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1+1=U GOLF OUTING

SEPTEMBER 10, 2008

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Thursday, July 24, was no ordinary day for Margaret Demaree. In fact, she got only about two hours of sleep the night before. Why? This mother of 18-year-old twins and founder of 1+1=U, a nonprofit organization that gives under-served youth a second chance at success, was busy preparing for her first golf scramble.

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Over 25 youths from all parts of the city were just as excited. Today would mark the first time many of them had ever stepped foot onto a golf course, much less participated in a golf clinic.

"We have to show these kids that there is more out there for them than violence and gangs," Demaree said.

Business owners, mentors, academic tutors and volunteers gathered at Glenmary Country Club for a day of food, prizes and camaraderie.

A nonprofit organization that began last year witnessed the fruit of its labor in Claude Spillman, a Central High School graduate and 1+1=U's first youth who benefited from the program. Spillman, who now plays strong safety for Marshall University, returned home to attend the event.

He wasn't the only one. Grammy-nominated Hip Hop Artist R Prophet also attended and gave advice to several youths who dreamed of launching a music [career](#). Local comedians from Comedy Caravan showed up for a swing at golf and comedic value.

"If these kids can succeed," Demaree explained, "so can others."

The secret to the program's success is realizing that not every school is for every student. The 1+1=U program gears students toward success in colleges or universities; technical or vocational schools; and prep military academies or boarding schools.

The program also seeks to encourage self-discipline, integrity and education in a holistic [environment](#) that promotes leadership and responsibility."

Students participating in the program are divided into two groups. The U Girls meet separately from the U Guys, and each group speaks about certain intimate, personal issues that may be affecting their daily lives.

Demaree recalls one girl who had a simple request. "I just want to learn how to smile again," she told her.

The 1+1=U program is helping all of its youth smile again at the realization that there are adults out there who really care for their well-being.

Mentors and volunteers realize that from time to time, children will get off track, but that, according to Margaret Demaree, is just par for the course.



Students and scramble participants received golf tips from golf pro Derrick Robinson. Submitted photos

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Program founder Margaret Demaree with Claude "C. J." Spillman, the first student to benefit from the 1+1=U program.

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