



Youths like the one pictured here might not have run away from home if their parents had understood their problems, including drug

abuse. Mothers and fathers who use scare tactics risk driving their children from their homes.

# When parents draw line ...kids will cross it

Part III of a series  
By JACKIE KLEIN

This story of heartbreak and a second chance is true. Only the names have been changed.

A number of years ago, Kathy and Jean left home and hitchhiked to New Mexico. They were stopped by a small police while strolling through a small town. Their identifications showed they were from Southfield.

The girls had \$187 between them, so police provided meals and overnight lodgings in an antiquated jail. Jean and Kathy's parents were contacted, and the girls were flown back home.

For Kathy, 15, things had begun to grow sour when friends convinced her to smoke her first "grass." Before long she was deeply into the drug scene. THC, acid, mescaline, hash and downers were part of her life.

Her school attendance dropped, her interests in art and sewing disappeared and so did her good relationship with her family. When the hassles became unbearable, she left home for New Mexico.

FOR JEAN, 16, it was different. She hadn't become involved with drugs, but she was having problems at home. She also had a poor attendance record in school. One day, she stole some jewelry at Northland for kicks.

Jean was caught and placed on probation by the court. Her parents screamed, hollered and imposed restrictions. When Kathy asked her to run away, she was ready. She believed she had nothing to lose.

When Kathy and Jean returned from their trip, a Southfield police juvenile division officer recommended the girls see someone in the city's Human Resources Department youth services office. They participated in the program. But equally important, their parents learned a lot about their daughters and drug abuse.

Youth services counselors had been looking for a publication to educate

mothers and fathers about drugs. They finally discovered "Drug Abuse: A Realistic Primer for Parents," compiled by Do It Now Foundation in Phoenix, Ariz.

"Every day we get asked decent questions about street drugs, and we also get ridiculous questions," said Vic Pawlak, foundation out of using drugs.

"BECAUSE THERE'S obviously a gap, we believed a detailed drug publication was in order, in an effort to narrow the gap from a large canyon to at least a narrow gorge. Like it or not, if you're a parent with a son or daughter between five and 20, some day you'll have to face up to the fact your child will be exposed to drugs."

From the television set to the medicine cabinet to the school parking lot, exposure to drugs from the earliest ages is now inevitable, Pawlak said. Sooner or later, Pawlak contends, every parent has to make up his mind about marijuana or face the danger of being confronted with answerless questions. Attitudes about marijuana, he claims, are the key to effective communication between parents and children in a majority of cases.

"Mothers and fathers who take a hard-line, 'killer weed' stand to lose communications with their kids because marijuana hasn't been proven physically harmful. If parents argue that it is, they're widening the gap."

"Arguing that marijuana causes harmful psychological reactions has proven fruitless, and if anything, shows your kids how little you know. Don't make the mistake of comparing alcohol to marijuana on an overall basis."

MANY YOUNG persons, Pawlak said, believe alcohol is less desirable for them than pot. Alcohol causes a drowsy intoxication in which the world slows down and is eventually clouded over, he said.

"Every day, parents get into arguments with kids who say 'You drink, so I can smoke grass.' Parents retaliate with 'Two wrongs don't make a right,' and the result is ridiculous. If you find yourself doing this, you should be ashamed of yourself."

Marijuana, Pawlak claims, isn't addicting, and the argument that it leads to heroin is a pharmacological and psychological fallacy. Legalizing marijuana, he contends, would lessen the ex-

posure by taking sales away from illicit sources who may also peddle pills, he said.

"In the meantime, parents do have one argument against marijuana," Pawlak said. "It's still illegal, so parents can take an appropriate stand on this. Your child has been aware, and if he decides to experiment, he knows the legal consequences. You may remind him of this, but don't constantly push it in his face."

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