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(Parvin)
April 1, 1982
10:00 a.m.

MRS. REAGAN: PRIDE CONFERENCE, ATLANTA
APRIL 2, 1982

- Thank you. I genuinely appreciate your inviting me this morning, and I am very happy to be among so many concerned parents. While drugs have cast a dark shadow in recent years, the parent movement has been a light in the window, shining hope and progress. The work you are doing is so important, and I came here today to tell you how proud I am to be in the same auditorium with you. I am a supporter, an admirer and a wholehearted advocate of your efforts. Thank heavens there are parents like you out there.

- Over the past couple of years, I have been discovering the depth of the drug abuse problem and, at the same time, the potential of parents groups. Drugs have caused many of our children to lose their families, their friends, even their personalities and identities. They don't know who they really are or where they belong. What can you call these sad children except drug orphans?

- America has a frightening number of drug orphans lost to themselves and their families. They may be at home physically, but their minds and emotions are often far, far away. The parent movement is reclaiming these children and taking precautions so that others won't be orphaned by drugs. And the PRIDE Conference is an important part of the

parent movement, as we seek to get our children back where they belong -- at home and in good health.

-- Just as each of you have set personal goals in regard to drug abuse, I want to tell you of mine. And let me do so by first reading to you a letter that was sent to my husband by Melissa Katz and Kimberly Cole, two nine-year-old girls in South Carolina.

"Dear President Reagan and America: Are drugs good or bad? Think about it a while. Well, of course, they're bad! Yesterday my friend and I saw a movie about drugs. It was very upsetting to us, to see so many children taking drugs." The girls go on to say, ". . . why can't they do something about the drug problem? If rockets can fly to the moon, and science can cure diseases, then why can't we cure the drug problem? America we can do it! We need you people; we need you!"

-- I think those two little girls have more wisdom than most of Washington's social planners. What we need more than anything else to solve the drug problem is people. We need people like yourselves -- committed, determined, active people who will work together. My personal goal is to add as many like-minded people to your ranks as possible.

-- A few weeks ago I told the PTA about a line from a movie called, "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs." In one scene,

a mother, echoing the feelings of every parent, says of her children, "I always thought I could give them life like a present, all wrapped in white with every promise of happiness. . ." Well, we may not be able to give our children happiness, but we can give them freedom from drugs. And I pledge to you today that you have my enduring and most heartfelt support as you fight drug abuse among our young people. Thank you.

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(Parvin)
~~April~~ ~~March 30~~, 1982
~~4:00 p.m.~~

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-- I was thinking the other day how hard it is for us as parents to accept that our children must grow up. Speaking as a mother, I know how difficult it is to let go. It sometimes hurts. But what is even more painful . . . what is tragic . . . is that many kids, while becoming independent of their parents are becoming dependent on drugs. They never get the chance to stretch those awkward, funny adolescent wings and learn to fly on their own. Drugs require total submission at the very time when a child should be experiencing new freedoms.

While drugs have cast a dark shadow in recent years, the parent movement has been a light in the windows, shining hope and
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progress. *The work you are doing is so important.* Come here today
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~~(later insert)~~

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*Carleton Turner found this letter but has given us free use of it.

X

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They may be at home physically, but their minds and emotions are often far, far away.

--America has a frightening number of drug orphans, ~~wandering~~ ^{and their families.} ~~around~~ lost to themselves. ^{But} ~~But~~ The parent movement is reclaiming these lost children and taking precautions so that others won't be orphaned by drugs. ^{And} The PRIDE Conference is an important part of this parent movement, as we seek to get our children back where they belong -- at home and in good health.

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- I was thinking the other day how hard it is for us as parents to accept that our children must grow up ~~and seek independence~~. Speaking as a mother, I know how difficult it is to let go. It sometimes hurts. But what is even more painful . . . what is tragic . . . is that many kids, while becoming independent of their parents are becoming dependent on drugs. They never get the chance to stretch those awkward, funny adolescent wings and learn to fly on their own. Drugs require total submission at the very time when a child should be experiencing new freedoms.
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(later insert)

-- ~~In my own way, I have been trying to focus public attention on the drug problem.~~ Just as each of you have set personal goals in regard to drug abuse, ~~today~~ I want to tell you of mine. And let me do so by first reading to you a letter that was sent to my husband by two nine-year-old girls in South Carolina.*

