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The Cincinnati Beacon

Kids Must Stand Up for Their Rights

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Posted by [Derrick D. Blassingame](#)

As many of you may know, I am very concerned about "Kids Helping Kids." Last Friday while standing with protesters and interviewing many of them, I was moved by the level of concentration these survivors have placed on this issue. For some it has been twenty years since being part of Kids Helping Kids (formerly Straight Inc.) and for many it is as real today as it was twenty years ago.

Normally I try and explore both sides of the issue with the good and the bad. I have spoken with representatives of Kids Helping Kids and have made requests for interviews. This organization is linked with many other cults and they use the same marketing director.

Overall Kids Helping Kids is a dark cult-like organization with a long history of abusing children in the name of recovery! How about Phase One, where contact with the outside world is cut off to other clients in the program? You must leave home and stay at a "host home" where complete strangers act as your parent and guardian. I wonder if any type of sexual or physical abuse has taken place? Giving youth power can sometime lead to all sorts of stunts and explorations. Or how about the "belt loop" (since abandoned in 2004) where everywhere a client goes, another teenager have his hand balled into a fist and wrapped around the child's belt? Or how about the fact that these children cannot even go to the restroom without another teenager watching them?

KHK Headquarters

The building is camouflaged with a storage facility and there were no windows except for the at the entrance. The place was dark and gloomy. A serious gas leak near the building almost knocked me dead! The facility has no windows, other than the main entrance. The entire property is controlled and secured by other teenagers. In the middle of no where, this facility houses many young people with various (alleged) problems. Many insurance companies pay anywhere from \$10,000 - \$20,000 for treatment! A

list of contributors is posted in the lobby area of the facility where I was able to identify National City Bank and Provident Bank as sponsors and supporters of the organization. I could not imagine children being able to make a full recovery from addiction in this facility.

Police Reports

Milford Police Department has reported to Kids Helping Kids on numerous occasions. In one report a client states "If he was not taken from KHK he was going to commit suicide." The officer then had the client transported to the hospital for a "psychiatric evaluation." The report further states, "Contact with child's parent left up to KHK." I cannot believe this! It seems like KHK not only has connections with powerful public officials, but also the police department. If a child reports to police that they are going to commit suicide if they are not removed from an organization or facility for alleged abuse and mistreatment, and then is forced to undergo a psychiatric evaluation what does this tell us? Sounds odd to me. And why didn't MPD contact the child's parent? Makes me wonder about children's rights. Have we forgotten about our youth? Or is this such a small organization that has no meaning to YOUR everyday life.

Lets Imagine

If this were a black organization and the clients were white. Would you put your child in it? Or, how many white people would tolerate a black organization beating the living lights out of their children? Or even watching their children use the restroom? I wonder.

Take a Stand & Be Counted

This is why I believe kids (teenagers and young adults) must begin to take leadership roles, organize ourselves, and advocate for ourselves. Organizations like KHK reminds me of the old "Child Labor" days; when kids were seen as a way to support their family and another hand to pick cotton. These children had no rights then and as we continue to watch organizations like KHK evolve, they have no rights now. KHK represents the worse in our community. This organization and others like it, sends the wrong messages to our youth. KHK teaches children how to conform



to one set of beliefs, practices, and behaviors and is essentially a cult. During an interview outside the facility one "new comer" parent stated that she only receives "one call per week" from her son and was completely alright with it. But I wonder about her son. I wonder if he is "alright" or happy. According to an eye witness Friday after The Dean and I left a "new comer" was leg locked with an "old comer" heading to their host home. This is an "activity" that is suppose to belittle and humiliate the client. During the "host home" the new comer is lead around the house with the old comers hands on both their shoulders. The young lady "held her head down as though she was ashamed and humiliated." These types of "activities" are suppose to "build character" and "teach discipline" but yet they have so many long term traumatic affects on young people.

