



TAGS: [richmond](#), [east bay news](#), [vic lee](#)

[Comment Now](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [Report a typo](#) [RSS](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google+](#) [LinkedIn](#) [StumbleUpon](#)



Vic Lee

More: [Bio](#), [E-mail](#), [News Team](#)

RICHMOND, Calif. (KGO) -- Thursday evening in Richmond, religious leaders and youth groups kicked off a new program designed to help keep kids in school and away from crime through mentors.

Almost a quarter of students in the West Contra Costa Unified School District drop out.

"However with the help of a mentoring program, 98 percent of youths matched with mentors stay at school and do not drop out," said Sheryl Lane, a Mentoring 4 Martin participant.

This was the mission tonight at the Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, to recruit mentors for youngsters in Richmond. It's part of a larger program to stem the cycle of violence in the city.

The effort began two years ago after a 16-year-old girl was gang raped just outside Richmond High. Thursday night's kickoff by church leaders, adults and youth groups was meant to coincide with events around Martin Luther King Day. Jason Hill, 8, memorized the civil rights leader's inspirational speech.

"I have a dream that my four children one day in this nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," recited Hill.

There were testimonials from mentors and those who benefited.

"The biggest part we can have and we can share with a youth is to genuinely, genuinely give them our heart," said Leroy Walker, a mentor.

"Having a mentor will show us how to be better young ladies and better in school and give us somebody to come to talk to," said Felicia Earl, a mentored student.

"That's what my mentors did. They always let me know I could depend on them," said Lamondo Hill, a mentored student.

That was what tonight was all about... the power of relationships.

"We honor the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. when we connect vision-filled young people with dream-filled adults," said Rev. Alvin Bernstine, the keynote speaker.

Plenty of dream-filled mentors stood up to volunteer. Then, they filled out commitment cards. Dr. King said, "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

Many did just that in Richmond.

(Copyright ©2011 KGO-TV/DT. All Rights Reserved.)

[Get more East Bay News »](#)

TAGS: [richmond](#), [east bay news](#), [vic lee](#)

[Comment Now](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [Report a typo](#) [RSS](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google+](#) [LinkedIn](#) [StumbleUpon](#)

[Recommend](#) [41](#) recommendations. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.

Recently Published

[Fremont school evacuated after shooter reported](#)

[59 min ago](#) [Comment Now](#) [Share](#)



[Strong winds knock down trees in East Bay](#)

[Comment Now](#) [Share](#)



[Crop duster probably never saw tower he crashed into](#)

[Comment Now](#) [Share](#)

0 comments

[Post A Comment](#)

Be the first to make a comment!

(Max. 500 Characters)

abc7news.com and its parent and affiliated companies are not responsible for the content of comments posted above or for anything arising out of use of the above comments or other interaction among the users. While we may delete comments and block or take other action against users who we determine at our discretion have violated our rules, we cannot always do so. Please see our [Terms of Use](#) for additional policies applicable to these comments.

By commenting, you agree to our [Terms of Use](#). [Post](#)

Sponsored Content

[Mortgage APRs Hit 3.25%](#)



If you owe less than \$729,000 on your mortgage, you probably qualify for the President's Home Refi Program. Qualify now. [More](#)

[Go Back To School With A Grant?](#)



Return to school online with a grant. You may qualify for grants and scholarships that can help you pay for your degree. [More](#)

[Mortgage APRs Hit 2.99%](#)



If you owe less than \$729,000 on your mortgage, you probably qualify for the President's Home Refi Program. Qualify now! [More](#)