with guys half my age who can't run as fast."

Joe Clark wins award

FARMINGTON The American Association for State and Local History during the fall of 1973 conferred on Joe Clark of Farmington an award of merit for his book, Tennessee Hill Folk, a pictorial history of a part of southern Appalachia. This award is given for excellence of accomplishment in the area of state and local history.

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