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THE INDUSTRY'S NEWSPAPER

Joe Marshall Gets 'Freedom Works Award'

■ 'Street Soldiers' host honored on Capitol Hill

By Jeffrey Yorke

She's 23 and "caught up in a triangle of drugs." She has listened to **Joe Marshall's** "Street Soldiers" call-in talk show for several years and "wanted to call in for a while, but I didn't have the courage. But now, it seems I'm backed into a corner and I don't know which way to turn."

Marshall — who founded the **Omega Boys Club** in San Francisco a decade ago to help rescue inner-city youth from the influences of gangs, drugs, and violence — understands. In the nearly six years he's hosted the nationally syndicated "Street Soldiers," he and **Margaret Norris**, the show's "academic director," have pulled many from the jaws of drugs, violence, and surely, death.

Since 1991, the three-hour weekly program — which originates on **KMEL-FM/San Francisco** and is heard on **KKBT-FM/Los Angeles** and a handful of other stations — has served as a conduit for information that often means the difference between life and death. Marshall describes the program as "a solution-oriented program designed to steer youth away from self-destructive behavior and support them to build productive lives."

And Marshall's work has not gone unnoticed. On March 20, U.S. House Majority Leader **Dick Arney** (R-TX) presented Marshall with the "Freedom Works Award" for his part in founding the Omega Boys Club. "It truly is a wonderful organization," Arney told a press conference in the Capitol Building.



Joe Marshall

'Inspired & Inspiring'

Listeners to the popular program are offered a toll-free, round-the-clock hotline for counseling (1-800-SOLDIER). When the 23-year-old caller stated, "Everywhere I turn I'm always running into someone who is trafficking drugs" and admitted she is no longer worried about herself but about her drug-dealing boyfriend, Marshall's advice to her was simple but solid: "Don't go with a dude who's dealing drugs. There are a lot of brothers that don't."

"You are putting yourself at risk by dealing with him. You talk about that particular vicious cycle. That cycle can end for you by not going with a man that's dealing drugs."

And Norris jumps in at just the right time to reaffirm Marshall's street-smart solutions and to help guide the listener into common-sense problem-solving.

Rep. **Nancy Pelosi** (D-CA), who represents San Francisco, thanked Marshall for his work with the club and for the radio show. Rep. **Ron Dellums** (D-CA), whose district includes Oakland, said he is proud of Marshall's work in the Bay area. "Joe Marshall is an extraordinary human being — inspired and inspiring," Dellums said.

"Street Soldiers" is also syndicated on **KATZ-AM/St. Louis** and **WQUE-FM/New Orleans** and will be picked up by Radio One's **WOL-AM/Washington** and **WOLB-AM/Baltimore** "within the next two weeks," according to **Jim Allen**, who programs the regional combo. Allen expects to air "at least an hour" of the show live and the remainder on a tape-delay basis.

Jeffrey Yorke is R&R's Washington Bureau Chief.