



"WE GOT ISSUES!"

Press Release

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Year of the Hip-Hop Women Officially Begins March 2008!

New York, NY – NO MORE! ENOUGH OF BEING CALLED B-t-hes and H—s. Powerful, intelligent, self-respecting women in Hip-Hop do exist. They're on the microphone, off-camera, and behind the scenes. They hold significant positions at the top echelons of the industry's professional food chain. They are anonymous shining stars. Why don't we know about them? Because they are silently tucked away due to a lack of media exposure, male-centric programming, and adverse images that present a one-sided perspective of women in Hip-Hop.

THE WOMANHOOD LEARNING PROJECT (WLP) is a wake-up call. It is a sound -out to all the B-Girls and Hip Hop Queens—women who have transformed music and culture. The WLP is a project of the **Hip-Hop Association [H²A]**, in collaboration with **Social Services of Hip-Hop, We B*Girlz, Where My Ladies at? Interactive Film, and We Got Issues!** The mission is to restore and revive the Hip-Hop Woman through the Womanhood Learning Project by exploring the role of women in leadership and other sectors within Hip-Hop culture and the community. WLP will examine the negative media and power struggles that hinder the growth and awareness of women in the Hip-Hop generation. It will focus strong attention on how these factors impact the youth, especially young girls. The WLP is intended to unify women in Hip-Hop by creating a space for them to learn, build, and bring about concrete change. This will occur through a yearlong campaign that includes a resource book, lecture series, workshops, an online community, and a case study.

Hip-Hop girls and women deserve acknowledgement. And the world deserves to know about how these women have become successful by negotiating the sexist system of Hip-Hop. The H²A and its partners, through the Womanhood Learning Project, will study and promote these invisible, yet talented women, and provide tools and resource to empower educators, social workers, parents, youth, and most of all, women and girls.

The H²A has convened an Advisory Committee of progressive and accomplished women in Hip-Hop and education and culture for the Womanhood Learning Project. It includes luminaries such as **Dr. Roxanne Shante, Martha Cooper, DJ Beverly Bonds, Maria “Toofly” Castillo, Raquel Cepeda, Suhier Ammad, Toni Blackman, Raqiyah Mays, Michaela Angela Davis, and Dr. Irma McClaurin.** H²A, the WLP Advisory Committee, and our partners—the Social Services of Hip-Hop, We B*Girlz, Where My Ladies at? Interactive Film, and We Got Issues! — are all committed to making the WLP a success and celebrating the Year of the Hip-Hop Woman.

The Womanhood Learning Project’s primary resource will be an encyclopedia of pioneering and trendsetting women: ***Fresh, Bold, and So Def: Women In Hip-Hop Changing The Game***, edited by **Martha Diaz and Felicia Pride.** The volume contains 300 profiles of international artists, industry professionals, and social activists. It is groundbreaking and informative focusing on how they have persevered and broken down barriers to make a difference in Hip-Hop culture and society at large. *Fresh, Bold, and So Def: Women In Hip-Hop Changing The Game* is written to serve as an inspiration for educating girls and women, boys and men, young and old, and everyone else on the historical legacy of women in Hip-Hop.

The ***Year of the Hip-Hop Woman*** is about change. It is not a blame, shame or game campaign. It is about appreciation and respect; it is about acknowledgment and positive depictions of women. It pays homage to women who help create Hip-Hop, but whose stories have not been told in their entirety.

Womanhood Learning Project H2A Team

Martha Diaz, President of the Hip-Hop Association
Mona Ibrahim, Director of Community Building and Program Development
Nakia Alston, H2A Communications and Development Coordinator
Beth Sachnoff, Head Researcher, H2Ed Communications and Development Coordinator
Kompalya Thunderbird, Director of Media Acquisition and Communications
Deanne Ziadie-Nemitz - Media Preservation Coordinator
Amanda Cumbow, Researcher
Ebonie Smith, Researcher

Womanhood Learning Project Partners

Jineea Butler-Graham – Hip-Hop Analyst, Social Services of Hip-Hop
J-Love – Activist, Author – White Girl, We Got Issues
Leba Haber – Director of the interactive film, Where My Ladies At?
Nika Kramer – Writer, Translator, Activist - We B*Girlz (Germany)

Womanhood Learning Project Advisory Committee

Toni Blackman – Freestyle Union and US State Dept. Ambassador
Beverly Bond – DJ, Activist - Black Girls Rock Foundation
Maria “Toofly” Castillo – Graffiti Artist, Activist – The Younty
Raquel Cepeda – Filmmaker, Author, Journalist
Rosa Clemente – Activist, Cultural Critic, Know Thyself
Martha Cooper – Pioneer Photographer, Author – We B*Girlz
Michaela Davis – Fashionista, Cultural Critic
Tamara Dawit – Activist - What’s the 411? (Canada)
Caridad “La Bruja” De La Luz – MC, Poet, Activist – Latinas 4 Life
Dowoti Desir – Director, Malcolm x & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial & Educational Center
Delphine Diallo – Photographer, Filmmaker, Visual Artist (France)
Johanna Guevara - 7one8Designs
Suheir Hammad – Poet, Author, Activist
Indy Hunjan - Kala Phool (England)
Raqiyah Mays – Managing Editor, The Ave and Radio Host for Hot 97
Dr. Irma McClaurin – Scholar, Poet, Writer, Author
Felicia Pride – Journalist, Author, The Message
Rokafella – B-Girl, Activist - Full Circle Productions
Dr. Tricia Rose – Pioneer Scholar, Author, Black Noise, Brown University
Marcella Runell Hall - Author, Activist, Educator, NYU
Dr. Theda Palmer Saxon – Life coach, Pres. of Seasoned Woman, Inc., Author, Pace U.
Raquel Sanchez - Alphabet City Design
Dr. Roxanne Shante – Pioneer MC and Psychologist
Akiba Solomon – Journalist, Author - Naked: Black Women Bare All About Their Skin,
Hair, Hips, Lips, and Other Parts

