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The Cincinnati Beacon

An Inside Perspective on KHK: Interview with a Former Client and Employee
Tuesday, March 14, 2006



Posted by [The Dean of Cincinnati](#)

As part of our continuing coverage on Kids Helping Kids (KHK), The Cincinnati Beacon is proud to bring some new perspectives to bear on our investigation. In this piece, you will find an interview with an individual (speaking under the condition of anonymity) who was a client at KHK before becoming an employee.



The Dean: Is it true that, during your time at KHK, that the organization prohibited unsupervised contact with parents during the first phase? If so, why?

KHK Source: KHK did, and still does prohibit unsupervised contact between first phase clients and their parents. Pathway Family Center (PFC) has more liberal rules governing contact, but I am almost certain it is still supervised. The reason for this is because pre-compliant clients are expected to manipulate their parents to remove them from treatment. It is also believed that clients need to focus on themselves in the initial phase of treatment and work through family issues on later phases. The motivation, at least at KHK, has never been to prevent parents from learning what really happens during treatment. First phase parents have plenty of contact with parents taking household and thus get a good idea of what happens. That said, the rules governing first phase client interactions is extremely restrictive, and in my opinion unhealthy. I was unsuccessful in encouraging change in this policy while an employee, but it is my understanding that PFC will liberalize this policy, though I am not sure how much.

The Dean: If abuse were to occur inside the facility, what access did the clients have to telephones or other communication devices? Can kids make unsupervised calls to parents to report abuse? If not, why

not? What structures are available for reporting abuse?

KHK Source: There is an internal grievance policy to report abuse that can theoretically lead to contact with state agencies, but only if clinical staff or the executive director are unable to resolve the grievance. The clients have no access to communication with the outside on first phase. While I have never seen abuse during my time at KHK and am certain it would not be overlooked, the clients must rely wholly on the staff's judgement and cannot therefore effectively report abuse if it were to be disregarded by staff. Prior to pressure put on KHK by ODADAS, restraint and seclusion were commonplace, though much more-so around the time I was a client. Clients were never arbitrarily restrained or secluded in my time there, but these practices were certainly overused to the detriment of some clients, and were almost never professionally supervised. It is safe, however, to say physical abuse never, to my knowledge, took place in the common understanding of the term. In the past two years restraint and seclusion have almost entirely been eliminated, solely because of outside pressure on KHK.

The Dean: During your time, what method did you use to determine whether a kid had a chronic drug problem, or merely a few experiences with curious experimentation?

KHK Source: For many years the primary method of determining a client's appropriateness for treatment was based solely on a symptom questionnaire filled out by parents. Clients could be, and were, released if they did not prove to have a significant using history. They were, however, regarded with great suspicion and it was an uphill battle once admitted. I have also seen a handful of clients retained who did not, in my opinion, have the appropriate history, perhaps out of parental pressure on KHK, the assumption that no one would be admitted if they did not need to be, or a reluctance to relinquish a client. I never saw a client retained who blatantly did not need to be, but the impulse of the clinical staff was clearly to justify retention rather than release a client. The majority of clients at KHK would be considered by any standard serious drug addicts with demonstrable life consequences. While it is very unlikely that a client would stay in treatment with no real history of abuse and its consequences, I believe it is difficult to weed out the individuals who had serious pasts but would be able to change without such drastic measures.

The Dean: Did KHK administer drug tests before admitting kids into the drug treatment program?

KHK Source: KHK did not administer drug tests prior to admission for the majority of my time there, but has been doing so at least for the last six months. Drug testing is sporadic while in treatment to catch transgressors.

The Dean: What do you think about people who have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, allegedly due to their time at KHK, or its predecessor Straight, Inc?

KHK Source: It is hard for me to imagine a client at KHK with anything approaching a standard treatment experience to have lasting psychological trauma. For many years, though, KHK was very persistent in retaining non-compliant clients beyond any reasonable expectation of success. I believe the rare examples of the clients who graduated after lengthy resistance to treatment motivated this clearly unsound persistence, and any outside professional would be able to recognize that a different course of treatment was needed. KHK has become much more quick to relinquish clients who are not successful, but there is still a shocking absence of the involvement of professional psychologists in the day-to-day treatment of clients at KHK. The clinical staff discuss clients with peer staff during biweekly meetings, but at KHK they very rarely meet with individual clients and almost never participate in the group sessions that dominate the clients' day. Professional involvement has been targeted as a priority, but the clinical staff have yet to become meaningfully engaged in the treatment of clients. PFC seems to be

significantly different from KHK in this regard, and will theoretically increase professional involvement as they take control of operations at KHK. Unfortunately the clinicians at KHK have resisted these changes thus far, and there is currently no effective management at KHK to implement the changes.

The Dean: If KHK really does a good job helping kids get past addiction, wouldn't that mean there were some long term statistics to demonstrate this effectiveness on a 5, 10, or even a 20 year scale? Have you ever seen such longitudinal studies?

KHK Source: KHK does have outcome studies conducted by an outside organization demonstrating success rates going back at least ten years, but the questions are written in such a way that the astronomically high success rate is extremely misleading. They boast something like 70% full-abstinence after two years (I may have this a little wrong, but it is close), but even taking the most charitable view this is a ridiculous claim. That said, from my experience KHK does seem to be much more effective than other available treatment for adolescents, but I would guess a realistic success rate is closer to 10%. I have experienced what can be seen as miraculous results for some individuals, including myself.

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1. *Royal Water* says:

14 Mar 2006 at 01:23 pm | #

Dear KHK Source,

First of all I thank you for speaking to the Dean. I have found that it takes an above average amount of courage for former client's/staff to speak out about KHK and its recently spotlighted

problems. I have a couple questions. When you said "as they take control of operations at KHK", does this mean that PFC is taking over KHK? It has been suggested that these two entities are connected through some sort of business relationship, though rather informal and certainly not "officially" as would be determined by corporate mergers, etc... Please elaborate as best you can on this question. Thank you.

What comprises an "assessment"? Prior to the ISAC Corporation complaint filed in April of 2005, KHK was charging \$1000 for this service. Certain indications are that now KHK charges only \$200. Why the drop?

I will surely have more questions and comments to offer, however time is limited for me at this moment.

Again, thank you for talking "outside the program". I hope to hear more from you soon.

RW

2. *The Dean of Cincinnati* says:

14 Mar 2006 at 01:50 pm | #

I can't believe that, apparently, KHK has only been giving its clients drug tests prior to admission for the past six months. I mean, if this is for people who are supposedly on drugs, shouldn't the first thing you do be to document whether the client is actually using drugs??

3. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

14 Mar 2006 at 02:31 pm | #

Good point Dean....this confirms how it was possible that so many survivors were falsely accused of being 'druggies' and were therefore put through hell for no reason for well over 20 years!

I have a couple questions for the KHK source: 1) When is this drug testing conducted? On a client's intake? During the child's program? or Both? I ask because the KHK source seems to indicate that drug testing is merely done while in the program, but not on intake. Is my interpretation correct? 2) What type of drug testing is done?

I wonder how on earth these drug tests distinguish between the one time user, the very occasional user, neither of which amounts to addiction, versus those kids who are chronic users who are actually addicted to drugs? How is this critical distinction made? If I read the response of the KHK source correctly, KHK's drug testing (I assume is a urine screen) along with its 'assessment' method is still a seriously flawed and an inadequate method to distinguish between a one time user/experiementer and the true addict. A one time user/experiementer does need intense KHK treatment, the true addict, as I have previously suggested, might need treatment, but not in KHK. KHK's inadequate assesment method along with its 'drug screening' make it very possible that children who try drugs one time, or a few times, could easily end up in KHK, which to me is outrageous and intolerable!

4. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

14 Mar 2006 at 02:34 pm | #

To clarify my 3rd paragraph in my previous post, my comments are based on the assumption that

drug testing is conducted on intake as well. Sorry if that wasn't clear from my last post.

5. *Antigen* says:

14 Mar 2006 at 03:32 pm | #

Thanks, KHK source for coming forward. Sounds to me as if you're a young person who's been put through some mind bending, just like the rest of us and now you're starting to really think critically about it all.

I have one thing to add to this conversation at this time.

Here is a raw dump of some interesting correspondence and questionnaires between ISAC, ODADAS and a recent client family.

<http://fornits.com/anonanon/docs/khk/ISAC-ODADAS/>

I've only just started tearing into this, trying to organize it. Here's the ISAC description of what all is there. <http://fornits.com/anonanon/docs/khk/ISAC-ODADAS/DocDescription.htm>

I also have a bunch of police reports. I probably will get threats and demands to take this stuff down. I'll let you know how that goes. Meanwhile, I think this sort of background information can add depth to the discussion.

