

San Bernardino Sun, 5 November 1971

Issue

Page

Page 33

THERE ISN'T MUCH CHOICE

By IONE OLIVER Sun-Telegram Staff Writer

When they first arrive at Cedu, most of the teenagers who are troubled by drug addiction problems don't have much of a choice. They can either stay at the four-acre mountain retreat near Running Springs for at least six months for rehabilitation, or they can decide to leave. If they "split" they may be committed to prison or a mental hospital, depending upon the seriousness of their problems. The option has nothing to do with any rules laid down by Cedu. Most of the kids have been referred to the rehabilitation center by county probation departments because, in addition to being addicted in varying degrees to illicit drugs, they are also in trouble with the law. So they are referred to Cedu with the hopes that here they can kick the drug habit, receive help in finding the real reason for using narcotics in the first place and learn to live a meaningful life.

According to statistics released by Marie Searson, who is now representing the Cedu Foundation in its relations with California probation departments, 42 adolescents were sent to Cedu from seven different counties between July 1 and Oct. 15, 1971. The counties and the number of boys and girls referred to Cedu during that time include Los Angeles, 28; Riverside, 6; San Joaquin, 4, and Contra Costa, Marin, San Diego and Orange, 1 each. Rehabilitation is not 100 per cent successful. But some of the counties, including Riverside, have submitted favorable reports regarding the children who have received help at Cedu. Walter Aldinger, clinical psychologist for the Riverside County Probation Department, bases his report on the 47 children placed at Cedu by the Riverside County Juvenile Court from Nov. 27, 1968 to Feb. 1, 1971. A minimum stay of six months is enough for "graduation" according to the report. "The conclusion is that the success rate (for graduates) is unusually good." The length of placement of the graduates ranged from six to 18 months, with the average length of stay 12 months. "We analyzed the disposition of the (19) children who ran away from Cedu prior to six months in the program. Of these, 53 per cent (10) encountered more serious dispositions: commitment to the California Youth Authority, county jail or a state mental hospital or death by drug overdose. This was also true of the 8 out of 14 children who ran away in the first 30 days. "Of the children who remained at Cedu six months or longer, none has encountered these dispositions," the report stated. San Bernardino County Probation Department does not make referrals to Cedu, according to Stewart Smith, chief probation officer. "There have been instances where the parents have asked that their son or daughter be referred to Cedu. This we have done if the parents want to pick up the tab. We have not done so and paid for it out of county funds. "They have a different philosophy about parents' involvement," he explained. "We think the parents

should be involved. (Cedu asks that parents not see their children for several months after being placed in its care so that the youngsters can become adapted to its lifestyle without parental interference.) We (the county officials) also have a different opinion about the length of stay for a youngster in a rehabilitation center. We think there should be a definite terminal date. "I am not saying that they don't do some good. They do a good job for some kids," he opined. While Cedu Foundation, Inc., and the Cedu Foundation School has been prospering at the mountain settlement, there are several mothers in San Bernardino who are still fighting the center and are critical of its operation. "They kept my son's clothes," charged the mother of a boy who, she said, volunteered to go to Cedu to "try and save the world." She bitterly compared the foundation to "The Manson Family."

(Continued)

Another mother has a daughter who is still at Cedu as a staff member (the girl was never an addict). The mother and a friend are hoping to get some kind of legislation which will provide more "protection" from such places as Cedu, they say. "We are going to Assemblyman Lewis," said one of the women. "We've got better laws to protect dogs," she charged. The group, which voiced disapproval (of Cedu at the time it was ousted from Keche Canyon and first moved to Running Springs, is also critical of the method of raising funds through a car give-away for which some Cedu staff members and some of the kids, sell tickets. But Cedu is inviting those who purchase tickets to dinner and an open house Feb. 4. Residents will prepare and serve the dinner and a 1972 car will be given away at that time. Tickets to the open house are available from Hams', Sears and Black's. For some of the questions we've failed to answer in this series, a visitor to the open house might find a clue for himself. (Next a girl and a boy tell sad stories)