

# The gospel of success

Rosey Grier takes self-esteem to streets



By Rob Brown, USA TODAY

**'GENTLE GIANT':** Rosey Grier, back, reaches out to children through his ministry, 'Are You Committed.' Here, from left, are Jennifer Drati, 11, Jearon Wilson, 11, Danyel Wilson, 9, Vanessa Luna, 10, and Yvonne Luna, 10. 'You plant a seed,' Grier says. 'You tell them they have value.'

## COVER STORY

# Convincing kids they can be heroes

The former football player becomes a beacon of hope for children at risk

By Karen S. Peterson  
USA TODAY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Success happens when “preparation meets opportunity,” says Roosevelt Grier. It’s a motto he wants to share.

Grier is one of 11 kids, the son of a Georgia peanut farmer who could not read or write. Named after FDR but tagged Rosey, Grier

grew — and grew — to a 6-foot-6, 300-pound-plus pro football star. He played in five world championships with the New York Giants, then led the Los Angeles Rams’ fabled defensive line, the “Fearsome Foursome.”

Grier became a noted needlecrafter, a Carnegie Hall singer coached by Gian Carlo Menotti, a TV show host and a Kennedy family friend who in 1968 wrestled the gun from the hand of Bobby’s assassin.

Now at 60, he wrestles social ills. He is an ordained minister who reclaims kids from street gangs. And he weeps for society’s castaways without embarrassment. “I am a very emotional person. I see these kids in trouble on TV, and I cry. I hurt for people.”

Grier hopes to stimulate kids with his unabashedly inspirational book about minority successes: *Rosey Grier’s All American Heroes* (MasterMedia, \$9.95). It’s arriving on shelves in time for Black History month. The paperback presents as examples both household names and newcomers, from Bill Cosby to Wilma Mankiller, the first woman chief of the Cherokee Nation.

“All too often, minority kids never hear about anyone other than athletes,” he says. “They don’t know the living you can make with your mind. When I hear the same thing in black schools as white — kids talking about becoming doctors and lawyers — I know the ghetto will disappear.”

He has no compunction about crying for kids of all colors. “I have never understood what is the big deal about being

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