6. *Influence Peddler* says:

14 Mar 2006 at 07:23 pm | #

Thanks for the links Antigen. My question is: Is Pathway Family Center(PFC) just another morph by the same criminals that have been doing this for years. Straight through a series of steps is today Kids Helping Kids(KHK) These people are punishing our children and denying them adolescent exploration. We rarely know where the line is until after we've crossed it. This is being disciplined out of them leaving an automaton that is nearly an empty shell. Devoid of feelings that define our behavior and give us **personality**. What these children experience is torture, brought to you by the same people that brought us Abu Girab sp. and GITMO. The same people conducting wiretaps on citizens and misleading the press into ineptitude. Time and again we get hype instead of news. Opinion instead of facts, and lies to replace the truth.

7. *Royal Water* says:

14 Mar 2006 at 08:42 pm | #

Dear Influence Peddler,

Included in those documents submitted by ISAC Corporation to ODADAS in its 2005 KHK Re-Classification Request are a couple of letters and a memo that clearly state PFC's intentions to maintain the program they operate according to STRAIGHT, INC. methods. The memo has "Formerly STRAIGHT, INC." in parentheses. The initial incorporators and board members of PFC included former executive staff and board members of the Detroit chapter of STRAIGHT, INC. The host homes are really unlicensed foster homes. What is worse is that the parents of first phase clients are not told where their kids are staying and are not allowed contact with them until "open meeting" night, and even then, only if the client has been awarded the "privilege" of doing so.

In its efforts to get around this requirement of programs offering foster care, PFC organized a "Host Home Association". PFC claimed it was a separate entity altogether. Here is an excerpt of that letter titled "HOST HOME ASSOCIATION NEW PARENT INFORMATION AND HOST HOME WAIVER"... "The Host Home Association is organized, operates as a separate legal entity and is not affiliated with Pathway Family Center. As such, all activities after program hours and off-premises of Pathway Family Center are not the responsibility of Pathway Family Center."

A search of corporate records in Michigan revealed NO SUCH entity exists. They even had a lawyer draw up some legalese laden statement that to untrained eyes would seem to make sense. There is no way that a kid being placed in PFC will be sent to a host home without the direction of a PFC staff member. Any other excuse or plan simply is not valid.

At this time, KHK has been sent, by ODJFS, an application to acquire a license that would allow them to refer clients to foster homes. Obviously, these foster homes would be required to also be licensed. Given the policies, procedures and overall nature of KHK host homes, this will undoubtedly prove to be a difficult venture.

I hope this sheds some light on this issue.

RW

8. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

14 Mar 2006 at 09:01 pm | #

TO KHK Source - I appreciate your candor as you answered questions about KHK and am grateful that you chose to step forward. With that in mind, I have many things to say in response to your answers, some of which you may or may not agree with. However, even though I respect your willingness to disclose information, my strong opinions and vehement opposition to KHK does show. So, please to not misinterpret any of my remarks as an attack on you, for that is not my intention at all. I look forward to reading more of your input regarding the KHK issue.

First, I have numerous comments regarding your statements about the prohibitions against unsupervised parent child contact while on first phase. Specifically, I firmly believe that the notion that non-compliant kids will manipulate parents to remove them from the program is in large part a myth. There are perfectly valid reasons that a child may ask a parent to remove him/her from the program. For example, a child may correctly recognize the fact that he/she does not need treatment, especially when a client has either never used drugs, or when a child had not progressed further than experimentation. Therefore, requests to be pulled may be entirely legitimate, a far cry from manipulation. In addition, the child may recognize the fact that KHK is an inherently abusive and/or traumatic environment. Again, if a child asks a parent to withdraw him/her under these circumstances, this is not manipulation. That said, even if a child IS merely being manipulative because he/she just doesn't want to be in KHK, how does this justify cutting off unsupervised parental contact with the child? Aren't parents the ones who should be determining whether or not their child is really being manipulative or whether the child has valid complaints? A parent is in a much better position to know their child than a stranger! In essence I am saying that KHK has no business making a broad determination that all children in KHK are trying to manipulate their way out of KHK. Nor does KHK have any right to prevent parents from hearing a child's complaints, regardless of the validity of such complaints, because only parents have the right to decide if the child belongs in KHK.

I also believe that the idea that a child needs to be cut off from family and the outside world in order to focus on themselves in the initial phase of treatment is entirely false and completely untrue. In fact, I would argue that the opposite is true, that children need the support and interaction with family more than ever! Furthermore, I have serious doubts that there is any empirical research that supports the proposition that completely cutting off a child from his family and the outside world is even remotely healthy.

You also stated that "The motivation, at least at KHK, has never been to prevent parents from learning what really happens during treatment." I must respectfully disagree. In my opinion, I firmly believe that KHK deliberately hides information from parents: I believe many if not all parents have NO CLUE as to the daily routine in KHK, and have no idea about certain disciplinary tactics. For example, while in Straight, my dad was never told by staff what the daily routine consisted of, he never knew that we motivated, had no idea that children were verbally abused (aka confrontation), was shocked to hear how children were physically abused (IE. children restraining other children), and was never informed the extent to which we were supervised in the bathrooms. (For the record, KHK is identical in almost every respect to the now defunct Straight program which operated out of the same building where KHK currently operates). Even if KHK does not deliberately hide information from parents, the structure of the program makes it impossible for anyone, including parents, to know what goes on inside group, inside intake rooms, what occurs in other host homes, etc. This structural defect originates with KHK's twisted confidentiality policy, NO TBB. If a child would even start to speak about something inappropriate that happened in group that day, either a newcomer, a host brother/sister, or the parent will stop the child from disclosing those facts by saying NO TBB!!!!

In another related point, you mentioned "first phase parents have plenty of contact with parents taking household and thus get a good idea of what happens." Again, I wholeheartedly disagree for the same reason I just discussed, the overly restrictive and unethical KHK confidentiality policy. In addition, it is impossible for parents to have plenty of contact with parents taking household (where their child is staying) because KHK prohibits parents from even knowing who their child's host family is!

Despite all my disagreeable commentary, I applaud your recognition of the fact that "the rules governing first phase client interactions is extremely restrictive, and in my opinion unhealthy." I agree that the undue restrictions place on 1st phasers is not only unhealthy, but I would add that those restrictions are also emotionally and psychologically damaging. In addition, I would go a step further and say that the same is true for all phases in the program: the restrictions on upper phases, even though a bit more relaxed than 1st, are extreme, unreasonable, and unhealthy as well.

9. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

14 Mar 2006 at 09:49 pm | #

"A one time user/experiementer does need intense KHK treatment, the true addict, as I have previously suggested, might need treatment, but not in KHK."

That should read: A one time user/experiementer does NOT need intense KHK treatment.....oops, sorry about that very glaring typo! ☹️ 😊

10. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

15 Mar 2006 at 12:19 am | #

To KHK Source:

Thank you for confirming that there is virtually no professional psychological treatment of and interaction with KHK clients. Although I was already painfully aware of this unethical, irresponsible, and shocking practice, I really appreciate confirmation of that fact from a more recent insider. Although I (and many others) have explained at great length how KHK does nothing more than employ a few professional 'props' (executive staff) to make the program look good to outsiders and to parents, and even though I (and other people) have revealed that KHK is, in reality, run by untrained, unqualified teenagers providing 'treatment' to other teenagers, my 'insider' experience occurred about 20 years ago in KHK's predecessor Straight, Inc.

It saddens and angers me more than I can convey that in over 20 years nothing has changed and that KHK has carried on Straight's ill-conceived treatment model to the letter. In my opinion, while some people may believe that 'positive peer pressure' is an acceptable treatment model, I do not support it at all. Although I do not know your motives for becoming a staff member, I venture to guess that you had noble reasons for doing so, probably to help other kids. There is nothing wrong with that. However, I believe that professionals with extensive educational backgrounds in psychology or other appropriate fields should render treatment. KHK does nothing more than reinforce its own ideology when it 'trains' its peer staff. This is no substitute for professional qualifications and experience. However, KHK's outrageous notion of staff training is not your fault. I believe that you were following your conscious in an effort to reach out to others.

Again, I really hope to see more commentary from you in the future. I also hope that you are willing to discuss/debate the issues with Straight and KHK survivors, the public, etc.

11. *Royal Water* says:

15 Mar 2006 at 02:50 am | #

Where's the public outcry? Why did WKRC fumble the ball? Hmmm... Can we call the show on the 31st from the McKinley Memorial? That would be cool.

