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#### I-Team: Drug Center Closes

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Photographed By: [Phil Drechsler](#)

Last Update: 7:56 pm



Scene from original I-Team report on Kids Helping Kids.

*A controversial drug treatment program the I-Team profiled several years ago has shut its doors to patients. But that doesn't mean the controversy is over. The I-Team's Hagit Limor says the teenagers have just been moved to another state.*

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Kids Helping Kids presented itself as the treatment of last resort when the I-Team got an unprecedented look inside

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four years ago. No cameras had been allowed before. The treatment the I-Team saw called for complete isolation of newcomers, who don't go to their home or to school for months, sometimes longer. They aren't allowed to listen to music or TV. They can't talk to each other, and must get permission to speak at all.

The executive director of the facility in Milford, Ohio told us in 2005, there's a reason for this tough love. Penny Walker said, "We deal with difficult kids and sometimes difficult families, and we're not going to please everybody." Walker no longer works for Kids Helping Kids.

The I-Team investigated the program after former clients and some parents called it a brainwashing cult. They cited day-long rap sessions in which teens were forced to repeating gestures and words in order to advance in the program and win a chance to go to their homes at night.

But some parents of clients in treatment at the time strongly supported the tactics. Parent Martha Logan told the I-Team she believes the program saved her son's life. She said, "There was no place else to turn."

After our report, protesters picketed regularly outside the center in Milford. This continued even after the center became affiliated with a chain called Pathway Family Center.

Now the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services confirms that Pathway has turned in its state certificate allowing it to operate.

A property search shows Pathway still owns the building. It still lists its address on Branch Hill Guinea Road on its paperwork, and the local phone number still leads to voice mail. But a visit to the building found no one there

in the middle of business hours. The facility looks deserted, but files and keys still sit on desks. Inside, the rooms once full of troubled teens sit empty and silent.

Mark West says he knows what happened to the roughly two dozen kids who were here when the place shut its doors to treatment. He says they were moved to other Pathway facilities, including Indianapolis, where his son is enrolled. He opposes the program, but his ex-wife, who has custody, supports it.

West says the Milford location closed because of, "Bad publicity, not just bad publicity but actually the truth started getting out. I think community pressure closed it down."

The I-Team tried to reach Pathway through calls and e-mails not only to its Milford location, but also its other treatment centers in Michigan and Indianapolis. The day of this report, a spokeswoman finally called back. She said it wasn't community pressure, but economic realities that shut the center in Ohio. As of Thursday, January 29, 2009, she says the Michigan facility in the Detroit suburb of Southfield also has shut its doors.

West and his ex-wife have differing opinions of Pathway's program. The I-Team has heard from other parents as well. We'll be following up with a report of both sets of opinions.  
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