

Reel History: NPR's Horizons and Project Dream

Friday, 11 July 2014

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Yasent Oliver/KMXT

Hello, my name is Yasent Oliver, a summer intern at KMXT as part of the station's summer archiving project. Over the past two weeks, I was able to listen to quite a few tapes, but the one that stood out to me the most was an NPR program on suicide among Native American youth.

"From National Public Radio, this is Horizons. I'm Vertamae Grosvenor."

"Sometimes, living is so painful, that we've all felt like we just want to die. But what is it that makes some of us commit suicide, especially young people? The suicide rate for Indian teenagers is almost twice the national average. Indian and non-Indian, those who have lost their children feel the same pain."

Throughout the tape, many people told stories of their experiences with suicide.

"I'm a person that attempted suicide, and, it's kinda hard to talk about it, but, um, I had two friends that really talked seriously about suicide, and when I told one of them that I'm here for you if you need to talk to me."

"Just, came up to talk to you, try to help other people, you know, so they wouldn't be killing themselves, 'cause it's hard on their friends and the family. I know it was hard on me, losing both of my brothers, so I just wanted to let them know that there is people that care for you."

"I can feel some of the things people who have killed themselves have felt. They didn't feel that they were important, and nobody let them know that they were. So I think this is a community problem. They'll disguise it; you won't know who they are. Everybody needs love and support."

Later on in the tape, information is given of a group whos purpose is to prevent suicide.

"Project Dream, a group of young people from the Sisseton Wahpeton reservation in South Dakota, are trying to fill the void with drama and music."

"Francis Country founded Project Dream in 1986 after an outbreak of suicide on their reservation."

"We need to find the answer. Ours is kids working with kids. Because, uh, a lot of adults show a lot of authority. They say 'don't do this, don't do that, you're wrong.' We don't really, fully understand 'hey, these kids are intelligent.'"

"Project Dream comes and says, uh, 'there's something to be in an Indian. There's something that's deep and rich and old.' And from this, we can, uh, find a way out of the misery."

You just listened to some audio clips from an undated NPR program about suicide among Native Americans. Thank you for listening, I have been your host, Yasent Oliver, wishing you a good rest of your day.