RW

12. *Lene* says:

15 Mar 2006 at 03:06 am | #

CAROLYN J. GIVENS, DIRECTOR
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL
AND DRUG ADDICTION SERVICES
280 North High Street, 12th Floor,
Columbus, OH 43215-2550
Phone: (614) 466-3445
Fax: (614) 752-8645
E-Mail: general@ada.state.oh.us
Web Site: <http://www.odadas.state.oh.us/>

Dear Ms. Givens,

It has come to the attention of many people in the Greater Cincinnati area that questionable practices regarding treatment of youth by an organization in Milford, Ohio. Your organization was

asked by ISAC Corporation in 2005 for a KHK re-classification request. The resulting investigation that was conducted appears to be inadequate. According to information I have read Staff and Principles of KHK were interviewed. In addition two parents and one client were interviewed. With allegations of physical and emotional child abuse being raised I ask that you reopen this action and visit the Cincinnati Beacon online to read what is being said about your agency and this organization.

It was recently revealed that this group is once again changing their name to escape public scrutiny. In the beginning they were Straight, Inc. Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia carries the following comments:

"Straight, Incorporated

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Straight, Incorporated was a widespread adolescent drug treatment center that operated for 17 years in the US. This program utilized such techniques as starvation, sleep deprivation, extreme emotional abuse, isolation, and other types of physical abuse in order to completely break down the adolescents' personality so that they could be rebuilt according to program dogma. Many of the facilities closed due to allegations of child abuse, although at times the facilities would simply change names, and were still otherwise the same program.

Much of the abuse went on because of three factors:

1. The children were allowed absolutely no contact with their parents (or anyone outside of the program) until the staff was sure that the child had begun to buy into the program dogma, a process that could take months, and
2. The parents themselves were told during this beginning process repeatedly that the child would end up dead if they withdrew them from the program, and
3. The parents were told additionally that if the child complained or wanted to be taken out, it is simply because they wanted to return to using drugs.

There have been numerous reports of Straight keeping adolescents who showed no signs of addiction and had no history of drug use, yet insisting that the child would end up dead if withdrawn. The last Straight, Inc. center closed in 1991, although several of its spin-offs are still in operation, surrounded by controversy."

Since Straight, Inc. closed in 1991 they have been TRI-STATE DRUG REHABILITATION AND COUNSELING PROGRAM, INC., a Kentucky Corporation, and operated in Milford, Ohio as Kids Helping Kids. (KHK) Now they are once again changing their identity to Pathway Family Center.(PFC) This practice is questionable at best and fraudulent at worst.

According to your mission statement:

Mission

The mission of the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) is to provide statewide leadership for alcohol and other drug addiction prevention and treatment services for the **health, safety and productivity** of all Ohioans.

I'm writing to give you a heads up and let you know that this is now a public discussion and probably will not go away. To avoid embarrassment of yourself, your department, and the state government during an election year it might be a good idea to visit our website at "cincinnatiabeacon" to catch up on posted comments and reply if you have any updates that might be helpful to our readers.

13. *The Dean of Cincinnati* says:

16 Mar 2006 at 07:27 am | #

The comment was sent to me from "KHK Source":

I do not know what comprises an assessment specifically. KHK offered a five day admission to interested parents that cost \$1000 for a brief time. Perhaps they have abandoned this and only do assessments without a trial admission.

Drug testing, all clients are tested prior to admission at this point. I do not know how long this has been the practice, but my best guess is six months. A drug test has always taken second place to a symptoms based assessment, however, and probably still does. During the assessment the clinical staff meet with the parents and the client and ask them questions about their life, consequences, family, and drug using history. I do not, however, have any intimate knowledge of the process. I do know that KHK does not admit or retain clients that they know do not need treatment, but desperation for clients has led to the admission of some individuals with questionable histories or circumstances outside of their use history that would not make them appropriate for the treatment model. Urine testing is used before a client's intake and sporadically (perhaps every six months) during treatment.

Responding to a remark in comment six, KHK and PFC were probably just like Straight in the early years of their operation, but their practices have evolved significantly based on what I have learned from Straight survivors. They do appear to have retained most aspects of the Straight model, but with measurably reduced intensity.

Responding to remarks in comment eight. The no talking behind backs policy (TBB) is founded in a desire to provide an environment in which clients can discuss issues without fear of being made fun of or talked about. I do believe that the TBB policy has undesirable effects and limits communication in unhelpful ways, including parents being unable to hear what happens from an unfiltered client's perspective except on rare occasions. There is a fair amount of spill-over at household, however, and I think the parents have a good idea of what generally happens at KHK, even if this was not the case at Straight. The program is not nearly as secretive, at least now, for participants as it seems to outsiders. Regardless, I think defects in the TBB policy are a valid topic of discussion and criticism.

Again, responding to comment 8, I neglected to discuss the restrictions placed on upper phasers. I am sure many of these restrictions are unhelpful or unhealthy, and most appear to be vestiges of Straight. I think greater liberalization in this area would also be beneficial.

Responding to comment 10, I think there are numerous problems with the amateur nature of KHK, but the model also has its benefits. The peer staff generally do a magnificent job working with the clients, and have what can be considered extensive on-the-job training. This feature is the defining characteristic of KHK and one of its greatest strengths in reaching adolescents who may not respond to other methods. In my opinion the best course of action is to professionally supervise the program at all times and introduce professional psychological care where it has been absent. KHK has a long distance to go in this area. It is my hope that PFC is able to professionalize KHK while preserving the peer based aspect of this treatment model.

14. *Royal Water* says:

16 Mar 2006 at 11:47 am | #

Desperation for clients? I believe that is true. About 3 weeks ago, we got wind of a story by a kid

who had been in the program for over 6 months and when they went home they called a friend. Come to find out, the parents got the phone bill and walla, staff was notified and the client was started over. The client got sucked back into the calling out for help to the outside world black hole. The source of this story was the friend that the client called. It was discussed that this client didn't do drugs, but was somewhat rebellious and had an abusive parent. KHK will accept non-users too. I have no doubts about that. Furthermore, I would go out on the limb here and say that they prefer NOT to treat the hardest users, especially heroin addicts, due to the fact that this kind of treatment would most likely lead to their early deaths. Out of the kettle and into the fire, so to speak. Of all of the police reports I've seen, there's about 12 or 13 where kids there have attempted suicide or they have been seriously considering it. It is a tragedy that this treatment is for kids. It's not for anyone, unless they like being abused and think they deserve it somehow. It is an inherently fallable way to punish kids that may or may not have done drugs. OH IT'S OK TO ABUSE THEM, THEY'RE A BUNCH OF DOPEHEADS. See? One of my favorite Penny Walker statements is the one where she's talking to Hagit about abuse and said "We don't do that anymore". Anymore!!!? Why in the first place? Surely nobody was charged with child abuse, but, it would appear that they are still guilty of it. Sure, you might find a few here and there who are still walking around in "soberland" since day one, but, they are probably not acting like normal people. I have examples that I can elaborate on later.

The peer staff thing, I will leave to others, as this is quite possibly one of the most controversial aspects of this program. Please, whoever you are, that was the "defining characteristic" of STRAIGHT, INC.

Explain:

Penny Walker, in 2004, was paid \$79,000 per year salary there and nobody else got paid more than \$50,000. BUT BUT BUT... The 990 states that the program costs are nearly \$750,000. Plus, the website says KHK needs \$400,000 from donations... the total revenue appears to be more than \$1million. Also, there's a sheet somewhere for PFC that has monthly expenses of \$30,000. They generate a similar to KHK income structure. "Peer staff" might get minimum wage. I'm sure that 5th phasers aren't paid to counsel. My goodness... You gotta be kiddin me. Just wait until the financial report becomes available.

What does KHK Source say about kids missing school due to head games instilled by program rules?

RW

15. *Antigen* says:

16 Mar 2006 at 12:32 pm | #

Source: The no talking behind backs policy (TBB) is founded in a desire to provide an environment in which clients can discuss issues without fear of being made fun of or talked about.

You can't seriously believe this, can you? Please see page 3 of the ISAC questionnaire filled out by Ed Norton located here:

<http://fornits.com/anonanon/docs/khk/ISAC-ODADAS/isacquestionnaire4.jpg>

He seems to indicate that this warped theory of therapy persists to this day. I'm guessing that you just haven't ever had real therapy and so you think this is it. It's not. How can you have client therapist confidentiality when the clients are forced to relate the intimate details of their thoughts and lives in front of the whole group of other kids?

