

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On Tuesday, May 10th, WRSU-FM (88.7) will take a close look at a group of prison inmates in Rahway State Prison. In a special broadcast beginning at 7PM, WRSU News will examine The Lifers' Group. Founded in December of 1975, the membership is made up of those men at Rahway State Prison who are serving life and those sentences in excess of 25-years.

According to Richard Rowe, president of the organization, The Lifers' Group was formed on many premises. The men see themselves as incarcerated people that suffer from tremendous discontent without adequate language with which to register complaints, or to imagine a brighter future for themselves. So, the group came together, with the approval of the prison administration, to try and help each other.

A booklet, published by the group, states that at a membership meeting in May of 1976, the subject was proposed that the men turn their efforts towards helping the old, the blind, the handicapped and the youth of the surrounding communities. Their first efforts in this area were turned towards the young with the creation of the "Juvenile Awareness - Project Help Program."

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The programs, held twice daily, are sessions designed to enlighten the youth to the facts of what involvement in crime, prison or its ramifications will lead them into.

In preparation for our program, which is another in our continuing series of Community Awareness broadcasts, WRSU News was allowed to record one of the sessions, where young people are brought into the institution, taken on a tour and then escorted to the prison auditorium where the inmates have a rap session.

The whole program at Rahway is revolutionary in it's methods, yet very effective in it's results. Out of 1,300 youths who have gone through the sessions, only 14 have committed crimes again.

Why this high success rate? The men say that through their own experiences these young people might be apt to heed their advise were they might not listen to a parent or someone in authority. Frank Bindhammer, treasurer of the group, says that "we are able to relate to their problems having lived them ourselves. Over fifty percent of our membership has been involved in a juvenile offense or has spent time in a juvenile prison."

During the one hour special, WRSU News will bring you behind the bars of Rahway State Prison, let you hear the rap session between inmate and juvenile offender, and get the reactions of those young people who have already gone through

this history-making project.

Also included in the broadcast will be an indepth interview with Frank Bindhammer, treasurer of the Lifers' Group as well as interviews with Middlesex County Judge, the Honorable George Nicola and Woodbridge Police Chief, Anthony O'Brien discussing the success of the program during it's first eight months of operation.

The experiences and interviews that WRSU News has gathered together for this special are real and at times are frightening. However, according to the inmates involved in the project, "This is with no regret on our part, because we would rather for them to know in a cold, harsh, emphatic way what we have been through as criminals, than for them to follow in our foolish footsteps, to find out sooner or later that our warning is true."