Working with Fathers from the Hip-Hop Culture

April 28, 2009  2pm – 3:45pm EST

Moderator:
Nigel Vann: NRFC Director of Training & Technical Assistance

Presenters:
P. Thandi Hicks Harper, Ph.D., President, Youth Popular Culture Institute, Inc., Clinton, MD
Brian Gullins, Coordinator for Male Responsibility, Richmond City Health District, Richmond, VA
Carol F. Burton, LMSW, Executive Director, Centerforce, San Rafael, CA (OFA grantee)
Ron Clark, Director, Community Based Programming, National Fatherhood Initiative
11th Annual International Fatherhood Conference
- "Maximizing Father Engagement, Celebrating 100 Years of Father's Day in America"
- June 16-19, 2009
- Baltimore, MD
- For Details Visit www.fatherhoodconference.com
- Or call: (888) 775-6725

Responsible Fatherhood Rally
- Saturday, June 20th, 2009
- Washington, DC & Regionally
- For Details Visit www.npclstrongfamilies.com
Hip-Hop & Fatherhood

“Using Hip-Hop culture to connect with fathers and bridge the gap between fathers and children”
As a result of this presentation you will be able to:

1. Discuss the historical origins of hip-hop culture.
2. Recognize the underlying messages and needs expressed in hip-hop culture.
3. Examine strategies for communicating the value of fatherhood through hip-hop culture.
In the 1950’s the South Bronx borough of New York was a stable middle class community. In an effort to “bridge” growing suburban neighborhoods with downtown retail districts, massive construction began on an expressway.

Construction would destabilize the economic base of the South Bronx, to be followed by suburban flight. Demographically, by the 1970’s the South Bronx would become characterized by low income, high unemployment, high crime, high rates of non-marital births, rising school drop out rates and a majority African American population.

The South Bronx would become the birth place of hip-hop culture.
Hip-Hop
“from subculture to pop culture”

4 original elements of hip-hop
1. Rapping
2. DJ-ing
3. Breakdancing
4. Graffiti

- Early themes were fun, community and self-pride.
- Beginning as an urban genre, hip-hop would transform into a global movement.
Hip-Hop culturally and continentally can be found in:

- North America
- Asia
- Africa
- Europe
- Middle East
- Latin America

- No racial or cultural limits.
- Cultures with historically oppressed populations embrace hip-hop.
Generation X and hip-hop

- Post Baby Boomer Generation.
- Described as a “Nomad” Generation.
  - Ratty, tough, unwanted, diverse, adventurous.
  - Cynical about authority and institutions.
- Hip-Hop message was shaped by a generation that felt disenfranchised.
Generation X and hip-hop

- Culturally, the deep seated feeling of disconnection and abandonment would give way to messages of misogyny, materialism, criminalism and anti-intellectualism. These feelings reflect a generation lacking the emotional and financial connection of a father.

- “Every rapper- I’ll say about 90% of rappers grew up without a father…” Snoop Dog.
Messages and Needs


- A survey indicated a need for greater understanding around the following 4 issues:
  1. Identity
  2. Relationships
  3. Sexuality
  4. World View
Using Hip-Hop to Reach Fathers -- 5 Strategies

1. Create a Profile
2. Bait the Hook
3. Make Programming E.P.I.C.
4. Target Critical Transitions
5. Use what is Cultural to Communicate what is Timeless
Strategy 1 -- Create a Profile

- Location, Location, Location (census Data)
  - Where are they?
- Educationally (Public School Website)
  - What do they know – and what don’t they know?
- Socially (Local social networking sites)
  - Where do they go?
- Economically
  - How much do they make?
  - Where do they spend and on what?
Create a Profile (cont.)