I'd like to ask you about something that I witnessed personally when we were out there demonstrating last month. A couple of boys came out to the road with their back packs. We assumed they were 3rd - 5th phasers waiting for the school bus after dropping off their newcomers. They didn't speak to us, which would seem odd if you didn't know the back story. You would expect them to say something, right? Like "hello, what are you doing here" or something, right? But they didn't. They stood on the other side of the driveway, looked at us and spoke quietly to one another. One of my friends hollered over at them "I hope you boys have a good day in school!" One of them said "You too!"

But this seemed to make them even more nervous. They conferred briefly then picked up their back packs and ran back up the driveway to the building. Just a few minutes later, the school bus came, waited a few seconds then left without them.

Now, what do you make of that? You mention unhealthy restrictions on higher phasers. I would call that the understatement of the year. I would assume that they probably got scared and went back to report themselves for possibly talking to splits, pulls and screw ups. When I was involved, that would mean basically anyone outside the program.

That may also shed some light on the 'symptom' based intake assessment. Denial is the first symptom, therefore anyone who doesn't want to be in the program (any sane, honest person) is a druggie in need of treatment, or a pre-druggie, or showing a druggie attitude that needs to be nipped in the bud.

Is it still pretty much like that?

16. *Lene* says:

16 Mar 2006 at 01:12 pm | #

The best approach is to close this facility and jail the schysters that run it. Without professional supervision these facilities become prison camps like GITMO. Nobody has representation or any procedure to have complaints heard. Kids are our future and God help us if this is what it looks like. We as a society deserve better.

17. *Antigen* says:

16 Mar 2006 at 01:33 pm | #

Well what do you mean by 'professional supervision'? Cause, technically, they have professional supervision. They're licensed by ODADAS. The trouble is that ODADAS seems to be stacked w/ people who have been drinking the TOUGHLOVE hategroup kool aid and who refuse to take seriously any complaint about their friends there in Milford. Like our source here, they sincerely believe that brow beating and intense indoctrination are, not only OK, but the only appropriate way to "treat" kids who reject their ideals and perceptions.

This is why ISAC will be demonstrating in Columbus at the end of this month. They've been polite, professional and patient over the past year. They've written letters, filled out formal

complaint forms, responded to ODADAS requests and requirements for additional information. ODADAS simply refuses to investigate or to hold KHK to any normal standards.

So now I take it that Pathway Family Center will be taking over operations. Big surprise there (NOT!) So now they'll claim that any current complaints against PFC are not valid because, miraculously, these same staff and clients, rules and policies are now squeaky clean by virtue of a little paper shuffling.

While I agree that KHK needs to be shut down, I'm giving you fair warning that that won't solve the problem. KHK is only one little tiny operation which is part of a much larger cult. Their influence extends to and beyond your governor's office. For a little more insight into that, please see Dan Forbes investigative report, The Governor's Sub-rosa Plot to Subvert an Election in Ohio Note especially pages 13, 27, 29, 30, 31 and 34 of the full investigative report (pdf format, linked from summary report).

18. *Antigen* says:

16 Mar 2006 at 02:04 pm | #

Just noticed this: <http://fornits.com/anonanon/Forbes/ohio/playbook.pdf> ODADAS is actually named as a "partner" in this conspiracy.

19. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

17 Mar 2006 at 11:43 am | #

To KHK Source:

Thanks for your responses the other day. Although you made it clear that there was an impending change at KHK regarding PFC, for some reason it escaped me that this change had already taken place as of Monday March 13.

"Pathway Family Center Expands.

Effective Monday, March 13, 2006, Pathway Family Center, serving the greater Indianapolis and Detroit areas, has acquired Kids Helping Kids, a Cincinnati Ohio based adolescent substance abuse treatment program. We believe that the combined resources of our two organizations will have an immediate and direct benefit for the communities we serve. This partnership increases our network of clinical experts who are knowledgeable in compassionate and progressive services for families. Thank you for your confidence and trust in working with Pathway Family Center."

<http://www.pathwayfamilycenter.org/>

You have mentioned that KHK seems to be resisting suggested changes by PFC. So, to your knowledge, will anything change at KHK as it operates under its new name PFC? I take it the structure of the program will remain the same? Will peer staff still be used to lead all group sessions? Will confrontation still be used in group? Will anything change with the host homes? Will any part of the assessment/intake process change? Will drug testing remain a mere formality and still take a back seat to the traditional Straight model assessment procedure? Will the phase structure and restrictive rules remain the same? Will 1st phase clients still be forbidden to have unsupervised contact with their parents? Will the TBB policy remain in effect? Will clients still be supervised in bathrooms? Will restraints still be used? If there is anything you can think of that I

have not mentioned, please elaborate on that as well. Thanks again.

20. *Royal Water* says:

17 Mar 2006 at 12:02 pm | #

Ah yes, the ??? never cease, LOL... I would like to know how Tri-State Drug Rehabilitation and Counseling Program Inc (TSDRCP) fits into this picture. I find it hard to believe that 2 non-profits would share royalties off of some fictitiously named drug treatment program in a former STRAIGHT, INC. warehouse. This is ridiculous. Why change the name? How is PFC so much better? Was PFC treating clients in IN before they were licensed? How about MI? How about KHK? It wouldn't be the first case of this happening. Someone in high places wants this program open REGARDLESS of abuse. They stop at nothing to get what they want... \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ and lots of it.

RW

21. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

17 Mar 2006 at 02:45 pm | #

In light of the debate regarding KHK's sorry excuse for intake 'assessment'I though this was extremely alarming!

<http://www.pathwayfamilycenter.org/WarningSignals.html>

"Open Minds See the Signs

If you answer yes to any of the questions below, your child may be at risk of becoming harmfully involved in drugs and alcohol, if they are not already actively using. For more information on teenage substance abuse and treatment, please contact Pathway Family Center at 248.443.0105 in Michigan or 317.585.6953 in Indiana.

Is Your Child...

Frequently tardy or truant from school?

Losing motivation, energy, and self-discipline?

Losing interest in activities and hobbies?

Increasingly forgetful - short or long term?

Having trouble paying attention and concentrating?

Expressing anger, hostility or irritability?

Sullen with uncaring attitudes and behavior?

Argumentative with you and/or siblings?

Unable to explain extra money or "new" items they have?

Experiencing unusual mood swings?

Dropping old friends and secretive about new ones?

Unhealthy in appearance, e.g. bloodshot eyes?

Inattentive about personal grooming?

In trouble with the law, in or out of school?

Eating much more or much less than usual?

Occupied with drug-related graphics and slogans?

In possession of pipes, small boxes, baggies, rolling papers, empty aerosol cans, etc?"

In comparison, these are KHK warning signs:

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

"Warning Signs

How do I know if my teen is on drugs?

Their behavior is a key indicator. See the checklist.

Has your child...(Check all that apply)

seemed depressed

become rebellious and defiant

had trouble with the law

had a bad attitude

avoided you upon arriving home

become increasingly isolated

had a drop in grades

required extra sleep

dropped out of favorite activities

changed friends

started looking unkempt or unhealthy

changed image/clothes/personal style

been caught lying

possessed unexplained money

threatened or attempted suicide

frequently broken curfew

been fired from work

come home high or drunk

destroyed car or property

Do you...

argue with your spouse about your child's behavior

feel anger or dislike for your child

fear you are a failure as a parent

*"bargain" with your child to change
 compromise your own values
 lower your expectations
 feel frustrated because nothing seems to change your child's behavior
 cover up for your child
 make excuses for your child
 feel relieved when your child leaves the house
 give money to your child
 fear your child might injure him/herself
 fear your child might injure others
 desire to spend less time at home
 fear your child is out of control*

You have checked boxes

If you have checked 4 or more boxes, click here to get help now!"

OK now back too **PFC** Warning signs....theoretically, this means a child could easily be labeled as a druggie or at risk to become one if only **ONE** of the following apply!

Frequently tardy or truant from school? *What if the child simply oversleeps frequently due to insomnia?*

Losing motivation, energy, and self-discipline? *Isn't this common in many teenagers?*

Losing interest in activities and hobbies? *In learning who they are, isn't it sometimes just a sign of changing interests due to changing maturity/the learning-self discovery process?*

Increasingly forgetful - short or long term? *What if the teen just has a lot on his/her mind? This tends to contribute to forgetfulness!*

Having trouble paying attention and concentrating? *Again, could be symptomatic of simply being the typical distracted teenager, or could it be ADHD? Since when does this justify long term, jail-like treatment????*

Expressing anger, hostility or irritability? *Ok, who isnt angry, hostile, or irritable when something is bothering them?*

Sullen with uncaring attitudes and behavior? *Again, this could be a sign of so many things besides drug use.*

Argumentative with you and/or siblings? *What teenager isn't arguemntative with siblings? Its called sibling rivalry! And, teenagers are well know to argue with parents as well....that's just inherent in the parent/child relationship isnt it?*

Unable to explain extra money or "new" items they have? *Hmmm.... if these new items or \$ are stolen, what if its the first time? I'm not excusing it mind you, but many teenagers push/test the limits by shoplifting and parental discipline should be adequate....I guess this one needs probing to find out if its habitual or isolated. But still, even if habitual, does this really justify throwing a*

child into a lock-down private jail? Consequences of course are appropriate, but isn't a private jail-like facility a drastic measure and extreme?

