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Members laud schooling, church's no-drug stance

By CURTIS KRUEGER
Times Staff Writer

Marie C. Gale is raising her children the same way her parents raised her: using the principles of Scientology.

"Considering my parents and grandmother, my children are fourth-generation Scientologists," Mrs. Gale, 36, said in a letter.

Mrs. Gale, of Clearwater, is one of many local Scientologists who say their religion offers benefits to their families, their children in particular.

Members say Scientology benefits their children because:

- It offers educational methods that they say are superior to those used in public schools.

- It steers parents away from psychiatry, which they view as evil.

- It stresses a drug-free environment.

- It teaches them procedures called "touch assists," which are designed to help them recover from bumps and bruises.

Mrs. Gale said she decided to become an active member of the Church of Scientology when she was 12.

"I attribute much of the success and happiness in my life to my upbringing in a sane and happy family and my ensuing Scientology pastoral counseling and auditing."

Auditing is a Scientology counseling process that involves the use of an "E-meter," a device similar to a lie detector.

Both of the Gales' children, Philip, 12, and Elizabeth, 8, attend the Delphian School in Oregon, a boarding school highly regarded by Scientologists that uses methods devised by L. Ron Hubbard, the science fiction writer who founded Scientology. Elizabeth started attending this year, and Philip started when he was 8, she said.

Both children are involved in a variety of school activities and are studying at advanced levels, according to her letter.

Mrs. Gale said neither she nor her husband has pushed them into Scientology training or auditing.

But this summer, Elizabeth completed the "purification rundown." This is a process that purports to cleanse the body of various drugs and toxins.

Philip has completed auditing sessions designed to help him educationally, she said.

In response to an inquiry from the *Times*, Mrs. Gale wrote a letter to the newspaper and also wrote answers to follow-up questions.

The *Times* was able to find only a couple of Scientology parents willing to talk about raising children in the church.

Edward Best, a father of four, said in a telephone interview that Scientologist children are strongly warned of the dangers of drugs, and he thinks they get involved in drugs and crime less often.

Richard Washburn of Tampa agreed.

"I think the big advantage in Scientology for children is the awareness of the danger of drugs," Washburn said. "That's why my kids are in a private school."

Washburn said two of his children attend the True



Photo courtesy of Marie C. Gale

Happy Scientologists: Marie C. Gale poses with her husband, David, son Philip and daughter Elizabeth.

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works there. The school uses Hubbard educational methods.

In an effort to get more firsthand information, the *St. Petersburg Times* repeatedly asked Scientology spokesman Richard Haworth for permission to interview staff Scientologists and their children.

The requests were declined for months. (See box page 14.)

Haworth did arrange for Scientologists to write letters to the *Times*. The newspaper received more than 180 letters. More than 150 arrived in a single day.

It was impossible to verify most of the letters. Several letters had illegible signatures and no return addresses. Reprinted below are verbatim excerpts from some of the letters. The handwriting on some is difficult to read and the spellings of the signatures may not be correct. Haworth declined to confirm the spellings.

■ ■ ■

I am 15 years old. I was born into a Scientology family and have been raised with Scientology technology.

It has helped me tremendously. When I was very small I got in many accidents. My mother did a Scientology handling for those who get sick often, and it helped me to a point where I was rarely sick anymore.

I was raised with the principles covered by Ron Hubbard on exchange, manners, how to have good relations, etc. I have turned out well — I am a very sane girl (not to brag) but I can tell right from wrong — I am not promiscuous, don't smoke, do drugs, can have many things as a result of Scientology and the way I was brought up by my parents.

Elyssa Alexander

■ ■ ■

My daughter is five years old and is almost in the second grade!

She and I have a beautiful relationship we communicate we laugh and we cry together. I not only have a daughter but a friend who is five going on forever.

She is drug free and knows drugs are bad. She sees people drunk and doped up and tells them to stop it.

I could go on and on but the best was I came home one night and my five year old was teaching her 13-year-old babysitter how to use a dictionary! That says it for me!

Kate Ryan

■ ■ ■

My daughter was raised in Scientology. She is now 14 years old. My daughter even though is only 14, she knows how to communicate with people without being reactive. She has learned how to treat people and she makes friends very easy.



Times photo — STEVE HASEL

Scientologists in white uniforms walk along Franklin Street in Clearwater.

She has never even tasted a medicine therefore she is 100% drug free — except for the school vaccines. Of course if she were sick we obviously would have given her whatever the doctor said, however my daughter never had any sickness that required to go to the doctor. I feel that the main reason she is healthy is because she has nobody that suppresses her or makes her life impossible. Therefore she is very happy. We allow her to be herself at all times.

Bolivar Quinomis

■ ■ ■

I am 20 years old and am the daughter of two people who were Scientologists since before I was born. I grew up moving all around the United States and have gone to many different types of public, private schools.

When I started 9th grade I got into drugs and hardly ever went to school. Most of the time I spent ditching class and hanging out with my friends. No person in the school ever noticed or did anything to handle the situation when I walked off the grounds in front of them. Luckily, I was taken out of that situation and moved here to Clearwater where I then went to school at TRUE School, a Hubbard Method School in the area. I received all the personal attention that I needed. I had no problems with the other children and actually did very well in my studies.

In the Hubbard based schools I learned. At the others I sat in class like a zombie trying to learn and eventually just left giving up on learning.

I am now the owner of my own business and married very happily with a child on the way. I am a Scientologist as well as my husband.

Shelly P.