Kids have rights! To those who would dare say otherwise is part of the conspiracy to keep young people down and immobilize the great strengths in being a youth. I recall the Walnut Hills students last year who rallied to ban Military Recruiters from recruiting from their school. (source) When young people come together things gets done. But when there individuality and creativity is taken away, it hurts us all. This organization will continue to be under my radar and I hope if any young person have gone through this organization will have enough courage to stand up and fight this institution. We are behind you. Kid Helping Kids reminds me of an old establishment that represents the old way. I am pissed off and you should be to!

Send us an email to realtalklive@yahoo.com. All information will be kept confidential.

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☐ Auto-login on future visits

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Tell us what you think!

Anonymous comments are allowed, but you can log in above to stamp your name and to avoid typing the anti-spam code.

1. [funnelcake](#) says:
14 Feb 2006 at 02:41 am | <#>

I am not disagreeing with you that KHK is probably a bad solution for drug rehab. The question is what else works?

2. [Derrick D. Blassingame](#) says:
14 Feb 2006 at 03:03 am | <#>

Not KHK. There are many alternatives to KHK. I will be discussing them in the next few days. Children's Hospital Medical Center has several nationally accredited programs for addiction prevention. I will list these organizations in the next few weeks.

On the other hand, if we are to believe that KHK is good for our youth, than we should also be accepting to people like Sam Malone and the way he disciplined his son. We also should define what is good treatment and what is bad.

We live in a society that holds youth accountable for their parents bad decisions. All of the children that are part of KHK are not addicted to drugs. Some of these kids are just experiencing normal teenage temptation(s). The bigger question should be, Why is the kid addicted drugs? What are parents and family life like? Most kids get on drugs because of family drama and all sorts of parent related matters. According to one of the survivors, these kids are not allowed to discuss their family issues. They are blamed for their entire life and are labeled "drugees."

3. *The Dean of Cincinnati* says:

14 Feb 2006 at 08:27 am | #

I'm really interested in the fact that the 2004 contributor list is not apparently online, and how they kicked Derrick and I out of the place when we started to read it...

Who is on that list?!

4. *funnelcake* says:

14 Feb 2006 at 10:48 am | #

Dean -

You'll have to flip this around a bit, but contains some 2004 contributors:

<http://www.kidshelpingkids.com/Newsletters/KHKNewsletter.pdf>

Current listing here:

<http://www.kidshelpingkids.com/Board.html>

The BBB gives them a clean bill of health so they are likely to get more contributions:

[http://search.cincinnati.bbb.org/default3.asp?](http://search.cincinnati.bbb.org/default3.asp?strTheForm=2&ID=1&strBCode=029200000&ComID=0292000002000006)

[strTheForm=2&ID=1&strBCode=029200000&ComID=0292000002000006](http://search.cincinnati.bbb.org/default3.asp?strTheForm=2&ID=1&strBCode=029200000&ComID=0292000002000006)

Since 2003 Fundraising contributions were about \$450,000 & the Benefit listed about dragged in about \$100K, I am guessing you want to know who throws in the other \$350K.

5. *Antigen* says:

14 Feb 2006 at 12:54 pm | #

Thanks, you guys, for getting the audio up there for us.

Derrick, you keep making comparisons between the way these programs treat teenagers and the bad old days of child labour, sharecroppers and people as chattel. I think there's something to that. Michael Males has writted quite a lot about this. Basically, almost everything you 'know' about kids ta day, juvenile crime and delinquency is **wrong!**

If you listen to the self appointed experts, you'd think we're in the midst of a decades long juvenile crime wave. But if you look to the stats on criminal justice, you'll find *the opposite is true*. That's right, kids ta day are better behaved, less violent and overall better citizens than we were in our day (well, by we I mean us old farts)

