

Parade Magazine

The following article can be found online under the topic of 'AMERICA AT OUR BEST'

http://www.parade.com/articles/editions/2007/edition_10-28-2007/Intelligence_Report



When Mark Goldsmith gave a talk to a group of inmates at New York City's Rikers Island Prison, he was impressed by their eagerness and intelligence. "They were incredibly bright but just didn't know it," he says. But he worried about their futures, since some 50% of ex-cons end up back in jail. So he founded Getting Out and Staying Out (GOSO), a group that begins working with male inmates ages 18-24 shortly after they're incarcerated and continues assisting them even after they finish their sentences. "So many of them ask me, 'Why are you here for us?'" says Goldsmith. "I tell them that when I was their age, I had no idea what I wanted to do either." When an inmate is released, he's expected to show up at GOSO offices within a week. Goldsmith's dedication has paid off: Only about 10% of the men who've gone through his program have returned to prison.