

Support Of All Needed To Block Drug Crisis

(Last of six articles)

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The worsening drug scene in Santa Cruz county can be altered considerably for the better through adoption of a comprehensive program supported by all the people, according to county authorities.

Raymond Ansell, director of the county welfare department, said he would welcome such a program. He points out that now the welfare department can aid the drug addict or drug dependent only incidentally, as part of the general problem of coping with disabled persons or needy families.

The welfare department has neither the funds nor the authority to help drug addicts or drug dependents as such, Ansell said. But if it had, there would be no way at present to obtain the aid needed to rehabilitate the afflicted.

Seaside Supervisor Philip Haray would welcome such a program because "these are people." He added: "There is so much fuss about the Mt. Hermon Road bypass project. We need to be less excited about public works projects and more excited about people projects."

Pajaro Supervisor Henry Mello would welcome such a program. He said: "We have

one of the most beautiful coasts in the state. We have magnificent redwood trees. Our air is still good, and our living conditions are still good. But what does it all mean when people have these problems?"

Mello thinks many of the county problems are found throughout the state and nation. The counties have bigger problems than state or nation, however, he said, because they are short of money and are reluctant or unable to levy additional taxes. He believes that state and federal money must be used to help counties solve the problems.

He believes also that national goals and policies need to be established and defined. "The draft, the war in Vietnam, environmental exploitation and hypocritical subsidy of tobacco are among the things the young people are disturbed about," he said. "I'm not making judgements on these issues, just pointing out they are part of the problem."

Aptos Supervisor Ralph Sanson bore down on the same theme, saying: "I think we have a sick system. I think we are in a real crisis as far as our system of laws is concerned. If you tell young people some terribly harmful thing will happen with some drug when they can demonstrate it does not,

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you reinforce criticism of the way things are run.

"That questioning by young people is the healthiest thing there is. If we do away with that, as some people want us to, then you end up with Nazi Germany. We have to accept on faith, and they, too that this is a good system if we only let it do the job. I think I see real county action forthcoming to handle this problem. Our new budget will contain a substantial allocation for drug abuse prevention and control, in addition to other funds in the budget used for drug related work, such as in some of the aid to the disabled program."

District Attorney Peter Chang thinks the proposed plan must include more opportunity for healthful outlet of the energies of young people.

"In San Lorenzo Valley," he said, "they have a recreation hall open to kids only one night a week. Or take Santa Cruz, a city of more than 30,000 and without a Y.M.C.A. What are the kids to do in the evening?"

Chang, like Seapy, believes also that the parents must show greater love and concern and interest in their young children, that being out when the kids come home, or going out and leavin the kids to shift for themselves, can lead to considerable problems.

Social workers say there must

be greater concern for all members of society, for the adult as well as for the young. They point out that addicts are sick people, that addicts have fled from problems they could not handle only to find there can be no meaningful escape from reality and that their drugs add to their problems.

Ed Stedfeld of the Drug Abuse Prevention Center and Harry Richardson of the Do It Now Foundation stress that help must be given when needed, and that this must be followed up by rehabilitative work to overcome the psychological dependency on drugs that can exist after physical dependency is licked.

Educators say that preventive drug education must be supported in the schools to get factual information to the students. If such education is not being offered, they say, it should be demanded.

Law enforcement officials must be supported with sufficient funds to do the job, according to Undersheriff Paul Tara and Detective Sergeant James Marston. Both point out it is unrealistic to expect limited manpower to handle all law enforcement problems in the county.

Specific things that individuals can do have been suggested by authorities as follows:

1. Parents should remember to be parents, to give their children the love, guidance, disci-

pline, understanding and encouragement they need so that they will remain themselves, discover their identities and learn to stand up to problems and pressures the world imposes.

2. People who know someone with a drug problem he can't handle, should refer him to appropriate authorities—that is, to school principals in some cases, to the Drug Abuse Preventive Center and the Do It Now Foundation in more critical cases, and to General Hospital in crisis situations. The Sheriff's Department is the place to telephone in the event help is needed fast.

3. People who know someone with economic need should refer him to the county welfare department, particularly if children or disabled people are involved.

4. People should support the efforts of the Drug Abuse Preventive Center, 1084 Emeline Ave., Santa Cruz, and the Do It Now Foundation, P.O. Box 223, Santa Cruz, with cash donations. These private agencies stand between many a drug addict and disaster in a county that has no drug abuse program.

The work of the Drug Abuse Center has been complimented highly by District Attorney Peter Chang, by the Sheriff's Department and Supervisor Henry Mello. The work of the Do It Now Foundation has been complimented highly by Dr. Richard Svihus, social welfare workers, and the Sheriff's Department.

5. And this, above all: people

will help to lick the problem if they remember that the name of the game is still love, as the Bible has been reminding believers and nonbelievers alike through the ages.

Addicts or not, the young are our boys and girls. Addicts or not, adults are our brothers and sisters.

At the Drug Abuse Preventive Center last week, Ed Stedfield said, "If there is a love-charged atmosphere, the addicts respond. They want to do better, and with love they do. And when you see one of these people restored to their families, to a useful life, sometimes the tears roll from your eyes."

Without this love, this community concern, there can be no effective drug abuse control

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plan. And without a carefully developed and thoroughly supported plan, the drug scene in

Santa Cruz County can quickly degenerate from "worse" to "crisis."

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