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นำเสนอเมื่อ : 5 ม.ค. 2557

คำอ่าน

... San Francisco Educator Works to Keep Young People 'Alive and Free'

This is the VOA Special English Education Report, More than half of young black men in the United States do not finish high school. Many grow up without fathers and in neighborhoods with gangs, drugs and violence. Sixty percent of those who drop out of school have spent time in jail by the age of thirty-five.Joe Marshall co-founded the Omega Boys Club in San Francisco, California, twenty-three years ago. Mister Marshall tries to give boys -- and girls -- a safe refuge and a chance at a better future. Every week, he has two basic messages for his young students: "Stop the violence" and "Don't do drugs."Mister Marshall spent twenty-five years as a teacher and administrator in San Francisco. He taught math in middle school and expected to see his best students go to college.But he said a lot of his former students ended up dead or in prison for selling drugs or being involved in gangs. And many girls ended up getting pregnant. The Omega Boys Club serves more than four hundred young people every year. Two times a week, it offers after-school classes in math, reading, family and life skills, and college preparation. In many ways, it serves as a kind of family. It provides teenagers with structure and support. Joe Marshall has a doctorate in psychology. He sees gangs and violence as a disease that needs to be dealt with as a public health problem. He tells young people to follow some new rules for living. These rules will decrease their chances of ending up dead or in prison and increase their chances of staying alive and free. The club represents the headquarters of what he calls the "alive and free movement." But his most effective way to spread his anti-violence message is through radio. In nineteen ninety-one, Joe Marshall started "Street Soldiers," a weekly call-in show. It airs on popular hip-hop station KMEL in San Francisco.Marlena was one of the graduates of the Omega Boys Club. She is at Southern University right now, going into her third year. She talked about what she had learned by coming to Omega.The club provides guidance and financial assistance to help students stay in school. Over ninety percent of members who were accepted into college have graduated.Twelve other American cities have copied the program. Joe Marshall has been invited to speak in Canada, Nigeria, South Africa and Thailand. He turned sixty-three this year. He says he has no thoughts of retiring any time soon. And that's the VOA Special English Education Report.

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