But people don't generally double check their journalists' homework. They just buy into the fear mongering. And look at the specific things about kids behavior that bother these people. What do they mean by "urban" styles? You know what they mean, "OMG, John!, little Johnny is dressing and talking just like a *black* kid! He'll never get into college! Never marry a nice white gal...." (or Latino or other feared, hated class depending on what's trendy in your local highschool)

In the '70's, the big boogiemens were the Manson Family (and, therefore, all Beatles fans) and those pot smokin', tie dyed commie war protestors. Back then, Art Barker had on his list of "warning signs", concert t-shirts and posters, especially BOC, Alice Cooper (our era's Marilyn Manson... and better, too, if ya ask me ☺) and a couple of others. Incense was a sure sign of drug involvement, according to the uber guru of the Straight line of programs.

None of this, of course, is supported by fact. The fact is that most kids who experiment with drugs or with other risky behavior learn to manage the risks or to abstain pretty much all on their own. By that I mean *with* sound guidance and support from mature, trustworthy friends and family and *without* any sort of coercion. Those who don't learn to manage or abstain don't need to be forced into good and helpful treatment. They want it.

But what's going on in that little warehouse is not at all helpful. In my experience talking w/ other program vets over the past 8 years or so, we've had a far worse time of it--both with regard to excessive drug abuse and general life and relationship problems--than those other kids who didn't get the 'benefit' of that intensive treatment.

People involved in these cults don't know that. They honestly don't. They hold hands and swear faith in their convictions; "the program works, drugs are the root of all evil, nothing else matters, the program WORKS!" If you try to show them any evidence to the contrary, they turn hostile right quick. That's fine for me standing out in the open on the sidewalk out front. But it's pure hell on a kid trapped in there with them, incommunicado for an undertermined stretch.

The thing to understand here is that KHK is part of a much larger, incredibly well funded and carefully camouflaged outfit. This goes all the way back to the Reagan White House. Here are some video collections including former President GHW Büsh hawking Straight, Inc. by name, an investigative report on SAFE, Orlando that you'll find eerily familiar after having seen Hatig's initial report on KHK and a few other related pieces.

http://thestraights.com/video/video_list.htm

<http://fornits.com/anonanon/video/>

As to the alternative? Well, I'm rather hard line and minority on that. If you want to understand and be really helpful to young people who have to deal with drugs in the world, you *must*, first and foremost, keep your head and take a level, sensible, well reasoned approach to the issue. Most people these days are completely unaware of the history of drugs in human society or even the fairly recent history of drug policy in this country.

We assume that drugs just didn't exist before the 60's, but nothing could be further from the truth. Before the New Deal, any kid could walk into an apothecary w/ a small amount of money and walk out with morphine, heroin, laudinum, cocaine or other hard drugs or cannabis preparations for granny's rheumatiz w/o so much as a prescription. In those days, morphenism (opiate addiction) was called "the soldier's disease" because soldiers, w/ their physical and emotional injuries and scars, were the 2nd most likely to become addicted after upper and middle class

housewives. (what does THAT tell ya about the Victorian ideal??)

And yet there was just no such thing as drug crime. For a really clear illustration, just compare the problems we have w/ alcohol now to those we had during prohibition. No doubt at all, drinking alcohol is inherently risky. But it didn't cause the Valentine's Day Massacre; coercion did.

The drugs have been with us always and will likely only get better, more potent and more readily available as the pharma industry continues to tweak their recipes. Our best means of dealing with this risk is to put it back into perspective, give good council and advice and have a little faith in your kids to handle themselves or right themselves w/o coercion when they do make mistakes. That's how we've done it for the last some thousands of years that we know of. And that always works better than coercion.

6. *Serpent101* says:

14 Feb 2006 at 03:31 pm | #

Does Tazing work in re-hab?

7. *Funkadelicac y* says:

14 Feb 2006 at 07:38 pm | #

funnel - Thanks for the links. I've organized the 2004 KHK newsletter into a more readable format. [Click here.](#)

Lots of well-known names are affiliated with KHK. For example, developer Robert Rhein and his wife Marilyn, identified as past president of KHK. Rhein is a [member of the HamCounty Economic Development Task Force](#).

