

How Drugs Altered My Life

By LORA VANDERHALL
Lifestyles Editor

Freddie Hendrix has had a very troublesome life because of drugs but now he is trying to put it all back together again.

Hendrix, 41, was a part of the prison system until about a year ago. He says that he hopes that by telling his life story it will inspire some young person to do good and stay off of drugs.

"A good way to stay out of prison is to stay off of drugs. It's easy to start using drugs but you have to realize that it will always be with you. You can stop using them but everyday will be a challenge for you."

Hendrix encourages kids to stay in school and further their education. "A high school diploma is not enough. If you drop out of school you'll probably end up in prison."

He had a fairly normal upbringing. "I was raised by my grandmother and I knew right from wrong."

He attended West Charlotte High School in the mid 60's where he played on the golf team. "I was kinda small for my age so I started playing golf in the 11th grade and that started to build my courage and self confidence. John Crawford was the coach at that time."

"In the 12th grade I was still on the team and we won the state championship and that really made me feel like I could do anything," he said.

After graduation he volunteered to go into the Army instead of being drafted. He enlisted for three years. About nine months after his enlistment he was sent to Vietnam. "I was in the 173rd Airborne Brigade."

"After about three weeks in that unit we made combat contact with the enemy. The initial contact lasted for about 15 minutes but it seemed like years. I was scared because this was the first time my life had been threatened."

Hendrix said he was visibly shaken after this incident, when some of the guys who had been in Vietnam longer approached him with some marijuana. "At this point I had never even smoked a cigarette but they said it would calm my nerves...and I tried it."

"Things got worse every day and we continued to smoke marijuana every day for about a year."

In 1969 he got out of the service but returned in 1970. Within 30 days of his second enlistment he was back in Vietnam but was not in as life threatening situation as before but the drug usage continued.

"I became addicted to heroin for about eight months. Before I left Vietnam the Army asked me if I had a drug problem and I told them I did and they hospitalized me for about 30 days before I returned to the States," said Hendrix.

He returned to Fort Bragg, where he had about three years left to serve. That is when he realized the impact of his drug addiction.

He says he sold drugs from 1971 until 1979.

"Less than a month after I got back to the States, I started using marijuana and heroin again. I got busted in 1972."

The jury gave him five years and a dishonorable discharge but the division commander overruled the decision and said because of his record he would allow him to serve a probationary period of 16 months and if nothing went wrong the charges would be dropped.

He stayed out of trouble while on probation.

Hendrix was released in 1974 when he moved to Baltimore. Even though he found himself a job he was still involved in selling drugs.

He returned to Charlotte in 1977 to continue the same vicious cycle of selling and using drugs.

"All of the people around me were breaking the law and I joined in with them."

During a two year period he was arrested at least eight times for possession of stolen property, larceny and crimes of that nature.

In 1979 he sold drugs to an SBI agent and was sentenced to five years probation. "In 1983, I realized I had a real problem, so I checked myself into the VA Hospital and I stayed for about 30 days. After that I was in a halfway house for about nine months," he said.

Just four months short of completing his five-year probation he was arrested for forgery. For this crime he was sentenced to five years in prison.

Because he had violated his parole he had 10 years to serve but the judge ruled the two concurrent so that when he served a



day on the probation he also served a day on the sentence, making it five years. But when he got to prison the sentence was cut in half.

"Almost from the beginning I was on work release. I made restitution, paid some of my living expenses and I saved some money while I served time," said Hendrix.

"Anybody will tell you that prison life is a hard life and it is. I know that I probably should

have been there before then because I was breaking the law," he added.

Hendrix says that the prison system seems to be set up to help those who are in for 15 or 20 years because they can sometimes learn a skill. "Those of us who had short time didn't have a chance of learning a skill to better ourselves."

"I use to read a lot about what was going on nationwide. I read magazines like Newsweek and Time...anything educational," he added.

Hendrix ended up serving 22 months before he was released in August 1987.