Experiencing unusual mood swings? How do you define unusual mood swing? Aren't ALL teenagers susceptible to unusual mood swings? Teenagers do have raging hormones and body changes that are well documented to cause drastic mood swings!

Dropping old friends and secretive about new ones? Hmmm....I have former friends of all ages (mid 20's upward) that do that!

Unhealthy in appearance, e.g. bloodshot eyes? Bloodshot eyes....that reminds me of Miller Newton's claim that one could tell if a person was a druggie just by looking at their eyes! It did not hold up in court by the way...bloodshot eyes can also be a sign of contact/eye irritation or lack of sleep, maybe even allergies!

Inattentive about personal grooming? That sounds very subjective to me!

In trouble with the law, in or out of school? Admittedly, this is a legitimate warning sign of a problem with something. Although I will say it's a stretch to automatically assume this is related to drug use.

Eating much more or much less than usual? Teenagers grow fast and their eating patterns can fluctuate as their body changes!

Occupied with drug-related graphics and slogans? Could just be a sign of generalized rebellion without other problems, but could be sign of interest in drug use...need to distinguish between the two because they are very different things!

In possession of pipes, small boxes, baggies, rolling papers, empty aerosol cans, etc?" So if a teenage girl uses lots of hairspray and doesn't promptly discard empty cans (laziness maybe?) then this is a sign of drug use! Small boxes...now that is definitely a sign of drug use (being very sarcastic) I guess I better throw away all my small boxes!

22. Antigen says:

17 Mar 2006 at 02:51 pm | #

They were both written by Miss Cleo.

Seriously, that crap goes all the way back to the Seed. Art actually used to say that concert t-shirts and posters, especially Alice Cooper, were among the signs.

23. Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86 says:

17 Mar 2006 at 03:11 pm | #

Oh I know it's the same thing, just under a different name....Just taking an opportunity to point out that PFC will not change the nature of KHK, it will still be Straight, Inc all over again, and pointing out in detail the absurdity of the Straight Model/KHK/PFC assessment methods.

24. The Dean of Cincinnati says:

17 Mar 2006 at 05:23 pm | #

This just in from the KHK Source:

Regarding persistent conflation of KHK and Straight, Inc., these programs are not identical and if serious and effective criticism is the goal should not be treated as such. I was in and involved with KHK for a long time and have a good idea of what the program is actually like. While value judgements are subjective, and I cannot say definitively that KHK is a good place that should remain in operation, I can say it is significantly different from Straight, Inc. (as I have heard Straight consistently described), or even perhaps from itself 20 years ago. It would be best for motivated critics to try and understand KHK and PFC as they currently exist.

Likewise, focusing on profit schemes and various conspiracies sidesteps any legitimate criticism that may be leveled at these programs. Tri State Drug Rehabilitation is a business identification, maybe incorporated in a friendly regulatory environment, but is not an elaborate disguise. Additionally, I have personally seen KHK on the verge of closing on a number of occasions solely for financial reasons. Often clients were kept through their entire treatment cycle with payments in arrears out of a belief that it would be wrong to deny service to someone even if they were not paying for it. Whether or not the program is a healthy and helpful place, it clearly did not exist to rake in money. Conspiratorial fantasies may be fun to entertain, but they are not the reality of the situation and block constructive dialogue about the validity of this treatment model.

Regarding listed PFC assessment criteria. I agree wholeheartedly that any of those symptoms taken in isolation or small clusters are not a reliable indication of a drug problem. I have never met a PFC client, nor do I have any knowledge of their admission process. The posted criteria would clearly not be an appropriate measure of a need for treatment.

Listed KHK criteria seem to be little better. KHK's admission record is not blemishless, as I have said before. I have not, however, seen in my time any clients retained that clearly did not have any past history of addiction and related consequences.

To Cincinnati Straight Survivor:

I appreciate your comments, research, and criticisms. My agenda is not to defend KHK, though I would argue from my own experience that at least some part of the program is worth saving for some individuals. My only goal is to add a different perspective to what could be a very constructive debate, regardless of its final outcome. I will answer your questions regarding PFC as soon as possible, though I must apologize in advance for my limited specific knowledge of their program.

25. *Lene* says:

17 Mar 2006 at 09:35 pm | #

With your limited knowledge of their program, Dean, It puts you in the same position as many in the audience. We rely on current and past participants to educate us. This goes higher and deeper than I ever realized. This is a popular topic and I think it should be broken into separate threads. This is a right wing cancer that is in need of treatment. We will have to start by removing the decaying material until we can find something solid upon which to build. In my opinion that solid foundation cannot currently be found in the White House or State House. These people are promoting an agenda that is not in the best interest of Ohioans. This is far larger than our state boundaries. These same people have killed people in other states. They need to be stopped.

26. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

17 Mar 2006 at 09:36 pm | #

KHK Source: Again I appreciate your candor and willingness to discuss the issues related to KHK/PFC etc. And a just for the record, I do not oppose the notion of drug treatment in itself. I do however think that treatment is resorted to entirely too often and in inappropriate circumstances. That said, there are times when it is a good idea. However, my problem is with facilities that take an extreme and overreactive approach which considers ANY or experimental drug use as being justification for extreme treatment measures. I think KHK/PFC is fundamentally flawed in its assesment process, which increases the liklihood to an unacceptable degree that kids who dont need help will be erroneously labled 'in need of treatment.' Add to the mix the FALSE ASSUMPTION that all kids lie on their intakes and/or are just being manipulative to avoid treatment substantially increases that liklihood. Speaking from experience of being mislabeled labled a drug user, being labled a liar, being told I was in denial and that I needed to get honest, when in fact it never ocured to me to try drugs, then being unjustly subjected the Straight model of treatment, I am keenly aware that being mislabeled and unnecessarily subjected to treatment can cause severe emotional and psychological damage. And I do not rely soly on my experience in making that claim. Numerous Straight, KHK, and PFC survivors say the same thing about the negative impact on their lives stemming from those program's nearly identical assesment processes.

Another problem I have is the 'peer staff' concept. I realize you defend this as a valid treatment model. That said, again I must reiterate that peer staff are not qualified to treat children in any manner: that should be reserved for professionals with a college education in the appropriate field such as psychology, etc. I also believe the group model of therapy is destructive and unhealthy for entirely too many reasons to elaborate on here. However, I believe another possible approach to treatment (not using the Straight model at all) would be to have professionals in charge of one on one therapy, and add the peer concept through mentoring (only in a friendship role) with no authority over the child.

Regarding your take on the "persisent conflation of KHK and Straight, Inc.," I disagree. From all I have heard from KHK survivors, ranging from 20 years ago to in the past couple years or so, it sounds precisely the same to me. The only differences I have heard are the recent discontinuation of the belt-looping practice in favor of 'arming,' and there is less time spent in the warehouse itself. I also noticed that the aftercare is shorter than Straight was. From what I understand, the same assesment process is used, same phase structure, same peer staff model, same confrontational/'relating' approach in group, MI's, etc. I could go on and on with specificity everything that is identical to Straight. Did you see this side by side comparison of Straight and KHK by any chance? <http://isaccorp.org/khkandstraight.html>. You might find it very interesting. So since I need convincing that there may be any **significant** differences between KHK and Straight, would you mind elaborating more and specifically about what you believe is **different** between the two programs?

I think keeping the Straight connection in the debate is important: I guess you could say for historic reasons, and to explain to the public that long term damage related to being subjected to the Straight treatment model caused to Straight survivors is happening to survivors of KHK, and other Straight spin off programs that retained the same treatment model. In other words, by explaining Straight and how it negatively effected countless survivors, this helps explain the probelsm with KHK or any other Straight-like program. And survivors that have been out in the real world for years can explain this in a without the program filter (dogma/teachings, group-think) obscuring our perceptions of the program. As far as my historic reasons, lets just say that once you review the history, a suspicious pattern emerges of evasive Straight, Inc. closings,

seemingly to avoid civil or criminal liability for child abuse charges/allegations, to avoid further bad publicity, and to keep operating the Straight program by using a different name. So the point is, that in reality, Straight never really ceased to exist, its dead in name only. Straight just kept changing its name and continued operating the same as before.

