

o m e g a b o y s c l u b



MARGARET J. NORRIS

Nationally syndicated talk-show host, Margaret J. Norris is Director of Academics of the Omega Boys Club, a youth organization that emphasizes academic achievement and non-involvement with violence and drugs. She has developed the Academic Program of the Omega Boys Club, teaches the Academic Preparation class, counsels students pre-, during and post-collegiate experience, and has assisted more than 100 young men and women matriculate into colleges and universities throughout the country. Since 1990, when Ms. Norris became Academic Director and instituted the Academic program, Omega Boys Club has celebrated 38 college graduations, a continuation/graduation rate of nearly 70%.

She has developed the curriculum for The Omega Institute, the replication arm of the Omega Boys Club. The Omega Institute is designed to instruct others in violence prevention/intervention skills. Norris shares major responsibility for teaching trainees of the Institute.

Her expertise in teaching and counseling has lent itself to the Institutional Violence Prevention/Intervention component of the Boys Club. Ms. Norris works within juvenile and adult correctional facilities around the state of California. She has developed programs for incarcerated fathers, teaching them parenting skills. The success of her work is evidenced through a judge awarding an inmate custody of his children while still incarcerated.

With these kinds of achievements, the Omega Boys Club continues to receive national recognition. Norris, staff and members of the club have been profiled in the New Yorker, the Los Angeles Times Magazine, Vibe, the San Francisco Chronicle & Examiner and on CBS Evening News.

In addition to her work with the Omega Boys Club, Ms. Norris hosts the syndicated violence prevention radio talk show, "Street Soldiers". The show provides a forum for youth to articulate their ideas about and receive information on and solutions to the most pressing problems facing their communities: crime, gang violence, teenage pregnancy and drugs. The New Yorker Magazine hailed the show as "a tantalizing media model for discouraging violence and serving as an electronic parent for violence prone young people." On January 19, 1997, "Street Soldiers" celebrated its first nationally syndicated show.

The effectiveness of Ms. Norris's work can be seen in the upcoming PBS documentary Street Soldiers, a film that follows the stories of three juvenile offenders trying, with Omega's help, to turn their lives around. The documentary is currently being aired across the country. She, the staff and club are subjects of this film.

Additionally, her work is chronicled in detail in the recently released bestseller, Street Soldier (Delacorte Press, May 1996).

Ms. Norris participated in the French-American Foundations's Bi-National Symposium on Youth Violence. This conference convened at the United Nations Building.

Margaret Norris received her Bachelor's degree in English and History from the University of San Francisco in 1973. She has done post graduate work at both the University of San Francisco and the University of California, Los Angeles. She was employed as a teacher by the Jefferson Union High School District and the Alhambra School District for a combined total of 20 years. She is a single parent of three teenage sons and is committed to teaching people, globally, how to live peacefully with one another.

THE OMEGA INSTITUTE

PURPOSE

The purpose of The Omega Institute is to inform, teach and train individuals in violence prevention/intervention skills modeled after those used in the Omega programs, with the intention that these individuals will return to their organizations and implement Omega-like approaches in their work. The Institute provides a way of developing practitioners who can take what they learn to communities throughout the country and around the world. Educating individuals about violence prevention-intervention is necessary regardless of one's station in life. We believe that **violence prevention is good business for everyone.**

GOAL

The goal of the Omega Institute is to empower individuals to stay alive and free, and to help them assist others to do likewise. We believe that individuals can make a difference in the violence prevention area, and thus our focus is on training individual people to do so.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To inform individuals about and teach Omega's concepts about violence prevention and intervention. These include:
 - (a) risk factors that result in destructive behavior;
 - (b) methods of dealing with psychological, emotional residue; and
 - (c) rules for living that results in healthy lifestyles.
- 2) To teach individuals to assist others in living violence free.

STRUCTURE

- lectures/note taking
- questions and answers
- individual presentations
- observation of Omega Boys Club program

EXPECTATIONS

When these sessions end, you will be knowledgeable of the Omega Boys Club violence prevention treatment model. Specifically, we expect you:

- 1) To be able to identify and to articulate to others:
 - (a) the risk factors associated with violence and
 - (b) Omega's new Rules for Living
- 2) To understand some techniques and processes of dealing with Emotional Residue (i.e. - Anger - Fear - Pain).
- 3) To have basic instruction needed to implement activities with a similar message and approach.

o m e g a b o y s c l u b



DESCRIPTION

The Omega Boys Club, headquartered in San Francisco, is a highly successful youth development and violence prevention program founded in 1987. The following is a brief description of the Club's programs:

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

This program has a College Preparation component and an Employment Training and Entrepreneurship component. The class teaches verbal, written expression and critical thinking to young people in both components. The college bound students receive SAT preparation, assistance with college applications and financial aid forms and requirements, and scholarships. The employment-bound students receive assistance with GED test preparation and skills training, including support while completing internship and apprenticeship requirements.

Achievements: In May 1997: Omega celebrated its thirty-eighth (38) college graduate. We have assisted a total of 146 young people since 1988. Since 1990, when the Academic Program began, we have a continuation/graduation rate of nearly 70%.

STREET SOLDIERS VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Club's violence prevention effort reaches beyond the club members to the community at large. Key program components are 1) the Club's syndicated *Street Soldier Talk Show*, a call-in forum for youth and adults on the issues of drugs, violence, and other related topics; 2) the Club's national helpline, 1-800-SOLDIER; 3) the **Institutional Violence prevention** component where staff, volunteers and Omega-trained peer counselors work with incarcerated youth and adults to reduce recidivism; 4) the **Community Violence prevention** component in which staff provides violence prevention training for community agencies, schools and other organizations.

Achievements: Staff are in contact with over 10,000 (multiple counts) students and teachers in training each quarter; the radio audience is over 200,000 on two evenings each month when our broadcast is statewide; we are in contact with nearly 2,000 (multiple counts) detained juveniles and adult prisoners each quarter.

THE OMEGA INSTITUTE (TOI)

This is the replication arm of the Club. Launched in mid 1996, TOI is designed to instruct others to use the tools and methods that have made the Omega Boys Club successful. It was developed in response to requests from all over the country for help in replication of the Club model. Participants must be working with youth and/or have the responsibility of developing programs for at-risk youth.

OTHER RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. **Book** - *Street Soldier: One Man's Struggle to Save a Generation, One Life at a Time*, Delacorte Press 1996. This bestseller is a comprehensive history of the organization and its evolution, and has become required reading for numerous organizations and school personnel. A portion of the proceeds from every book sold is donated to the Club.

2. **Documentary** - In the Spring of 1997, the documentary "Street Soldiers" aired on PBS (Public Broadcasting System) stations across the country. It is a 90 minute film that follows the stories of three juvenile offenders trying, with Omega's help, to turn their lives around.

3. **Syndication** - *STREET SOLDIERS*, the radio show, celebrated its first nationally syndicated show on Sunday, January 19, 1997, and can be heard every Sunday in various cities around the country.

Joseph E. Marshall, Jr. is Co-Founder and the Executive Director. Jack Jacqua is Co-Founder and works with the institutional violence prevention component. Margaret Norris is the Director of Academics. The Omega Boys Club is a member of the National African-American Male Collaboration funded by the Kellogg Foundation. Omega Boys Club is not sponsored by or affiliated with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.