

## HIP HOP VS THE WORLD

Written by Robert ID4086

Monday, 10 December 2007 12:33 -

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Hip Hop notables RYMEFEST AND DMC, OF RUN-DMC, JOIN HIP HOP ACTIVIST DUO TO CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH OF HIP HOP EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES Launching “R” Literacy in the Juvenile Detention Center and People For President Voter Participation Campaigns are Group’s Initial Community Action Initiatives.

TJ Crawford and Dr. Chandra Gill will host a press conference with Nancy Jefferson School Principal Dr. Judith Adams, Congressman Danny Davis, State Rep. Connie Howard, Arne Duncan, local elected officials and featured hip hop artists outside the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, at 1100 South Hamilton, to announce the launch of their “R” Literacy Campaign’ on Friday, December 14, 2007, @ 1:30p.m.

“R” Literacy Campaign, a city wide book club that will start with youth detained at Cook County’s Juvenile Detention Center, seeks to encourage literacy and reading; engage dialogue; and decrease the rate of recidivism among youth offenders in the juvenile justice system. Weekly teach-ins and discussions will be lead by educators, authors, artists, advocates, and other volunteers.

For their first required reading material, youth will be assigned “Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago,” a book on the urban plight authored by Chicago native and Peabody Award Winner, LeAlan Jones.

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It is estimated that of the 430 youth who are temporarily housed at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center awaiting trial, 91% are males; 86% are African American; 11% are Latino; 75% would be high school freshmen, 50% of all black males in the Chicago Public School system drop out; and 65% will be repeat offenders.

“By engaging them in dialogue and relevant discourse on lifelong changes via life choices, we hope to empower the hearts and minds of these children through thematic approaches that promote respect, responsibility and resiliency as a means of ridding the realities of recidivism,” says Dr. Gill. “That’s why we’re calling it “R” Literacy Campaign.”

This event serves as the kick –off to the Hip hop vs. The World weekend, unveiling Dr. Gill and TJ Crawford’s Hip hop Empowerment Initiatives, which also include announcing the People for President Voter Participation Campaign and a series of monthly forums that begin on Saturday, December 15, 2007 at the South Shore Cultural Center, located at 7059 South Shore Drive. A final concert/rally celebrating hip hop based community organizations and artist will follow the program. The rally will feature Rhymefest, DMC (of Run DMC fame) Dres (of Black Sheep), Killer Mike (Outkast/Aquemeni/Grind Time Music), Malik Yusef(Good Music) and DA Smart among others.

### About Dr. Chandra Gill

Viewed by many as the new Civil Rights leadership, Dr. Gill has spoken to national and international audiences about relevant issues of our time. Endorsed by such leaders as Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. and Congressman Danny Davis, she is regarded by many as one who edifies, encourages and empowers youth. Dr. Gill posited the theoretical framework of Blackademically Speaking which insist on bridging the gap between theory and practice. While

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her scholarly writings are centered on activism, she has mentored and advised young people throughout the country. As part of the inaugural class for Bill Gates Millennium Scholar's Program, she was Chicago's first African-American public school recipient at the graduate level. Dr. Gill as a mentor and graduate student at Illinois organized nearly 100 women to visit over 40 colleges and universities in 8 states and over 25 cities. Dr. Gill has served as President for the Church of the Living God's Young Adult Ministry, the Black Graduate Student Association and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Dr. Chandra Gill will serve as the Executive Director for Loop Lab School, a state-of-the-art private elementary school soon to open in the heart of downtown Chicago. She is currently a Professor at Northeastern Illinois University's Center for Inner City Studies. Additionally, she recently joined the city's only Black-owned radio station, WVON, as executive producer and co-host of the city's first Hip-Hop talk show.

### About TJ Crawford

TJ Crawford is a Hip hop generation community advocate and entrepreneur who specializes in civic engagement, youth development and media literacy. He is currently the Executive Director of the Chicago Hip Hop Civic Engagement Project and is the immediate past chair of the National Hip Hop Political Convention, of which he is also a co-founder. A Chicago native, TJ works to bridge the gap between community, corporations and governments by demonstrating how all three entities must work together for the communities' greatest benefit. His work with CHHCEP includes publishing and producing the MPR Report in print, radio and on the internet, producing the THIS is HIP HOP Stage and Pavilion at the African Festival of the Arts, PE 101 Political Education and Training, and the Thank GOD for Hip hop Film Festival and Action Conference. Mr. Crawford also works in direct partnership with Prof. Lance Williams and the Chicago Council on Urban Affairs to produce various workshops, trainings and seminars around hip hop and media literacy for both high school students and staff. As the chair of the 2006 National Hip Hop Political Convention, TJ lead a national initiative that mobilized thousands of young people nationwide in organizing a national political agenda for the hip hop community. As a community advocate, he has organized numerous civic and leadership trainings, issue forums and focus groups, and spoken out on various causes and issues of community concern. In 2004, TJ created the People for President Campaign and organized a team that registered over 17,000 voters in a 13 week span. He has been featured in the New York Times, Time Out Chicago, the Chicago Tribune and the Ave. Magazine, among others. In 2003, he was recognized by the Source Magazine as one of the top ten most influential people in Hip Hop and Politics, and in 2005, he was recognized by UR Chicago as one of the city's Top 30 under 30. His awards include those from WVON Radio and the prestigious ETA Theatre. Most recently, TJ joined the city's only Black-owned radio station, WVON, as executive producer and co-host of the city's first Hip hop talk show. A graduate of both the Culver Academies and Morehouse

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College, Mr. Crawford holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and is currently pursuing his Master's degree in Inner City Studies.