More to come.....

27. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

17 Mar 2006 at 10:09 pm | #

KHK Source:

Yes I agree that it is important to have the facts straight about how KHK/PFC currently operates. That is why I asked so many questions in comment #19 and took the time to go over PFC's warning signs in comment #21. I had already familiarized myself with KHK's warning signs some time ago, which although slightly better, since it is slightly more specific and since 4 (as opposed to one) is the threshold standard in determining if 'help' is needed, it still inappropriately clusters behaviors that could be indications of many things other than drug use. According to KHK's warning signs, KHK could still easily mislabel me as a drug user based on the behaviors I remember that I exhibited as a teen. If memory serves, I believe at least 8 applied to me.

And rest assured, I am doing my homework on PFC as we speak. And so far I am not happy with what I am seeing. I look forward to whatever insight, however limited, that you can provide regarding how PFC may or may not change KHK.

As far as conspiracy theories go, yes, for some reason the mere mention of them tends to overshadow the less controversial issues. However, again if you familiarize yourself with the history of Straight, its connections to its spin-off programs, etc., unfortunately there are many realities that are so unbelievable and outrageous that people have a difficult time accepting them as reality and jump to the conclusion that they are conspiracy theories. To use me as just one example, my personal history in Straight (and the part I have not publicly revealed) sounds like the rantings of a conspiracy theory monger, but unfortunately my experience is true. Sometimes the truth is much more shocking than fiction or conspiracy theories.

28. *Royal Water* says:

17 Mar 2006 at 10:29 pm | #

My mom once said that the word "if" was the biggest little word in the dictionary. At this point in my life, I see that the STRAIGHT, INC. IE BETTY SEMBLER, MEL SEMBLER, BILL OLIVER, and all the other STRAIGHT, INC. executives currently managing drug policy and whatnot, I believe that this is one of the biggest little issues in this country now. Of course, people say, "my issues are bigger", then so be it. However, there are thousands of school kids now who are subject to suspicionless drug testing as a result of BETTY SEMBLER and the DFAF submitting QUACK reports, amicus briefs to the Supreme Court and the list goes on and on...

So, here we have KHK, or PFC as they call it, TSDRCP, SAFE, INC., GROWING TOGETHER, doing the treatment. They all descended in mostly whole or in part from STRAIGHT, INC. This was not due to LACK of money. Where did that \$100,000,000 go that STRAIGHT, INC. raked in? KHK SOURCE, How do you know about the \$\$\$? Since when does it cost \$21,000 to sit a kid in a chair in a windowless room in a warehouse? In the meantime, KHK is accepting grants that

combine for a total in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, Getting many services donated, insurance payments, they own the building they bought from STRAIGHT Foundation, aka STRAIGHT, INC renamed the 1st time... etc etc. Again, the list goes on and on. How else can KHK stay open with only 4 or 6 newcomers? They've got to have LOTS of money. People say, SHHHH, don't talk about \$\$\$, they are helping kids. TSDRCP didn't even file REQUIRED annual reports with the state of KY for nearly 4 years. No wonder they have so much \$\$\$\$. If they spent it on REAL treatment, they would be pressed hard with only the handful of clients they have. Oh, and let's not forget the combined forces they have now with PFC. So all told, you have what? 50 clients total? 2.4 million or so, give or take a couple couple hundred grand...

RW

29. *Antigen* says:

18 Mar 2006 at 12:45 am | #

Source, I feel neglected. Why won't you address any of my questions? What do you make of the behavior of those two boys as I described it? And do you really believe that all of the restrictions on communication are about protecting the confidentiality of the clients? For the uninitiated, let me give you the run down as best as I recall:

No talking out in group

This means no saying so much as "please pass the salt" at lunch (if, indeed, they even offer salt or a sit down lunch), no looking at one and other, only at the person who is recognized to speak or "eyes to the wall" if no one is speaking, no communication whatever, verbal or otherwise, all day long except that explicitly authorized by staff.

No newcomers talking to newcomers

Same as above, no communication of anykind. This would include ppl who may have been there for years, but have been started over on first phase. And it extends into the host homes at night (which, according to KHK, are not part of the program for licensing purposes, but *certainly* are for the purposes of day to day operations)

No making or receiving phone calls

Not even your dear old Aunt Mabel or your granny on their birthdays. Certain exceptions apply wrt mandatory dime therapy. Again, that which is not mandated is, by default, verboten. Generally applies to television, radio, letters, newspapers, magazines or any other form of contact with the outside world.

At open meeting, parents are not allowed to relay any news or information from friends, relatives, about pets or current events.

Total blackout. It's like falling off the planet into the Twilight Zone

No Talking Behind Backs

Austensibly good advice, but taken to such extremes as to make it impossible to even relate the events of the day to your parents when you're finally allowed to go home nights after some months of compliance and contrition. Includes other phasers, so you can't really ever reflect or converse on anything that happens, unless it involves only inanimate objects--doesn't make for very interesting conversation.

I could go on...

Conversely, there's another rule, Honesty, and it's the first and most impotent (no typo). According to Program dogma, Honesty doesn't just mean dealing in good faith. Honesty means **NO PERSONAL BOUNDARIES OF ANY KIND WILL BE TOLERATED!** You are to disclose every detail, every feeling, every thought to **the entire group of other allegedly messed up kids** and then stand and take their criticisms, their indictments, their demands for more detail, more "honesty", more tears, more "sincerity". It also means turning yourself in for any questionable thought or deed, or even unauthorized *feelings* or *responses* to things that might occur in your presence and over which you had no control whatever.

One must also be "honest" about one another, too, or stand accused of trying to kill your fellow group members by being too weak and, thereby, leading them back to drugs. So if you merely suspect that another group member might be having "bad thoughts" and fail to flail your arms like a seagull on acid to confront them for it, you may well stand accused yourself. Worse? After a number of months of this heightened level of stress on short sleep and food rations, you may well even believe it yourself. This goes to another odd communication rule **No getting into your head!** (I used to always cast a sardonic eye at the "Think, Think, Think" sign on the wall whenever this one came up)

Now, you tell me, how much has changed in that little warehouse gulag over the past 24 years and how conducive to client confidentiality are these policies?

Sorry if I sound harsh and hostile.... well, no, I'm not. I *am* extremely hostile toward thought reform techniques, especially when used on unwitting children and desperate, panic stricken parents. Especially when most of the panic is induced by outlandish ideas such as those illustrated in the lists of "warning signs".

But, please believe me, I'm not at all hostile toward YOU, source. I still very much appreciate, not only your willingness to address these questions and join the conversation, but the profound difficulty in critically examining this program to which you obviously were so very dedicated. And I don't think you did it for the money. Typically, group staff earn less than minimum, work harder than Chinaman for it and get the mushroom treatment. But just wait till you see the financials (RW? WTF, mate??) There's a whole lot more going into that place than what they're spending. Where does it go?

For what it's worth, many of my good friends and some of my family are former staff. And a whole lot more, though they weren't on staff, did certainly and whole heartedly buy in for a time. It really is hard to resist. But there is life after programming. I promise. 😊

30. *Royal Water* says:

18 Mar 2006 at 12:45 am | #

<http://www.wishtv.com/Global/story.asp?S=4643633&nav=0Ra7>

This was called going on a "Speaking engagement" in STRAIGHT, INC. Why is PFC in DC? Who paid for that trip?

RW

31. *Royal Water* says:

18 Mar 2006 at 01:19 am | #

KHK Gross Receipts for 2004... according to them... with an average client base of 45 clients per year... \$1,156,344. Now, there's some expenses involved of course, like Penny Walker's \$79,000 annual salary. They claimed \$2,576 in interest on savings and temporary cash investments. Now broken down some more...

EXPENSES

Program Services: \$717,396

Management and General: \$269,693

Fundraising: \$36,924

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,105,218

Mortgages and other notes payable: \$438,159

Line 52a: Is the organization directly or indirectly affiliated or related to one or more tax exempt organizations described in section 501c3 of the Code? TSDRCP answer: NO

RW

32. *Antigen* says:

18 Mar 2006 at 01:59 am | #

Note the way the confidentiality rule goes out the window when they send kids to do speaking engagements. They'll claim the parent and/or kids give consent, and they do, at least nominally. But can consent given under circumstances where start over can happen at any time for any or no reason really be considered freely given? The more things change.... well, wait, what has changed again?

33. *The Dean of Cincinnati* says:

21 Mar 2006 at 07:50 am | #

Another response from KHK Source:

In answer to Cincinnati Straight Survivor's questions from comment 19, to the best of my ability:

Will KHK change?

