



JAIL HIGH SCHOOL Documentary Description

Jail High School is the story of two teenagers working toward their high school diplomas while they await trial for armed robbery. Both volunteered to continue their education at York Alternative High School, a Chicago Public School that is inside the Cook County Jail.

Dominic Mike was never interested in school before his arrest. But when he started going to school in jail, all of that changed. He found that it was a surprisingly good place to get an education—the teachers seemed more dedicated than the ones at his old public school in Chicago.

DeLoyal Kershaw is atypical of students at the jail in that he has a solid educational background. He was an honor student at a private school before he decided to drop out. Now this school has allowed him to pick up where he left off—he completed his GED, and he's working toward his high school diploma.

Dominic and DeLoyal are both in Ms. Horwick's class. Her classroom is a refuge from all of the violence and negativity that the kids encounter in jail. She allows her students to listen to music and to dance. She knows how to tap into their interests—she has been introducing poetry to the kids who like to rap. Mrs. Horwick also integrates horticulture into everything she teaches. She recognizes that many of her students have not grown up around grass and trees, and she feels that this is an opportunity for them to learn how to nurture and love.

But there are many distractions to their education here. It is hard for these kids to divert their attention away from their court cases, and many of them are facing charges that carry lengthy sentences. They also have to deal with the day-to-day stress of life in jail. When they are not in class, the students live on what is known as a "school deck"; but the kids like to call them the "gladiator decks", because they say they can be so violent.

The school has allowed Doinitric and DeLoyal to escape this environment, and both are starting to thrive. DeLoyal has almost enough credits to graduate, and he has started tutoring some of the students who are struggling. It has helped him realize that he likes working with people, and that he might want to become a social worker someday. Doinitric, meanwhile, is starting to consider college. He is studying for the ACT, and with the help of a social worker, he has been applying for scholarships.

But both of these students face uncertain futures.

Doinitric can only use a college scholarship if he can get out of jail. He recently rejected a plea bargain that would have sent him to prison for several years. But if he is convicted of armed robbery he could stay locked up until he is in his late 40's.

Outreach Campaign Management

Founded in 1992, Outreach Extensions is a national consulting firm that specializes in comprehensive, high profile educational and community outreach campaigns for media projects. Outreach Extensions is responsible for the design and management of the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign and the Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative.

For more information on JAIL HIGH SCHOOL or other media campaigns that are part of the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign or the Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative, please contact:



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