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--I was thinking the other day how hard it is for ^{us as} parents to accept that our children ^{must} grow up and seek independence. Speaking as a mother, I know how difficult it is to let go. It ^{sometimes} hurts. But what is even ^{more painful...} what is tragic is that many kids, while becoming independent of their parents are becoming dependent on drugs. ~~Drugs require more kids than parents.~~ ^{They never get the chance to stretch those awkward, funny adolescent wings.} ~~Drugs require total submission at a time when a child should be experiencing new freedoms.~~ ~~replace family, friends, personality, physical health, ambition.~~

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--Over the past ^{couple of} years, I have been discovering the depth of the drug abuse problem. Just yesterday, I. . . (later insert)

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Drugs
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And let me do so by ^{first} reading to you a letter that was sent to my husband by two nine-year-old girls in South Carolina.*

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--Well, ~~we need people to help us~~ ^{what a great} those two little girls have more wisdom than many social planners. What we need more than anything else to solve the drug problem is people. We need people like yourselves--committed, determined, active people who will work together. My personal goal is to add as many people to your ranks as possible. ~~I will continue to hit the road recruiting wherever and whenever I can.~~

* ~~Carole Turner found this letter but has turned it over to the FBI~~ ^{has given us free} use of it.
~~Carole Turner, who found the letter, is turning~~

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MRS. REAGAN PRIDE CONFERENCE REMARKS

April 2, 1982
Atlanta, Georgia

Thank you. I appreciate your inviting me this morning, and I am very happy to be among so many concerned parents. While drugs have cast a dark shadow in recent years, the parent movement has been a light in the window, shining hope and progress. The work you are doing is so important, and I came here today to tell you how proud I am to be in the same auditorium with you. I am a supporter, an admirer and a wholehearted advocate of your efforts. Thank heavens there are parents like you out there.

Over the past couple of years, I have been discovering the depth of the drug abuse problem and, at the same time, the potential of parents groups. Drugs have caused many of our children to lose their families, their friends, even their personalities and identities. They don't know who they really are or where they belong.

We have a frightening number of those young people who are lost to themselves and their families. They may be at home physically, but their minds and emotions are often far, far away. The parent movement is helping to reclaim these children. And the PRIDE Conference is an important part of the movement, as we seek to get our children back where they belong--at home and in good health.

Yesterday afternoon I visited a third grade class at the East River Elementary School and sat in on a drug prevention program. Here were little boys in Cub Scout uniforms and little girls in jumpers learning how to deal with drugs even adults can't handle. The scene was at the same time both terrifying and encouraging. Terrifying in that drugs are such a problem even third graders must be prepared to deal with them. Encouraging in that we finally are fighting back to prevent drugs from taking any more of our kids.

And then last night I attended a Narcotics Anonymous meeting at the New Freedom Lodge. The kids were such good kids and you just wanted to hold each one to you and tell them you loved them and they were going to make it. I told them how proud of them I was--for deciding to change the course of their lives in the face of extreme pressures.

Just as each of you have set personal goals in regard to drug abuse, I want to tell you of mine. And let me do so by first reading to you a letter that was sent to my husband by Melissa Katz and Kimberly Cole, two nine-year-old girls in South Carolina.

"Dear President Reagan and America: Are drugs good or bad? Think about it a while. Well, of course, they're bad! Yesterday my friend and I saw a movie about drugs. It was very upsetting to us, to see so many children taking drugs."

The girls go on to say, "...why can't they do something about the drug problem? If rockets can fly to the moon, and science can cure diseases, then why can't we cure the drug problem? America, we can do it! We need you people; we need you!"

I think those two little girls have more wisdom than a lot of adults. What we need more than anything else to solve the drug problem is people. We need people like yourselves-- committed, determined, active people who will work together. My personal goal is to add as many like-minded people to your ranks as possible.

A few weeks ago I told the PTA about a line from a movie called, "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs." In one scene, a mother, echoing the feelings of every parent, says of her children, "I always thought I could give them life like a present, all wrapped in white with every promise of happiness..." Well, we may not be able to give our children happiness, but we can give them freedom from drugs. And I pledge to you today that you have my enduring and most heartfelt support as you fight drug abuse among our young people.

Thank you.

#