

8th Year of Rap-It-Up Campaign

Written by Robert ID809

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BET and the Kaiser Family Foundation announced today the continuation of their partnership, Rap-It-Up – the largest public education effort on HIV/AIDS and related issues directed specifically toward African Americans. Launched in 1998, Rap-It-Up was designed to educate network viewers about HIV/AIDS, disseminate pertinent information to young adults about sexual health issues, and to encourage

African Americans to get tested. This year, Rap-It-Up will feature new HIV- themed programming and public service announcements (PSAs), the 2nd Annual RIU/BASS film competition, grassroots events, and free print and online information resources.

On February 7, BET, the Black AIDS Institute, and the Kaiser Family Foundation will launch the 2nd Annual Rap-It-Up/Black AIDS Short Subject (RIU/BASS) Film Competition.

Last year's winning films, "Walking on Sunshine" and "Tangy's Song!" has significant viewer appeal earning higher ratings than their respective Sunday network averages ("Walking on Sunshine" earned a .51 and "Tangy's Song!" earned a .47).

In recognition of Black AIDS Awareness Day (February 7), BET will re-air the 2005 NAACP Image Award nominated "Walking on Sunshine" on Sunday, February 6 at 3:00 p.m. ET/PT and "Tangy's Song!" at 3:30 p.m.

The film competition serves as a foundation for potential filmmakers to create short films that promote HIV awareness and address the magnitude of HIV/AIDS in Black communities.

The network also plans to unveil a pair of unique documentary-styled programs that will examine the influence of hip hop and sexual messages on the

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nation's HIV/AIDS epidemic. These fast-paced, thought-provoking documentaries are scheduled for broadcast on BET in September 2005.

Also, viewers can anticipate the return of the network's two successful HIV-related specials: BET OPEN MIC highlighting National HIV Testing Day (June 27) and the 106 & PARK WORLD AIDS DAY SPECIAL commemorating World AIDS Day to air later in December.

"The network is extremely pleased with the success and accomplishments of its pro-social initiative, Rap-It-Up," stated Kelli Lawson, BET Executive Vice President of Corporate Marketing and Communications.

"It is clearly evident that through our combined efforts of special HIV-related programming, community outreach, and public service announcements (PSAs), the network is effectively reaching viewers to educate them about HIV/AIDS."

"Given the devastating impact that HIV/AIDS is having on African Americans, BET's commitment to Rap-It-Up is essential and is showing real results," Tina Hoff, Vice President and Director of Kaiser's Entertainment Media Partnership program.

"Young African Americans who are exposed to the campaign say they are prompted by what they see to do more to protect themselves."

An August 2004 survey conducted by Kaiser of a random sample of African Americans

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underscored the effectiveness of the Rap-It-Up and Viacom KNOW HIV/AIDS campaigns.

Results revealed that more than half of all African Americans (58%) and 9 in 10 (92%) African-Americans 18 - 24 years old have heard of the Rap-It-Up Campaign.

Among the 18- to 24-year olds who had seen BET's special HIV-related programming, half said they had talked with a partner about safer sex, and approximately 77% of those who were sexually active said they were more likely to use a condom.

Nearly 40% said they had visited a doctor or had been tested for HIV.

To date, BET has produced and aired a total of 32 PSAs on HIV/AIDS or other sexual health issues; and a total of 21 full-length 30 to 60-minute specials, which aired a total of 32 times and reached a total of 9 million viewers over the last seven years.

Under the network's Rap-It-Up HIV/AIDS public awareness campaign, the network has also tested over 5,300 people nationwide for HIV infection; received over 900,000 calls to its toll-free hotline; distributed over 230,000 sexual health brochures, and hosted community teen forums in over 27 cities for over 5,000 young adults.