8. *Royal Water* says:

14 Feb 2006 at 09:52 pm | #

Hi folks, touching another aspect of this... I was just thinking about another question for Penny, Or for maybe someone to elaborate on at some point. It has been my and other survivors understanding that this program does not serve any non-white clients, or if it does, maybe 1 or 2 at the most over the years. Why is this? For the longest time in straight, inc, there were maybe 1 or 2 non-white kids when I was in,(19months). I find this very interesting since the population in OH is rather diverse, based on my limited personal observations while driving through last week. What sayeth Penny Walker about this question? I mean, don't kids of many races exist in OH, and when they are court ordered to treatment, where do the non-white "offenders" go? It seems to me that there is a significant racial imbalance that exists there at khk. I wouldn't want these kids of other races thinking they are missing out, cuz they're not... I am just trying to bring up a valid point. It is almost as if the program is somehow deliberately designed to torture mostly white kids for doing drugs. I don't know, I could be way off on that, it's just weird!

9. *Royal Water* says:

15 Feb 2006 at 04:37 pm | #

Last Friday, the KHK marketing director called WCPO and mentioned that they go through a rigorous accreditation process... The accreditation organization, CARF, is headquartered in Phoenix AZ. Last year, KHK was up for re-certification by ODADAS. Included in the paperwork

from that process is a checklist. Many of the items were checked with a "D". I called ODADAS for clarification on what that meant, as the key at the top of this checklist gives the choices of answers to be either Y N or N/A. Well, come to find out, "D" means CARF jurisdiction. In other words, ODADAS doesn't even look at those areas at KHK. They "take the word" of CARF to cover those items. So, how can it be a "rigorous" process? I get the impression that, and I have proof that indicates likewise, that when an agency needs to investigate a complaint, they just call Penny Walker and take her word for it. Believe it or not, I sent CARF a complaint last year that included evidence that kids are being systematically abused at KHK. They say they did an investigation, but, it would appear that they must have missed the evidence we sent or something. So anyway, KHK is accredited but attaining it is hardly a "rigorous" process. I think it's a matter of if the check clears. It is so befuddling to me that this kind of "treatment" could ever be allowed, much less "accredited". In my opinion, the KHK accreditation is a epic fiasco. CARF stands for Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

10. *Antigen* says:

15 Feb 2006 at 05:36 pm | #

Royal Water

It has been my and other survivors understanding that this program does not serve any non-white clients, or if it does, maybe 1 or 2 at the most over the years. Why is this?

I have my theory on this. For one, generally, black people either have incredulity and money (some) or total credulity and no money. So they're not generally targets. That healthy incredulity is, I think, the more potent factor. Remember the role that the less than wealthy families played? No money, no problem, they could use just a few service slaves who would do anything to raise money or to help recruit rich kids or mobilize political support for things like the Marchman and Baker acts and DFAF's "Safe and Drug Free [schools|workplaces|communities] or local chapters of the TOUGHLOVE hategroup?

But there's a difference. I think minorities and other scapegoats live in our society w/ a completely different world view than us lucky WASPie SOB's. I think they hang together as families, neighborhoods and such to a FAR greater degree than those of us who don't get pulled over and falsely accused every stinkin' week. As a result, I think they're generally a whole lot more skeptical of ANY stranger trying to sell them on the idea that they (the altruistic strangers) know more about their own kid than they do themselves.