- Culturally
  - Who do they listen to?
  - What do they wear?
- Relationally
  - Who do they date?
  - How do they connect with each other?
- Health
  - Are they healthy? (physically, emotionally, spiritually)
Strategies 2 and 3

• **Bait the Hook**
  - Create programming that appeals
  - 3 on 3 basketball
  - Video production opportunities
  - Job skills workshops
  - Open Mic contest
  - Stipend Focus Groups
  - GED opportunities

• **Make Programming E.P.I.C.**
  - Experiential draw to places or organizations
  - Participatory directly involved
  - Image Driven communicate using visual-stimulus
  - Connectedness networked with each other and the world
Strategy 4
Target Critical Transitions

• Middle School to High School
• Pre teen to Teen
• Abstinent to Sexually Active
• Walking to Driving
• Single to Dating
• Employed to Unemployed
• Husband to Fathers
• School to Work
Strategy 5
Use what is Cultural to Communicate what is Timeless

- Use Poetry
- Use Art
- Use Music
- Use Fashion
- Use Technology
- Use Sports
- Use Dance
- Use Food

Employ the culture as a vehicle to communicate your message.
“It’s an opportunity to shape and mold a young mind. To turn them into a contributing member of society. You actually get to mold a human being into something that is great if you do the job right. So far I think I’m doing okay.”
Brian R. Gullins
Coordinator for Male Responsibility
Richmond City Health District
(804) 205-3717
Brian.gullins@vdh.virginia.gov
HIP-HOP, Incarcerated Fathers and Implications for Service Delivery:

“Strategies for engaging fathers impacted by incarceration”
As a result of this presentation you will be able to:

• Understand the prevalence of young incarcerated males.

• Develop a greater understanding of Hip-Hop and its impact on children affected by incarceration.

• Learn strategies that can be used within organizations that typically do not have a youth focus.
Why this work is important to consider

• Incarcerated fathers and their children are a marginalized group of people -- “Distorted in the telling, buried in the untelling” (Randall Robinson on the legacy of slavery).
• A criminal justice system lacking a tradition of considering incarcerated father’s familial relationships.
• Fathers scared of overwhelming child support arrears.
• Negative public attitudes toward incarcerated individuals and their families.
• Tendencies toward focus on children of incarcerated mothers.
• Social Services providers are disconnected and ill equipped to engage young fathers and families impacted by incarceration.
Between 1987 and 2007, the national prison population has nearly tripled (from 585,084 in 1987 to 1,596,127 in 2007).

Who’s Behind Bars

- One in every Hundred Adults in the United States are Behind Bars.

- One in Thirty One are on Probation or Parole.
Who’s Behind Bars

- For Black men ages 18 or older, **1 in 15 are in state or federal prison.**
- For those aged 18-19, the ratio is **1 in 19.**
- For ages 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34, it is **1 in 9.**
- For ages 35-39, **1 in 10.**
- For ages 40-44, **1 in 13.**
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“Hi, Daddy.
How you doing?
Are you fine?
I haven’t seen you in a long time.
And I miss you.
I love you.
I just forget about you.
You’re still with me.
It’s great to see you here.
It’s great to hear about you.”
Xiara’s Song does not romanticize Harold, who has been in and out of jail for his daughter’s entire life; it does reveal the gentle side of this handsome, charming rapper who finds inspiration in his deep love for his daughter.
The Impact of Incarceration of Fathers on Children

Percentage of minor children with a parent in state or federal prison by age*:  
- Under 1 year old: 2%  
- 1-4 years old: 20%  
- 5-9 years old: 35%  
- 10-14 years old: 28%  
- 15-17 years old: 15%  

• Often, the same life circumstances that led the parent to criminality are present for the child.
Meeting Fathers where they are..