Prior to obtaining actual control of KHK on the 13th, PFC did not appear to have the ability to do more than make recommendations. Any changes I have heard about were mostly related to documentation and intake procedure. KHK's clinical staff were supposed to greatly increase their involvement with the clients on an individual and group level, but I witnessed great resistance to this change and little results. I am fairly confident that with full control, PFC will implement the same level of professional supervision that is present at their other facilities.

Same structure?

The structure of KHK and PFC do seem to be nearly identical, but PFC has all of their clients either in school or doing correspondence work in the mornings, they leave earlier at night, and they are closed on Saturday. Consequently PFC has about half the groups that KHK did. These schedule and school changes have been in place for about six months.

Will peer staff lead all groups?

The answer seems to be no at PFC, but KHK has not made this transition yet. All PFC groups are either led or supervised by a clinician with most having a peer staff member involved in some capacity. PFC has about half the peer staff KHK used to have. KHK did cut their peer staff in half, but the remaining ones have until now led nearly all the groups. The PFC model should be applied, but I do not know how quickly.

Confrontation?

I do not know anything about group confrontation at PFC. At KHK group confrontation has changed dramatically since I was a client, and does not resemble what I have heard from Straight survivors.

Host homes?

I believe KHK will change to the parent-run host home committee that PFC uses. The parents at PFC seem to have a lot if not total autonomy in placement without the frustration and uneven distribution that KHK experienced. I do not know if the actual host home experience is any different for the clients, though. I would guess they are pretty similar.

Assessment?

The assessment process has changed, seemingly dramatically, but I do not know what the differences are.

Drug testing?

I would guess that drug testing will remain a formality in the assessment process, but could be wrong. It would obviously make sense to pay close attention to drug test results.

Same phases, rules?

I think the phases are the same, but the rules seemed less restrictive, though I am not sure to what degree.

1st phase contact with parents?

I doubt 1st phase clients will have unsupervised contact, but I do know they have significantly more contact and are brought back into regular contact with their parents after two weeks or so regardless of their "compliance."

TBB?

I do not know the TBB policy at PFC, nor do I know if the TBB policy at KHK is different from the one in Straight.

Bathroom supervision?

Again, I am unsure. KHK has targeted the elimination of bathroom supervision for some time, I think because of ISAC, but as with everything were dragging their feet until their hand was forced. It may be gone already, though.

Restraint?

Restraint has been very rare at KHK for some time, and I imagine the same is true at PFC. PFC does not have any isolation (time-out) rooms and have not for some time, and KHK eliminated theirs maybe a year ago.

Sorry I do not have more information, hopefully you can find someone with PFC experience to fill

in the yawning gaps.

Regarding differences between Straight, Inc. and KHK, to me it appears to be a matter of application rather than structure. I agree, the two programs are disturbingly similar in their model, vocabulary, and to a lesser degree ideology. To me the significant difference lies in the application of the model and ideology. I imagine that at its inception KHK was virtually indistinguishable from Straight. From all the grievances I have heard aired against Straight, however, KHK seems to differ greatly in the intensity and persistence of the application of the model it inherited. As an example, around seven years ago KHK received several clients from a program called Kids of Bergen County (or something close), these clients were exposed to a treatment model that seemed very similar to the one KHK was using, but the actual client experience was markedly different. The Kids clients had clearly experienced lasting emotional trauma that seemed to make it very difficult for them to function on what could be considered a normal level. In my many years with KHK I never saw clients who even approached that level of psychological damage, though on the outside the programs may have looked identical. Ultimately, I may not be qualified to speak about the damaging effects of treatment at KHK because I was not damaged. When I entered treatment I was using drugs constantly, failing school, and was in a family that had disintegrated. Since treatment I have finished college, made friends that do and do not use drugs, and built what seems to be a healthy relationship with my wife and family. The friends I still have from KHK are mostly sober, however, and could be considered success stories. I feel that my time in treatment was very beneficial and the friends I still have from KHK (both sober and not) would say the same. Without any personal traumatic experience or contact with others who have been traumatized it is very difficult for me to attest to the damaging effects of this model. Even assuming cases that could be considered unequivocal successes, to me it is a matter of ratios. I do not believe it would be appropriate for one kid to experience trauma for every nine that benefited, but from the many kids I have seen at KHK, both successful and not, the program always seemed like one worth maintaining despite its flaws. I agree that the Straight connection is an important one, and all Straight successor programs are in some way accountable for the transgressions of their predecessor. I do not, however, think it is functional to treat these programs as identical simply because of their common lineage. KHK has plenty of defects that should be addressed and changed, but I don't believe it is possible to effect this change without looking at the program as it actually is today. That said, KHK's heritage alone may be corrupted enough to justify its closure, but my personal experience could prevent me from making this assessment accurately. My potential inability to take the broad view has motivated me to discuss these issues in hopes of the influence of others either strengthening or burying this treatment model.

Regarding PFC, as I have said I cannot speak to the quality of their program. They seem in many ways, among them their vocabulary, assessment criteria, and the retention of things like confrontative parent groups, to be more similar to Straight than KHK. In other ways, such as professional supervision and operating structure, they are more different from Straight than KHK. From my experience with clients from Kids, I would think it takes an understanding of the actual experiences of individuals in PFC to see what the program is really like for the clients. The staff I have met seem much more professional and "modern" to me, but their program did in fact (from what I have been told) close down as Straight on a Friday (1993?) and open as PFC on a Monday. This fact alone is very disturbing, but it is my opinion that many things at KHK seemed more disturbing than they were in practice. Consequently, I cannot make a judgement without more information.

Antigen,

First, many of your questions seemed rhetorical, sarcastic, or conspiratorial. I am sorry if I

misinterpreted them.

Second, regarding the situation you described with the school kids. I think it could be a little alarming to any teenager to see two grown adult men calling to them across the street at seven in the morning; I understand why they would go inside. I am confident they went to school that day and did not receive consequences for talking to you. The program you experienced sounds more strict than KHK currently is.

Third, I do not believe the rules about communication are necessarily pure or helpful, I am only asserting that they do not serve to insulate parents from the general experience of clients in the program, and they are not structured to mask abuse.

The rules you have listed are nearly identical to those still in place at KHK, but I imagine their application is somewhat different. I make no argument that all of these rules are good or should be kept. Perhaps my previous comment will address this question to some degree.

Honesty:

I agree that the definition of honesty should be more nuanced and respecting of personal boundaries, though we probably would not agree on how nuanced. The relationship between honesty, shame, and confrontation as you described it is different from my experience in KHK, however, particularly as a staff member able to inject nuance into a program that was much slower to change its structure than its application.

Finances:

I am sorry, but I cannot possibly see how KHK was making money, much less where it all would have gone. This theory would seem to require a very elaborate matrix of deception and sophisticated money laundering to be valid, and I think in all my time there I would have caught wind of something. To me it is more important to analyze the treatment model itself, as that is where I see the greatest potential problem.

Hostility:

I appreciate you disavowing any personal attacks, and do not feel attacked or threatened. Frankly, however, I do feel a bit offended by the allusions that I am recovering from programming. I have been out of treatment for many years, left town for college, married someone who drinks, and am pursuing a professional career (not in the psychological realm); I believe I have had an opportunity to "deprogram," and I think looking at what I write from the perspective that I am an awakening zombie can make it hard to take this discussion seriously.

I, of course, also mean no hostility and hope this admonition is not interpreted as such.

To Royal Water:

*KHK has had between 12 and 25 clients for at least the last four years if this changes your calculations, and many clients who have been in KHK have not paid for treatment and were not kicked out.

*KHK clients still do speaking engagements, though it is no longer mandated. I have long been opposed to this practice, as teenagers in that environment cannot make qualified decisions to forfeit their anonymity. The executive director and clinicians would not move on this issue, though I think more out of laziness and an aversion to critical thought. There has always been a strong resistance to change at KHK, and my hope for public dialogue and pressure is that it can

overcome this resistance.

34. *Royal Water* says:

21 Mar 2006 at 01:36 pm | #

Ok, thank you. When I saw on the 990 that TSDRCP had reported nearly \$675,000 for revenue from program service, I figured they were raking it in. At an average of 20 clients, that's still over \$33,000 each to treat by sitting in a chair and staying at a "host home"? Meanwhile, Penny is paid \$79,000 per year? OK, KHK makes LOTS of money. The overhead is low and the treatment is basically all volunteer. Phasers are not paid to counsel each other. Where's the professional help? Ok... The Chemical Dependency Professionals Board thinks this treatment is not abusive, just like ODADAS and all the other people who benefit from its existence. It's a classic case of the foxes guarding the henhouse. The program makes the rules and the licensing agencies go along. This doesn't stop in Milford or Columbus and it is not a conspiracy theory.

