

Program offers aid to drug abusers

By Andy Riggs

The 12 long-haired youths, barefooted and wearing patched bluejeans, sat in a circle facing the speaker.

The large recreation room contained a Ping-Pong table, television, stereo and some albums. It seemed as if a large family had gathered for a serious family discussion.

In a sense, it was a family discussion. Except there was no father and mother, no children. They all were adults.

They were trying to help each other express their true, inner feelings.

Were they scared? What did they think of someone else? Why did they think that? How were they supposed to react?

These are some questions asked to patients living in Full Circle, a program for drug rehabilitation. The program, that began June 1, has already helped many to get their heads together. The treatment is counseling.

Matthew, 19, was a UNL student last year. He was a cocaine dealer, living in Harper Hall.

"I sold to narcs twice. They didn't bust me at the time so I didn't know then that I had screwed up. The middle of March last year I went to the hospital when I was high on the drug THC. After I got out, I dropped out of school. I went home to Omaha and got busted for possession of coke," he said.

"After a month in jail, charges were dropped because I had three felony charges against me in Lincoln. (The two cocaine charges and possession of marijuana.) I was in jail for a while, but got out on bond. I came to Full Circle June 18 for help. I could have gone to the penitentiary," he said.

Matthew was strung out when he was in jail. His nose was raw from snorting cocaine. His nerves were shot and he couldn't think straight. Jail was always in the back of his mind. He thinks Full Circle has helped him.

"I've found out a lot about myself. I know how to study now. I'll probably be here nine or 10 months altogether. I can tell I'm being helped," he said.

Matthew is in charge of the kitchen in the house and does the cooking. There are jokes about the food in Full Circle just as there are jokes about the cafeteria food in the dorms.

"Much of what happens here is the same as living anywhere else. Funny things happen. Last week a kid found some tea and rolled it into a cigaret and lit it. It smelled just like pot. No drugs are allowed here so everyone got real worried about what happened. Then we found out. It was pretty funny," he said.

He described the group counseling as straight forward, saying that it makes him feel better. Matthew gets lonely sometimes and he says the group helps him overcome it. He said he plays his guitar much of the time and has written some songs. He describes the songs as visionary, some of them are fantasies, some are love songs.

Kris, 17, had a baby last week. Monday night she was back at Full Circle in group therapy. She came to Full Circle because she said she knew she needed treatment and because of the baby. She is one of the most active in therapy.

"I was kidnapped two years ago by an ex-Black Panther and taken to Omaha where he forced me into prostitution," Kris said. "He was a heroin user. I was so scared and nervous that I need a way of escape. I began using it, too. I mainlined heroin.



Full Circle staff members Ron Ruitnke (left), Cheryl Mulford and Steve McElravy

One day, he let me go out on my own and I stopped a police car. In order to avoid a lot of questioning and hassle, I told them I was a runaway."

Kris was taking LSD and smoking marijuana when she lived in Kansas City with her boyfriend. She became pregnant and had a fight with her boyfriend, so she came back to Lincoln to see her father.

"When you go to the groups, you really find out your feelings," she said. "For instance, I've always been yelled at instead of being hit so I'm scared of people yelling. One night in group, two persons started a yelling match. I was terrified, I was shaking. I couldn't endure it anymore so I told them to stop. Then, the group investigated my feelings. Ever since then I've been cured."

Dr. Olga Bom, Full Circle director and therapeutic communications specialist, said she loves to help youths find themselves through group counseling.

During the day, she works for the Lincoln-Lancaster county drug project, and at night at Full Circle.

"Caring is the most important part of the program," she said "I care for everyone here. It doesn't matter if they like me or not, I care about them. If they choose on their own to like me or care for me then it's like a present.

"This may sound conceited, but I'm good at my work," she said. "What I try to do is help someone who thinks they don't need help. Most of the time I succeed."

Full Circle is open 24-hours, seven days a week. The telephone line is always open, and patients need not be court referred. No one will ever be turned away.

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Theologian discourse

A theologian who has traveled throughout the world researching and speaking about Christianity will speak this weekend in Lincoln.

John Warwick Montgomery will speak at the First Evangelical Free Church at 3301 N. 56th. At 7 p.m. Friday, Montgomery will speak on "The Quest for Noah's Ark." He will speak on "Is Christianity Credible?" at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, on "The Inerrancy of Scripture" at 9:45

a.m. Sunday and on "Christianity in a Corner" at 11 a.m. Sunday.

Montgomery is a professor and chairman of the Division of Church History and History of Christian Thought at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill.

He also is director of Trinity's European program at the University of Strassbourg, France, and executive director of European Operations for the Christian Research Institute in Wayne, N.J.

Slaves sold

The UNL Rodeo Assn. earned \$224 last week at its annual slave auction. Slaves were auctioned Thursday night following a horse sale at the Burlington Northern Stockyards. Rodeo in April.



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