I only remember one black kid in Straight, Sarasota. Her name was Wendy and she came from the Ft. Lauderdale area. I always wondered if my mom's friend, Becky, had anything to do with that referral. Anyway, she wasn't there long at all, maybe a week or two. I remember seeing her family just once at open meeting then Wendy blinked out of the Straight, Inc. reality w/o notice. (for the uninitiated, this was 'normal'. If someone split, got pulled or terminated or got transferred to another facility, unless staff made some announcement, no one knew anything. And it was against the rules to say their name or even refer indirectly to them ever having been there.) Anyway, I got the sense that one open meeting was just about enough to tip these nice folks off that something was extremely Not Right® about the place. But I've always wondered what happened to Wendy and if my mom had anything to do w/ that.

Just out of curiosity, WTH does Royal Water mean, anyway????

11. *Royal Water* says:

15 Feb 2006 at 09:03 pm | #

Royal Water = 3 parts Hydrochloric Acid (HCL) and one part Nitric Acid (HNO₃)

Back in the way old days, like when they discovered it dissolved darn near all metals including GOLD, they named it Aqua Regia, or Royal Water.

The racial imbalance at khk and other straight, inc. spinoffs could indicate that they may also be in violation of discrimination laws. If they "know better" why are they special and allowed to discriminate? They are required not to discriminate, but, it appears that they do anyway. Is this because their predecessor was founded by a Sembler? What gives? When the judge court orders a kid to khk, for instance, who gets the option of jail or treatment? If treatment, then how do they decide where? It looks rather biased to me.

12. *Royal Water* says:

16 Feb 2006 at 12:26 pm | #

OK Folks, here's some excerpts of KHK's "Service Plan". Feel free to ask questions if you need clarifications, etc... This is one example how they make "outsiders" think they are experts at this treatment. If you didn't know any better, you'd think it was a great program.

KHK's

"SERVICE PLAN:

At Kids Helping Kids, we believe the most accurate and functional definition of chemical dependency describes alcohol and drug dependency as a disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. We further believe that, with adolescents, chemical abuse is characterized by developmental arrest or deterioration which may be viewed in stages with characteristic physical, psychological, and social symptoms."

"As a result of chemical abuse, the adolescent may experience inadequacies of personality, impairment of cognitive functioning, diminished motivation, interpersonal and social conflicts, emotional blocking and regression, and casual disregard for behavioral consequences."

"Ultimately, the individual must take responsibility for his/her own recovery and future drug-free life style."

"In addition to individual goals, on first phase, clients begin to learn the basic disease process and develop knowledge of how drugs have affected their lives, begin the rehabilitation process by complying with the program rules and responsibilities and develop basic communication skills. Before the clients go on to Phase II, they are expected to know how to apply the basics, to have experienced catharsis of negative feelings, to feel better and have a "shine," to have developed an awareness of the relationship between their bad feelings and their drug use, and have developed a

commitment to stay straight. Phase I is highly structured. Client move through Phase I on their own schedule but it typically takes 70 to 90 days. This structure over time in a drug free environment is critical for clients to develop a commitment to recovery."

"First Phasers are reinforced for progress made during the week by contact with their parents. If they are working towards achieving their goals, clients are granted permission to talk to their parents after Open Meeting. The eighth and ninth of the twelve steps of AA are; (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. During talk after Open Meeting, clients begin the amends process."

"When criteria have been met, clients move to Phase II and are called "Oldcomers." At this point, they move back home and begin restoring thier family relationships. They also reinforce what they have learned by teaching another client, their newcomer. Besides continuing to identify and work on individual goals, second phasers demonstrate increased use of and reliance on the basics, continue to develop insight into how drugs have affected their lives, progress in the rehabilitative process, improve communication skills, give and receive care with family members, serve as model for newcomers and address individual family issues in individual family therapy. Second Phasers are not only responsible for themselves but for taking care of their newcomers. If they behave irresponsibly, they are held accountable. This holds true throughout the remainder of the program. Clients address individual problems in group and individual therapy. They also meet educational goals by working with the teacher five hours/week."

