

Lifestyle

Page 5B

Message of prize-winning poster hits home

By Melgnia Moore

Marietta Daily Journal Staff Photo

Chase Thomas' anti-drug message hits home, his tone as a matter of fact.

Last March, Thomas entered his "Don't Let Drugs Hold You Back" poster in the Kennesaw Optimist Club's poster contest and won. In May, his step-brother and step-sister were entered into a long-term drug treatment program.

Thomas' mother, Jocelyn Beaupre, said their family life two years ago "became a living hell."

"I remarried three and a half years ago," she said, "and when the two teen-agers started causing problems my husband and I talked about it. He said they were just normal teen-agers. I thought, even if they are teen-agers, they shouldn't be acting this way."

The two teen-agers attended North Cobb high school and became involved in drug use with their friends, Mrs. Beaupre said.

"The 15-year-old was really using a lot," she said.

The two are now in long-term treatment with Straight, Inc. in Austell. Kara Dayton of Straight, said the program is a long-term treatment program for adolescents that lasts nine to 12 months.

The program consists of five phases during which the teen-agers deal honestly with their drug problem by focusing first on themselves.

The subsequent phases focus on family relationships, achievement in work or school, rebuilding friendships and learning social responsi-

bility.

It is difficult for anyone to break an addiction, but the Straight program is based on the 12-steps that Alcoholics Anonymous uses. According to professionals, addicts and alcoholics cannot be cured but must fight a daily battle to stay healthy.

"If you can live through adolescence straight, then you can live your life straight," Ms. Dayton said when asked about the pressure teen-agers must feel knowing they must fight a daily battle for the rest of their lives.

Straight, Inc. is a family treatment program that provides counseling and help for the entire family of a drug user. The parents and siblings are educated about drug use and the effects of it on the individual using and the family.

"Since May this has been our whole life," Ms. Beaupre said. "When you have an addicted person in your home, the dynamics of the family change. We're getting our whole family healthy," she said.

Thomas, who has received state-wide attention for his anti-drug poster design, is described by his mother as "Mr. Go-getter." He is an over-achiever who makes straight A's at Awitree Middle School and ran track in the National Junior Olympics twice this past summer, she said. The weekend before the Ribben Week, he won first place on the 14 and under age group in a 10K run in Cartersville.

"My concern is for Chase to have a safe and drug-free home and at school," Mrs. Beaupre said.



Chase Thomas, front, with parents Charles Thomas, left, Jocelyn Beaupre, FBI special agent William Hinshaw and Kennesaw Optimist Club president Ray Rhoades shows the plaque he received Oct. 22 for designing the billboard behind him.

Steps in recovery program for drug users

Alcoholics Anonymous is a recovery program for alcoholics based on 12 steps. The Straight, Inc. long-term drug treatment program for teens in Austell uses these 12 steps to bring drug users into recovery. The steps are:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and

fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible,

except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

INTERLUDE

DON'T LET DRUGS HOLD YOU BACK

DRUG FREE

CREATED BY CHASE THOMAS