

Honors for Hip-Hop's Simmons Bros and Others

Written by NiKKi ID1530

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Bankers, entertainers and non-profit leaders are being honored for outstanding efforts to expand mentoring opportunities to children, as part of MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership's 2005 National Recognition Event. MENTOR, the national voice for youth mentoring programs, is hosting Mentoring's Big Night tonight at New York City's Chelsea Piers. The event will honor The Royal Bank of Scotland Group; Danny, Russell and Joseph "Rev. Run" Simmons, founders of Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation; and Best Buddies International.

Russell and Rev Run Simmons are also founders of the hip-hop rap group Run DMC, and have been involved in every aspect of hip-hop culture.

"Mentoring can have a profoundly positive impact on the children who participate. Research shows that mentoring benefits kids academically, socially and emotionally, as well as in terms of their health and safety," said Gail Manza, MENTOR's Executive Director.

Mentoring's Big Night honors individuals and organizations who provide exemplary leadership and innovation to support mentoring. The Excellence in Mentoring Award is the nation's premier mentoring award for honoring the very finest mentoring programs and advocates. MENTOR selects honorees for their dedication to helping young people achieve their potential through mentoring.

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBS) and Group Chief Executive Sir Fred Goodwin is receiving the Excellence in Mentoring Award for Innovation for the bank's creative approaches to community investment. RBS partnered with The First Tee to create RBS/The First Tee Mentor Program. This program, which was first introduced in New York City in October 2004 and will be expanded to other communities around the country, matches mentees and mentors (primarily RBS employees) and uses golf to teach core life values like honesty, integrity, sportsmanship and a solid work ethic.

RBS employees who have volunteered for the program are sold on it. As mentor Mallika Mathur, notes, "It's a very emotionally rewarding experience to be able to get outside of the office and give your time back. I've never worked for a company before that is so involved or encourages volunteering. The reward I get is being able to help someone like [my mentee] Dilah see that there is more out there."

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Brothers Danny, Russell and Joseph "Rev. Run" Simmons are receiving the Excellence in Mentoring Award for Leadership in Arts and Entertainment. Since 1995, through their Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation and core programs that include Rush Grants; Rush Arts Gallery and Resource Center; and Rush Kids and Rush Impact Mentorship Initiative, the Simmons brothers have been mentoring aspiring young artists and introducing them to the importance of performing arts, as well as encouraging young adults to get out and vote.

Russell and Joseph Simmons also actively support the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN), a non-partisan, national coalition of hip-hop artists, education and civil rights activists and youth leaders. Russell and Danny Simmons were instrumental in expanding youth programming around the critically acclaimed series, "Def Poetry Jam." Danny Simmons' Project Diversity, a multi-venue exhibition, features 200 artists.

Anthony K. Shriver and Best Buddies International is receiving the Excellence in Mentoring Award for Program Leadership. Since 1989, Best Buddies has helped people with intellectual disabilities forge friendships with buddies, who each serve as each other's mentor. The idea for Best Buddies grew out of Shriver's first-hand experience with people who have intellectual disabilities and often lack opportunities to build friendships with people who are non-disabled. Best Buddies also helps those who are unable to attain or maintain a job develop and share skills useful in the workforce. Best Buddies has six volunteer programs; one of which is e-Buddies®, an e-mail friendship program, that uses technology to help friendships flourish. Together, Best Buddies volunteers annually contribute support services that equate to \$61 million.

"I am honored to be recognized by MENTOR," said Anthony K. Shriver, founder and chairman of Best Buddies International. "Just as MENTOR believes that each of us need someone to provide us with guidance and support, Best Buddies believes everyone deserves a friend. In friendship, we have the opportunity to mentor each other, and the result is mutually beneficial."

MENTOR leads the movement to connect America's young people with caring adult mentors by expanding the world of quality mentoring. To learn more about MENTOR, please visit <http://www.mentoring.org>

. For more information about Mentoring's Big Night, please call The Vantage Consulting Group, 212-888-7003.