

Do It Now—A Fresh Approach To Drug Education

By LEN KLEMPNAUER
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Harry Richardson is 32 years old, a college graduate with a middle-class background.

He affects the long-hair style so popular with men younger than he. He dresses in what can be described as hippie attire. He sports a beard.

Harry Richardson speaks softly but firmly about an organization he helped form—the Do It Now Foundation, an organization that spreads the word about drug abuse.

Without preaching.

Harry Richardson has made the trip. More than once.

He came back, however. He's glad he did.

The Do It Now Foundation, a non-profit organization founded in Hollywood, has moved its headquarters to Santa Cruz, not because the drug problem is any worse — or better, for that matter — here than anywhere else, but because Richardson and his staff like the area.

When Richardson spreads the word about drug abuse, he talks of what he talks.

Richardson, I used drugs. Quite

extensively," he admits. "But I got to the point where there was more pain than pleasure, what we refer to as the 'wipe-out' stage."

The "wipe-out" stage: "A general disassociation with the world around me; an inability to cope with people and situations."

Richardson first became acquainted with drugs in 1966, in Los Angeles where he had moved to re-enter college. Once a salesman, then a building contractor and later owner of a landscaping business in Connecticut, Richardson began using "uppers" — amphetamines — to keep awake "while studying for exams."

Alcohol, says Richardson, actually was his first drug but after the amphetamines came marijuana, LSD and "downers" (barbituates).

"I was never an addict," he says, but in 1968 after he had entered the "wipe-out" stage he began to seek help. "I found none," he stresses, "so I worked my way out."

That was 1968, and Richardson decided something must be

done to help others who were struggling against drugs.

So was born the Do It Now Foundation.

The Do-It-Now Foundation, registered as a non-profit corporation with the State of California, puts the emphasis on preventative drug education, through the news media and school districts.

One of the foundation's major projects so far was a drug abuse education program put on in the Paramount School District in Long Beach.

That city's newspaper, the "Independent Press - Telegram," reports Paramount High School Principal Russell Ball as stating the district paid \$8,000 to the Do It Now Foundation, and the money was "well spent."

The foundation is successful, says Richardson, because of three reasons:

1. It uses a peer group approach.
2. It isn't connected with any governmental, religious or civic group.
3. It explains what each drug does instead of presenting a "blanket view" of drugs. In short, Do It Now claims there are two kinds of drugs—those

that kill people; those, such as marijuana and hallucinatory drugs, on which research is not complete.

"We only pass on the facts," Richardson says.

In the Paramount School District, the Do It Now staff went in for 10 weeks with a dozen people to set up a customized school - community drug program and trained the district's staff to run it.

In Los Angeles, the organization also has set up a 24-hour crisis "Hot-line" which averages 100 calls a week from drug users who turn to Do It Now for help.

In Santa Cruz, Do It Now is setting up group encounter sessions and is training Switchboard 426-LIFE members to help fight drug abuse.

Richardson emphasizes that Do It Now doesn't offer rehabilitation services, such as the local Drug Abuse Preventative Center offers, but stresses education — getting through to the drug user or potential drug user before they've gone that far.

Says Richardson, who is married to the former Carol Raney, a 1960 Holy Cross High School

graduate, "We provide an alternative to the religious approach, through therapy and counseling."

Do It Now pays its own way through the sale of literature about drugs to school districts, county health departments, parents' groups, civic groups and others interested in combatting drug abuse.

It also sells a long-playing record, "First Vibration," which features music by rock groups and personalities. The record, which includes such performers as The Beatles, Donovan, Jefferson Airplane, the late Jimi Hendrix, the defunct Buffalo Springfield and many others, sends out a "subliminal message," says Richardson — "Speed Kills."

Do It Now also earns money by conducting seminars and workshops for professional people who are involved in fighting the drug problem.

And it provides in-school drug education like the Paramount program. Do It Now contracts its services to school districts for \$1 to \$3 per student, depending on how extensive a drug

education program, the district wants.

The Los Angeles Times, in a two-part series about Do It Now on Sept. 16 and 17, reported:

"Dedicated members of the Do It Now Foundation (all long-hairs and ex-drug addicts) offer valuable counseling to parents (and teachers and communities) who are curious and willing to take advantage of the foundation's program of education and drug abuse prevention.

"Members have been there and back. Their message: the trip wasn't that groovy. They also can tell you why the trip seems necessary for so many young people today."

The professional school journal, "School Management," in its April issue reported:

"For maximum effectiveness, the approach to drug abuse prevention should be custom-made for the district it's designed to serve. That's the basic idea behind a new genre of service organization exemplified by the Do It Now Foundation . . ."

The fund-raising LP, "First Vibration," was reviewed in The April issue of the magazine,

"Psychology Today," which said:

"'First Vibration' is a major breakthrough not only in drug education but in the music industry as well. It is the first collage album ever produced through the cooperation of competing record companies. The musicians volunteered to donate their work to the Do It Now cause, and then persuaded their record companies and publishers to release the songs."

The record includes 14 songs which can be purchased for \$3 postpaid from the Do It Now Foundation, PO Box 223, Santa Cruz or PO Box 3573, Hollywood. It cannot be bought at record shops.

Because it is a non-profit organization, Do It Now isn't all that strong financially, according to Richardson. The group needs help, too.

Being sought locally are attorneys, doctors and accountants who will offer free expertise in their fields. And Do It Now needs space in which to operate and housing for its staff.

Anyone interested in assisting can telephone Richardson at 423-2003.

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