

Children of Inmates Documentary Translation

COI Telemundo

In the United States, the jails are full of parents that have had little contact or, don't even know their children. For that reason, community service groups organize visits for minors to maintain family ties even though the jail bars separate them.

Andy Santos Valdes from Indiantown, Florida with more information.

Andy: It's raining, but nothing can ruin the trip. Destiny Ramirez wants to arrive, just as Destiny Menendez, who won't let go of her backpack.

This isn't an everyday trip. After about two hours, we arrive at Martin Correctional Institution, a maximum security prison in Indiantown, Florida. The parents are waiting to hug their children for the first time, in many cases. .

Anibal Ramirez: It gave me an opportunity to know my daughters. I left one as a small child and the other was in my wife's stomach.

Andy: Anibal Ramirez has been sent to jail for 15 years for armed robbery; he's been in jail for six.

Anibal Ramirez: I will tell her what I went through and that will teach her to think before she commits a crime or something.

In the United States, almost 3 million children have a parent in jail. The majority of them are African Americans and Hispanics.

Paulette: How is it that these kids are falling through a gap? Nobody acknowledges that they have a huge problem!

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Andy: Paulette Pfeiffer and a dozen of community service groups help about 600 children in south Florida have as normal a childhood as possible.

Paulette: The goal is that the children travel through a healthy path. That they keep seeing their parents. That they love them, that they forgive them.

Andy: Something difficult for Amber Martinez.

Amber: Sometimes we are sad because we don't have a dad.

Andy: This is the first time in 8 years that she sees her dad, who has been sentenced for 35 years in jail.

Mr. Martinez: I can't sit here and say that I'm the best father in the world because I haven't been a father; I've always been a prisoner. But I know that one day, I will be able to be with them.

Andy: But even though, if just for today, the parents and children are together... recovering the years lost.

Unknown: He has won the love of his daughters. Always. Through a card or a phone call.

Andy: This program is one of the first in the country. It has been going on for 5 years and the results have transcended through the jail bars. Further studies show that 23% of

children, whose mom or dad are in jail, are expelled from school and more than half commit felonies.

Paulette: They feel a bit calmer because now they have help

Andy: But after a couple of hours, the visits are over.

Amber: I am happier because they gave me a chance to reunite with my dad.

Andy: Destiny Melendez hurries and gives her dad the card that explains how much she misses him. It's difficult to say goodbye.

Without knowing so, these children are on their way to a better life.

One that they hope that some day, they can share with their parents without the bars in their way.

In Indiantown, Florida Andy Santo Valdes. Telemundo