I have a couple ?'s for you.

Do you think Penny Walker and Terri Nissley would meet with a delegation of survivors to discuss the issues surrounding the systematic abuse of children in their programs?

If you think they would, are you able/willing to make a call to arrange it?

We will be in Columbus on the 31st there at the Statehouse. That would be a great time to do this. Maybe even Hope Taft would join us. She's an avid supporter of KHK.

RW

35. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

22 Mar 2006 at 11:06 am | #

As an example, around seven years ago KHK received several clients from a program called Kids of Bergen County (or something close), these clients were exposed to a treatment model that seemed very similar to the one KHK was using, but the actual client experience was markedly different. The Kids clients had clearly experienced lasting emotional trauma that seemed to make it very difficult for them to function on what could be considered a normal level. In my many years with KHK I never saw clients who even approached that level of psychological damage, though on the outside the programs may have looked identical.

To KHK Source:

I didnt realize KHK inherited KIDS clients when KIDS was shut down. I was wondering if you were aware that KIDS of Bergen County was a Straight Spin off program founded and run by Miller Newton, a former Straight Inc. National Director?? Did you know that KHK also cooperated with Straight as well in this way while Straight was open in Milford? I clearly remember former KHK clients being in Straight (while I was a Straight client)and being told by them that KHK and Straight were identical and I have heard from KHK survivors how KHK staff constantly threatened KHK clients with being sent to Straight....

<http://www.thestraights.com/flowchart.htm>

At the time Straight was formed, Mr Ross, who Founded KHK and Miller Newton were both on Straight's Executive Staff at the same time....each one used Straight's philosophy, structure and methods to found programs nearly identical Straight. From everything I have read and heard, KIDS was even worse than Straight but nevertheless was structurally the same. KHK, from all I have read and heard uses Straight's treatment model as well but is "not as bad as Straight." Despite the different degrees in severity or intensity of the three programs, all three have clients that have reported various long term damage including PTSD...sources cited in [this article](#).

These facts say to me that the Straight treatment model is the source of the problem regardless of the varying degrees of intensity and the variations in the more egregious abuses. If there is one thing I hope you realize is that even if KHK is less severe, or less intense than Straight, it is nevertheless damaging children. The structure which has been retained by KHK, which seems so benign to the uninformed, is the most insidious part...you can take away the most egregious abuses at Straight and KIDS and yet the structure is still damaging...for me my PTSD had more to do with being put in a scary situation for which I had no control, being subjected to confrontation and being forced to accept group think against my will, the paranoia etc, and in the program I was never restrained, never beaten, never sexually abused, etc.

And just a question, given that you describe KHK as a less intense version of Straight why do you think there are two documented reports of KHK related PTSD cases? Just curious to see what you make of this....<http://isacorp.org/kidshelpingkids.html>

36. *Cincinnati Straight Survivor 84-86* says:

22 Mar 2006 at 11:08 am | #

Oops...here are those links again where I failed to space properly to make them hyperlinks:

<http://isacorp.org/kidshelpingkids.html>

37. *Antigen* says:

22 Mar 2006 at 04:16 pm | #

Oh, now that *is* interesting! Any chance you could find any of those people who shipped in from NJ? If so, please pass along my contact info. I would also highly recommend that they get a copy of Maia Szalavitz's new book, *Help At Any Cost*. You can read about it and/or order it here: <http://HelpAtAnyCost.com/> Anyone who's ever spent time in one of these places while Virgil was running the show might find Chapters 7 and 8 especially enjoyable.

No doubt in my mind, either, that Virgil was a singularly sadistic, egotistical psycho. Wherever he went, the "normal" level of stress and bizarreness of the Program went into overdrive. I say "was" not because he's dead. He's not. He's still living in luxury back home in Mederia Beach, Florida. But, by all accounts, he's a broken, pathetic little man anymore. He *should* be cellmates with Charles Long III, but we take what we can get, don't we?

But I agree w/ CSS' take on it. And I have a much broader perspective on that particular point than most program vets, too. My family got involved w/ this cult in '70 or '71 when I was only around 6 years old. I know just how things were in the Seed. The singing *was* better. The overall atmosphere *was* less hostile. They physical abuse *was* less common and less accepted. Art Barker *was*, by far and away, a nicer person and more engaging than Virgil ever even tried to be. And yet we hear back from people who experienced it over the course of it's 30 years of operation about

the very same specific problems as people who went through Straight in the early '80's or KIDS of Bergen, North Jersey or El Paso in the late '80's.*

Now, please understand this, folks. As KHK is pretending to improve their game and eliminate the more abusive aspects of the Program by, henceforth, calling themselves Pathway Family Center, this has all been done before. And every time, people ask the same question; "how can they get away with this for so long!!?"

Well, I have an answer. Some of you are not going to like it. Some will probably cast out pejorative terms like "conspiracy theory" and "politicising" and even go to ad hominem attacks about my bitterness and inability to move on. Ok, I'm used to that by now. But here are the facts. Just last September, Betty Sembler (Straight, Inc. cofounder, Seed parent and founder of Drug Free America Foundation) made this remarkable statement under oath:

"[Miller Newton is] a very close and dear friend and a valued one." Then she calls him "an outstanding individual." Mr. Newton is even a participant on the International Scientific and Medical Forum on Drug Abuse, a front group for Betty's Drug Free America Foundation. And there's more. See Betty Sembler's deposition, page 99.
<http://melvinandbettysembler.blogspot.com/2005/10/wife-of-former-us-ambassador-endorses.html>

Now, please understand the way they spun it back in the day. Straight had been under a lot of pressure from regulators, investigators and the media. When they fired Virgil, they played it like he was the one bad apple and so tossing him to the wolves solved all of their problems. Later, we come to find out that he established the Kids program in New Jersey, not only w/ the same model and rhetoric, but **the very same people!** All of his initial staff and most of his initial "clients" came from Straight, Inc.

This is *significant as hell* to all Ohioans because these same people and organizations as I've named in this response are making public policy and directing public funding in your state! And they don't see anything wrong with the way they do things. Oh sure, they'll consult their PR people to help them construct pretty lies for their press releases whenever the shit hits the fan. But they don't see it as really being dishonest, per say. They view it more like condescending to us poor sods who just don't have the **Awareness** to see the goodness and rightness of what they do. So.. they'll do it again and lie right to your face about it. Why? Because they're *zealots*.

Question for source: Is "Awareness" still a uniquely defined buzz-word in the Program?

* If anyone would like to read up on the history of The Seed or Kids programs or contact vets from those programs, you can find those contacts here: <http://fornits.com/wwf/viewforum.php?forum=8&7013> and <http://pub3.ezboard.com/bkidsofelpaso19333>

38. *Antigen* says:
 22 Mar 2006 at 05:00 pm | #

I wanted to address this seperately.

Hostility:

I appreciate you disavowing any personal attacks, and do not feel attacked or threatened. Frankly, however, I do feel a bit offended by the allusions that I am recovering from programming. I have been out of treatment for many years, left town for college, married someone who drinks, and am pursuing a professional career (not in the psychological realm); I believe I have had an opportunity to "deprogram," and I think looking at what I write from the perspective that I am an awakening zombie can make it hard to take this discussion seriously.

I, of course, also mean no hostility and hope this admonition is not interpreted as such.

I appreciate this very much. And I understand how you could take offense to my remarks. On the one hand, I think you're a good guy and engaging in this discussion in good faith. And I know how hard that is to do, friend. Do you still hear echos of those tired old admonitions about being led astray by us bitter druggie fuckups and splits who want nothing more than to bring you down? If not, good for you! It took me quite some time to learn how to identify that toxic little voice in my mind and tell it to have a seat. If so, just tell that little staffer in your head to have a seat! LOL

I also have a good many years and geographic distance between myself and that bizare chapter of my life. I didn't, however, go on to staff. I knew the whole thing was profoundly corrupt from about the time I was 9 years old. And there is a very real danger here of your unwittingly advocating those aspects of the Program that are very harmful, even if you haven't figured it out yet.

That's what makes Betty Sembler, Calvina Fay and all of their chums so damned dangerous. They don't sit around their garden parties plotting and scheming about how to better mess up people's lives. They believe without question that what they're doing is helpful, even if we're too drug addled and bitter to appreciate their "help".

So let's try attacking this difficult question from the other angle. Can you please explain to us all which aspects of the Program you found to be helpful? To what, precisely, do you attribute your recovery? And if we were to run into an old friend or two of yours from before the Program daze, would they agree with your assessment of how horribly messed up you were to begin with?

Name:

Email:

Location:

URL:

<http://>

Smileys

