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Organization offers alternatives to destruction of substance abuse

By Steve McCurdy

Of the Emerald

Our Choice is a newly formed organization that provides students with an alternative to using drugs or drinking alcohol.

Our Choice, according to adviser Jon Geiber, is not an anti-drug organization. Instead, the student-run organization promotes healthy alternatives to substance use and abuse.

Geiber said it is not realistic to eliminate substance abuse from a college campus — that is not the group's goal.

"What we do is try to help people deal with stress and depression, improve communication skills and provide advice on dealing with relationships with different kinds of people," said Geiber. "We help build self-esteem and explain other modes of relaxation rather than using chemicals."

The non-profit organization also is a referral center for people who want information about substance use and treatment. Our Choice is not a treatment center.

It is a meeting place where people can just talk, but it is not a counseling center either, Geiber said. "We are not here to say drugs are bad and you are bad for using them. We are not opposed to persons who use drugs. What we do is promote positive solutions to life's problems."

"We don't even talk about chemical use or abuse — we rarely use the words alcohol or drugs," continued Geiber.

Geiber is a GTF who has taught an alternatives to chemical abuse class for the past two terms. Many of Our Choice's philosophies and procedures originated in the class.

Our Choice began earlier this year and met with a lot of administrative resistance, said Glen Synoground, the organization's public relations representative.

"We were told many times by the people in the administration that a student-helping-student organization of this kind would not work. They also said that an organization of this kind was not necessary at the University," Synoground said.

But Geiber is concerned with student death and injury due to chemical abuse at the University this school year. "It is a serious problem. I'm not saying that this school is worse than other schools, but the problem does exist," he said.

Bill Ballester, conduct coordinator of the University, said there is a correlation between substance use and disorderly conduct among University students.

"Aside from academic dishonesty cases, almost all of the conduct cases we have dealt with in the past two years con-

cerned the disruptive behavior of someone using drugs or alcohol," Ballester said.

Our Choice chairwoman Carine Green said she joined the group after she went through the Greek-sponsored Impact training session, an informational substance abuse program, earlier this year.

"After Impact training, I wanted to get involved, so I joined a drug awareness committee, which led to another committee, which led to Our Choice."

Currently, about 15 to 20 students are involved in Our Choice, but the organization does not have an established residence yet. It also is relying on private donations and fund-raising for existence.

Geiber said Our Choice does not receive funds from the ASUO but hopes to get assistance this term or in the 1987-88 school year.

The long-term goal of the organization is to have some kind of impact on every student, Geiber said.

"We want to be known as a place where students can come in and see other lifestyles a person can choose from other than using substances," Geiber said. "One way or another, we want to reach every student."

For more information about Our Choice, call Jon Geiber at 345-4621 or Carine Green at 485-3552.

Third annual Indonesian culture festival to focus on formal dinner of native foods

"Dinner in Indonesia" is the theme of the third annual Indonesian celebration at the University.

Last year the theme was "The Charisma of Indonesia," focusing on dancers and singers who presented Indonesian entertainment, along with a buffet-style dinner.

This year the night will center around the dinner, and the entertainment will be a sideshow. People will be served a variety of Indonesian dishes including Lempur, sweet rice with chicken filling; Ayam Panggang, grilled chicken; Bumbu Rujak, beef with chili sauce; and Sarundeng, meat with dry coconut.

Since December, more than 100 students have been preparing for the celebration, said Rony Soerakoesomah, celebration director.

Many of the costumes that will be worn by the 20 performers come from the Indonesian consulates in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Slides, masks and movies were also donated by the Indonesian consulates, Soerakoesomah said.

Until two years ago, Indonesian night was incorporated into the Foreign Student Organization's International night, however, many Indonesian students felt there was enough interest in their culture and enough material to enable them to present a separate celebration, Soerakoesomah said.

Indonesian night will be held on April 5 from 6-8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$6.50 for students and \$7.50 for the general public.

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