

Camp Monterey Celebrates 25 Years Of Inmate Rehabilitation

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MONTEREY, N.Y. (WETM-TV) -- Officials at the Camp Monterey Shock Camp in Schuyler County say they're celebrating 25 years of success.

45,000 inmates have graduated from the military style boot camp since it opened.

For 25 years the Monterey Shock Camp in Schuyler County says it's been changing the lives of inmates.

That's includes the 208 current cadets you see here.

Using values of discipline and focus similar to the military, shock camps like Monterey help inmates convicted of non violent crimes rehabilitate themselves during a 6 month

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program.

Through physical training, manual labor and drug counseling, inmates are given preparation to lead a better life outside of incarceration.

"When an inmate comes here, they are straight off the street, so you can see it in their clothing, their attitude, 6 months later, they are reborn," says Drill Instructor Jeremy Woodworth.

Keith and Yolanda Peterkin are two shock camp success stories.

Both graduated more than 20 years ago and were asked to speak at the anniversary celebration.

Although it's been two decades since they attended camp, the lessons they learned have stuck with them.

"Responsibility, discipline, focus, really having a plan, following it, setting for goals for myself," says Keith.

"Shock is a chance to change, confront some mistakes and now I'm responsible for my life," says Yolanda.

The same can be said for those on the way to graduating.

"Mostly what I've learned is to take responsibility for my actions. When I first came here, I put things off to the side. This program taught me a lot about myself, doing the right thing," says Paul Mascipra, a cadet for 5 ½ months.

Officials say Camp Monterey's success is even more impressive considering it's one of few left in the country.

But officials say its no accident.

An incredible staff and willing participants make Monterey "second to none."

"They get their body together, mind together, makes more self-reliant, self-aware, the state transforms offenders, offenders transforms himself," says Corrections Commissioner Brian Fischer.

Officials say they hope to see at least another 25 years of success.

Officials also mentioned that the SHOCK program has saved New York taxpayers an estimated \$1.4 billion since its opening by keeping these cadets out of prison.

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