The Womanhood Learning Project (WLP) Interactive Lecture Series Preliminary Schedule

The WLP Interactive Lecture Series is a yearlong talking tour that serves as a space for women to discuss issues affecting women in Hip-Hop. The topics include Media, Politics, Gender Roles, Education, and Motherhood. This is a preliminary schedule based on existing events.

Part I – MEDIA JUSTICE BEGINS BY TAKING CONTROL OF OUR IMAGES

March 2, 2008 - The Fifth Annual NYC Grassroots Media Conference - Speaking Truth to Power: MEDIA JUSTICE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

www.nycgrassrootsmedia.org

W.A.R. (Women Armed and Ready)! :Defining the Reel Images of Women in Hip-Hop

This is a 90-minute candid interactive workshop focusing on the role media plays in the portrayal of women in Hip-Hop, and the issues and effects that women have to deal with as a result. From Queens to whores, the roles of women have changed dramatically over the last 30 years. From misogyny to hypersexual behavior, a whole generation of young men and women have been desensitized and programmed through negative media images. It's time to confront the media outlets, and step up as media-makers and concerned citizens to take control of our images, redefine ourselves and create a new perspective of women. The participants will discuss how their work addresses these issues, how their work is creating media justice, and they will share clips of their projects.

Participants:

Martha Diaz – President of the Hip-Hop Association

Maori Karmel Holmes – Producer and Director, Scene Not Heard

Melissa Ulto – Editor, The Art of Love and Struggle

Toni Blackman – Hip-Hop Ambassador, Artist, Writer

Part II– Herstory: The Power of Women Community Leaders and Entrepreneurs

March 29, 2008 – Urban League of Alaska – Anchorage, Alaska

Part III– H2Ed Womanhood LP Workshop

April 18, 2008 – HHEAL Festival - Bronx, NY (WGI!/Sister Outsider/Felicia Pride)

Part IV – Fresh, Bold, and So Def

June 2008 – H2O International Film Festival

Part V – Education Vs Industry

July – Brighton Hip-Hop Film Festival (Brighton, England)

Part VI – Interactive Womanhood Learning

August – We B*Girlz Festival (Berlin, Germany)

About Hip-Hop Association:

The Hip-Hop Association [H2A] is a 501(c)(3) media, education, and arts community building organization. Our projects are designed to encourage critical thinking, education reform, cross-cultural unity and civic engagement. The H2A empowers the community through the use of media, technology, resources, social entrepreneurship, and leadership development. We are producers of the largest annual international Hip-Hop film festival, and Hip-Hop Education forums.

www.hiphopassociation.org

About Social Services of Hip-Hop:

The Social Services of Hip Hop is a psychology based service agency that identifies and remedies issues that affect the growth of the Hip Hop community by presenting revenue generating and community building activities. The company serves as a technical assistance intermediary that organizes and enhances programs that interact with the Hip Hop Community. Our mission is to empower Hip Hop citizens to their maximum level of functioning by providing effective tools, resources and services.

www.ss-hiphop.com

About We Got Issues!:

We Got Issues! mission is to ignite the next generation of young women leaders and awaken a new brand of social/political activism in America. We accomplish this by training and development, outreach and education, and advocacy and recognition.

www.wegotissues.org

About We B*Girlz Festival:

The *We B*Girlz* Festival – Berlin 2008 is a multimedia festival by women for women celebrating the 4 elements of Hip-Hop and more. We B*Girlz wants to present a strong role model for adolescent girls. We want to show that women master skills in all aspects of Hip-Hop and have earned a place in Hip-Hop history. We will celebrate their creativity with a one-month festival in August 2008 in Berlin, Germany with workshops, panels, exhibitions, screenings, battles, shows and concerts. The event series will close with a big two-day festival with battles, shows and concerts on August 29 and 30.

www.bgirlz.com

About Where My Ladies At?:

Where My Ladies At? Is an interactive film website that encourages dialogue about "pop culture porn" through blogs, video diaries, SMS forums, and conversations with female Hip Hop pioneers. Although *Where My Ladies At?* targets Hip Hop, the film tackles larger societal issues and can be used to discuss issues of pop culture, sexuality and media representation with young people. The film is both a critique and celebration of Hip Hop, and women's accomplishments are showcased in a timeline of artists and pioneers.

www.wheremyladiesat.com