"I ran into my old golf coach, John Crawford, in May of this year and he has really helped turn my life around. He has helped me get a steady job and he started taking me to church with him," Hendrix said.

"My principles are back together."

Charlotte Cares Week Proclaimed

Charlotte Cares Week, October 16-23, 1988, will be proclaimed by Mayor Sue Myrick and Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners Chairman Carla DuPuy to mark a community-wide effort to stop drug and alcohol abuse through prevention and education.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Superintendent Dr. Peter Relic, and his wife, Mary Jo, will serve as Honorary Chairmen for Charlotte Cares Week, which is sponsored by the Charlotte Cares Coalition, an umbrella organization of Charlotte organizations and social service agencies.

Charlotte Cares Week hosts a variety of activities for all age groups, from school children to senior citizens, all designed to promote safe, healthy lifestyles. In addition, Charlotte Cares Week serves as the introduction of the Safe Homes Pledge to Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

The Safe Homes Pledge, which is signed by parents and witnessed by their children, promises that parents will host substance-free teen parties, will allow children to attend only substance-free parties, and guarantees parents will chaperone teen parties in their homes.

The Safe Homes Pledge unites parents and their children to make decisions about drug and alcohol use in the home. It has been endorsed by over 50 area agencies, public office holders, and businesses, including North

Carolina Governor James G. Martin, the Executive Council of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and the members of the Charlotte Cares Coalition.

"I see the Safe Homes Pledge as an opportunity for parents and children to sit down together and review their beliefs as a family," says Dr. Relic. "I hope the pledge will be accepted because it reflects our community's standards, as well as its laws, and that it will help families make a commitment to these standards in their homes."

The Safe Homes Pledge will be sent home with all Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools students in grades 4 through 12 during Charlotte Cares Week.

Two guest lecturers will also visit Charlotte as part of Charlotte Cares Week. Peter Bell, co-founder and Executive Director of the Institute of Black Chemical Abuse in Minneapolis will be the featured speaker at the Charlotte Cares luncheon at McDonald's Cafeteria on Thursday, October 20, at 11:45 a.m.

Sharon Scott, Licensed Professional Counselor and instructor of refusal skills, will be the keynote speaker on Monday, October 17, at 7:30 p.m. at CPCS's Peace Auditorium. Ms. Scott will also work with students in three CMS junior high schools, and with CMS intervention counselors.

"Charlotte Cares About Me: A Community Effort To Be Drug Free" will appear as the theme

line on stickers and posters distributed to students in CMS junior and senior high schools. These materials will be used in

conjunction with student activities to promote prevention of substance abuse during Charlotte Cares Week.

Peter Bell Speaks For Charlotte Cares Week

By LORA VANDERHALL
Lifestyles Editor

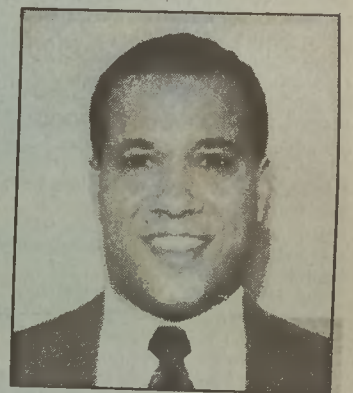
Peter Bell, co-founder and Executive Director of the Institute on Black Chemical Abuse in Minneapolis, Minnesota, will be the featured speaker for the Charlotte Cares Week Luncheon and Workshop on Thursday, October 20.

Charlotte Cares coalition was formed to develop and support programs in the creation of a community-wide effort to stop drug and alcohol abuse in Mecklenburg County.

The Charlotte Cares coalition consist of several organizations and churches including: The Drug Education Center, The Junior League, National Conference of Christians and Jews, Mecklenburg Council on Adolescent Pregnancy, Cities In Schools, YWCA, Charlotte Council on Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Senior Center, UNCC, Charlotte Parents for Drug Free Youth, The Alcohol and Drug Defense and The Bethlehem Center.