- Assume that most fathers love and care for their children.
- Ask fathers what kind of life and outcomes they desire for “all” of their children.
- Help fathers gain greater empathy for their children.
- Stress the important role of fathers in the lives of their daughters.
- Go for the low hanging fruit before requesting that fathers change their dress, language etc….
- Help fathers understand that paying child support is important and that there are other ways of being a father.
Staff selection and training

- Hire staff who are sensitive to the needs and complexities of incarcerated fathers and their families.
- Hire young fathers and women and then mentor and promote them to leadership positions within the organization.
- Consider gender and cultural specific training from experts in the field of “Engaging the Hip-Hop Generation”.
- Reexamine program policies and procedures that deter incarcerated and formerly incarcerated fathers from “fully” participating in services.
- Enroll “older” incarcerated men in prison outreach efforts.
- Seek resources that will challenge your belief systems.
Administrative Headquarters, Northern California
2955 Kerner Blvd. 2nd Fl.
San Rafael, CA 94901
phone: 415-456-9980
fax: 415-456-2146

Central California Office
4709 N. El Capitan Ave.
Suite 201
Fresno, CA 93722
phone: 559-276-6160
fax: 559-276-1656

The Yellow House at San Quentin, Office of Family & Children Services
(mail not accepted)
2 Main St.
San Quentin, CA
phone: 415-456-4200

The House on the Hill Visitor Center at San Quentin State Prison
(mail not accepted)
206 McKenzie St.
San Quentin, CA
phone: 415-482-8509
Hip-Hop Development™:

WORKING WITH FATHERS FROM THE HIP-HOP CULTURE

April 28, 2009

P. Thandi Hicks Harper, PhD

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC)
Technical Assistance Webinar
SUCCESSFUL YOUNG FATHER ENGAGEMENT

HHD points to the ability of Hip-Hop to assist in providing young people with engagement asset skills (& opportunities to use them) such as critical thinking, writing, speaking, goal-setting, outreach, debating, decision making, influencing, researching, negotiating, and the leadership, self-esteem, and confidence building that accentuate these skills.
Culture is learned.
Culture is socially shared and all encompassing.
Culture affects every aspect of an individual’s life.
Culture often unites a group and sometimes dictates behavior.
Culture is a blueprint to the mentality of a group.
Culture is a variable in nature in that all cultures allow for some individual variation, creativity and choice.
CULTURE TERMINOLOGY

• CULTURAL SENSITIVITY
• CULTURAL AWARENESS
• CULTURAL OPENNESS
• CULTURAL HUMILITY
• CULTURAL FLUENCY
One’s ability to willingly and un-judgmentally work to understand Hip-Hop culture, despite whether it is a culture other than one’s own. This means learning from those immersed in and knowledgeable about the culture, as well as drawing on resources and supports that facilitate unbiased comprehensions of traditions, values, norms, and cultural potentials is required.
“FORMAL FEATURES” OF HIP-HOP

• “Swagga”
• Technology
Adultism refers to behaviors and attitudes based on the assumption that adults are better than young people and entitled to act upon them without their agreement or input. This mistreatment is reinforced by social institutions, laws, customs, and attitudes.
Hip-Hop Development

Increasing our understanding of:
- HIP-HOP AND ITS FORMAL FEATURES,
- POSITIVE YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT ENGAGEMENT, &
- NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN HIP-HOP

Equals:
- MORE INFORMED DECISION MAKING &
- HHD STRATEGIES THAT LEAD 2 DESIRED PROGRAMMATIC & YOUNG FATHERS’ LIFESYLE OUTCOMES.
Passport 2 Opportunity (P2O)

Created for young people to explore juvenile justice issues, and the positive and negative choices that influence their interactions with the criminal justice system.
Hip-Hop 101

A SENSE OF URGENCY FOR...

Commitment
Competence
Belief
Change
Reception
Sharing
Authenticity
CHANGE
A Hip-Hop Development Mandate

“We gotta make a change...
It's time 4 us as a people to start making changes.
Let's change the way we eat, let's change the way we live and
Let's change the way we treat each other.
You see the old way wasn't working.
So it's on us to do what we gotta do 2 survive”

Artist: Tupac Amaru Shakur   Song: Changes