"On fourth phase clients regain privileges such as music, television, and telephone, and get days off from the program. They continue to increase self-awareness and add the focus of developing productive peer relationships and using their leisure time wisely. Fourth phasers are expected to show signs that they are internalizing the program and are able to consistently use their new skills. During the Friday Night educational groups, parents and clients begin planning for aftercare by meeting with other 4th phase parents and clients to discuss high risk situations and relapse planning."

"Progress tends not to be linear, but erratic. At any time during treatment, if clients are found to be slipping back into old, unproductive ways of coping, they may be placed back on a lower phase to give them a better opportunity to readdress earlier issues."

13. *Royal Water* says:

16 Feb 2006 at 12:31 pm | #

Inside the CULT, more details emerge as scrutiny blossoms. For example:

"The Friday Night Open Meetings are important to the KHK treatment program. The meetings are emotional for many of the parents, and sometimes for the clients. The format may be hard to understand or to accept initially. However, years of experience have proven that the format is effective when parents follow the guidelines. As parents begin to use the information from the Parent

Education sessions and become more informed about the disease of addiction, they also become more comfortable with the open meeting format.”

Parents of first phasers tell of a time from their child’s drug using past.
Parents of upper-phasers can comment on issues their phaser is facing, and comment on their progress.

Don’t say the name of any person outside the program, especially old friends.
Don’t mention pets of convey messages from people who are not at the meeting (though you can tell why a parent is not present.)

Speaking Guidelines:

1. Don’t preach. Preaching did not work before. It is not more effective because your child is forced to listen to you. You have very little interaction with your child during all of first phase. Don’t waste it on ineffective communications.

2. Don’t beg, Recovery (this program) is not about pleasing you. It is not about going home to the family. It is about reclaiming their own lives. Eventually, and for the rest of their lives, they have to choose sobriety for themselves. The program will attempt to rebuild the family relationship and reestablish self-pride to use as tools to hold on to sobriety- but they have to choose to work the program first.

Remember that our children have all abandoned self-love, and family-love to their addiction. Instead of using their family’s love as a tool to face the world, it has become a burden to escape so they can use. They had to put distance between themselves and the people that loved them so they had the freedom and privacy to use. They have become immune to the pain of their family.

When you beg, you enter into the roller-coaster of codependency- “I’m well if you are well; I’m not when you are not.” If your message is “I hear you are having a bad week, so I’ve been sad and I’ve had a bad week too” you are telling your child that you are so involved in their disease that you are not taking care of yourself. You are also putting them in a controlling situation. They control your mood and your wellness. You will learn in the parent education seminars that you, the parent, need to reclaim control of your own life, of your own well-being, and of your own home. Not only is it not good for you when your child controls you, unconsciously he know it is not good for him either.

3. Don’t read, not even from progress reports, and don’t comment on them.
Time spent on this will keep you from spending time on your past, and will again put your child in an

inappropriately powerful situation.

4. While some encouragement or reminders of past good times is ok, it's important to focus on bad "times from your past." These reminders serve several important functions.

The remind your child that her life -and yours- was out of control. When your child maintains in group that she does not have a problem, you have publicly told about the chaos that controlled her and you. They will use thes "times from her past" to encourage her to accept responsibility for her actions, and to accept the severity of her addiction.

They tell your child of the effect that her actions had on you and on those around you. It is very likely that she barely realized it at the time. For sure, her addiction prevented her from caring.

It allows you to express all the negative feelings that built up about her drug use. Before comes home, the slate is wiped clean. You have said to her all that she needs to hear from you, and are ready to put everything behind you both. For the same reason, your child spends her 15 minute "talks" making amends to you. Before you can rebuild family relationships, honesty has to be re-established between you - from both sides. There need to be no hidden resentments or hidden sins. It is important that you do not pretend that all is well between you, that there is no hidden anger. She will know that the feelings are there.

Stating your feelings in a public forum demonstrates to your child that you can express very negative feelings without screaming and yelling. It is important that she see you demonstrate increased self-control and self-respect.

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Location: _____

URL:

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