

Parents turn in teen over cannabis

The Southland Times | Friday, 28 March 2008

The parents of an Invercargill teenager decided it was time for tough parenting when they found cannabis in their son's room, so they called the police.

Yesterday, the teen narrowly escaped a jail term.

Judge Kevin Phillips sentenced 18-year-old Jamie Douglas Kennedy to 250 hours' community work after he admitted possessing cannabis for supply. His parents' actions in telling police about the cannabis had been "very brave", the judge said.

"You are a very stupid young man and you should be really proud of your parents for what they have done," he told Kennedy.

"Your parents support you and have done this as a way of tough parenting."

As a result, Kennedy had reached a turning point in his life, he said.

The judge said Kennedy may have read "crap" that cannabis was fun and a harmless drug but in reality it was an addictive and invasive drug that ruined people's lives.

"It takes away their willpower, their ability to resolve issues. It deprives people of the very desire to succeed, which I am sure you, at 18 years of age, have in you now.

That's why people that deal in drugs go to jail. You go very close to jail today." Kennedy's young age had helped prevent him going to jail, the judge said.

The judge said Kennedy was a man of good character but because of his drug and alcohol use he was at risk and needed to get it under control. He had factors in his favour.

"You are remorseful and have parenting support."

He had been given a chance, the judge said. "If you are involved in this type of thing again you are going downstairs rather than out the front door."

Kennedy's parents, who were in the public gallery for their son's sentencing, declined to comment.

Tough Love spokesman Peter Altmann said Kennedy's parents should be commended for their actions if their motivation was love for their son.

"If that's their motivation, I think they should be applauded for doing something to help turn the unacceptable behaviour around and solve the problem in the home," he said.

Tough Love did not advocate parents contacting police for every misdemeanor but parents should be encouraged to do something to help their children realise there were consequences for their actions, he said.

Southland police area commander Inspector Tony O'Neill said it was important parents considered notifying the authorities if they found their children with drugs " so that the necessary interventions can be put in place to preclude their offspring being involved in even more serious drug taking."

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/4454234a11.html>