

When a Friend Wants to Drop Out

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE who is thinking about quitting school, here are some ways you can help him or her from Ann Stokes, teacher of a peer helping class:

- *Let them know you care.* Since potential dropouts are often absent from school, one way to show

you care is to call your friend on the phone and say, "I'll be looking for you tomorrow at school."

- *Listen well, and without giving advice.* Just allowing a person to talk about problems can help.

- *Talk to someone who has dropped out.* It will give you an understanding of the problems that dropouts face. This will make you more knowledgeable and understanding of the issues involved.

- *Encourage your friend to list the pros and cons of dropping out.* This will get the person to think about why he or she wants to drop out and the consequences of that decision.

- *Send the person to the right place for help.* If the problems are largely academic, encourage him or her to get a tutor by obtaining information about tutoring programs. If the problems are home-related, encourage your friend to talk to a counselor or another sympathetic adult.

- *Be ready to intervene in the halls.* Teasing, ridicule and mistreatment can contribute to students hating school. You can make school a better place for everyone by jumping in when someone is being harassed and saying, "Knock it off!" "A lot of times, that's all it takes," Ann says. "I've seen it work."