The workshop will be held at McDonald's Cafeteria from 9:30-11:45 a.m. Bell will present information designed to strengthen the clinical skills of educators, counselors, clergy, and other interested parties to counsel alcohol and drug abusers who are members of racial minorities. He will also examine culture's role in shaping the development of chemical use and abuse, and identify chemical dependency service needs in minority communities. The workshop is free and open to the public.

Following the workshop Bell will be featured at a luncheon to be held at McDonald's Cafeteria, 11:45 a.m. He will explore ways a community can diagnose, treat and prevent alcohol and drug abuse most successfully by



Bell

examining the cultural context of abuse. The luncheon is open to the public and it will cost \$10 per person through October 6 and \$12 each after that date. Tickets and reservations may be obtained from the Drug Education Center, 500 E. Morehead Street or call 375-3784.

Bell has over 14 years experience in identifying the unique causes of drug and alcohol abuse in the minority community, and in training counselors to treat minority clients special needs.

He currently supervises a staff of 25 to provide training and evaluation for professionals to understand the diversity of counselor's attitudes and behaviors toward black clients with substance abuse problems.

A graduate of Metropolitan State University, Bell is a presidential appointee to the White House Conference for a Drug Free America. He is also an advisory board member of the National Association of Children of Alcoholics and of the Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

Len Bias' Mother Speaks Out Against Drug Use

RACINE, Wis. (AP) --- The mother of Len Bias, the University of Maryland basketball star who died two years ago after using cocaine, encouraged the media to convey positive messages to young people about avoiding peer pressure.

"The one thing Len Bias taught me before he died was all music teaches a story," Lonise Bias told an audience of black radio managers and personalities Monday at the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Conference Center.

Bias quoted pop singer Whitney Houston and said she tells school assemblies that Michael Jackson's "Bad" video is about resisting peer pressure. In the video, Jackson is pushed to rob an elderly man to show his friends he is "bad." Instead,

Jackson resists their pressure.

"Our babies are always being nudged and pulled down about the things they believe in," Bias said. "I tell kids all the time, 'if you stand up for what's right, your friends will talk about you in front of your face. If you stand up for what's wrong, they are talking behind your back.'"

On June 19, 1986, Mrs. Bias was called to an emergency room to identify the body of her son, who had been drafted to play for the Boston Celtics of the National Basketball Association two days earlier.

Bias said she has spent the two years since his death traveling and talking to groups about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, sexual activity and other teen-age temptations.



Stay Alive,
Say
"NO"
To Drugs!

Film Released To Help Fight The War On Drugs

BY RONALD POWERS
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK (AP) --- New York educators and city officials unveiled their newest weapon in the war against drugs, a pair of straight-talking films that tell students and their parents about the dangers of drugs and how to avoid them.

Unlike earlier films, these new ones produced for the city school system make no effort to frighten or preach to students, said Robert F. Wagner Jr., president of the Board of Education.

Instead, in "Kids Talk to Kids About Drugs," the first part of

the "Safe Passage" films, city school students who have avoided the temptations of drugs tell their peers how they can do the same. The film will become a part of the citywide curriculum for grades four through seven, the officials said.

The second film, "Keeping Kids Off Drugs," is aimed at parents and offers advice from teachers, drug counselors and police. It will be shown to parent and civic organizations.

"People tend to listen to groups their own age, and I think they will have a tremendous impact," schools Chancellor Richard R.

Green said of the films.

If something is not done to inhibit the use of drugs "the 1990s will be a time none of us is very proud of" and by the year 2000 "it will be out of our reach to be a great nation," Green said at a news conference at Gracie Mansion.

Mayor Edward I. Koch noted that illegal drugs were involved in the death of every city police officer killed in the line of duty in recent years.

And, he said, most people arrested "have some drug in them. It's enormous, the impact of drugs on this city."

When he asked the youngsters if they knew about crack, "I was shocked, because they all knew. They said, 'Mayor, you must be retarded. It's a drug,'" Koch said.