

**HIP-HOP SUMMIT YOUTH COUNCIL PARTNERS WITH FRIENDSHIP AMBASSADORS FOUNDATION AND DR. ELAINE VALDOV TO CONVENE HISTORIC 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL YOUTH ASSEMBLY AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

**CELEBRATING “INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY” AND EMPOWERING GLOBAL YOUTH LEADERS TO ADDRESS THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.**

*ASSEMBLY GUEST SPEAKERS INCLUDING THE 5<sup>th</sup> GRANDSON OF LEGENDARY LEADER MAHATMA GANDHI, DR. ARUN GANDHI; REV. JESSE JACKSON; RETIRED PHOENIX SUN BASKETBALL STAR KEVIN JOHNSON; MTV’S PETE GRIFFIN; YOUTH POET/ACTRESS AUTUM ASHANTE; AND CHARLES FISHER OF HHSYC ADDRESS YOUTHS FROM OVER 70 COUNTRIES.*

*“Hip-Hop at the UN” & “THUG 2 SNUG” Reality TV Shows/Documentaries also launched to support the MDGs, Gun & Gang Violence prevention, and the “Hip-Hop Against Poverty” campaign.*

**August 18, 2008, United Nations, New York, NY** – The Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, the United Nations, Dr. Elaine Valdov, Secretary General of the United Nations Youth Assembly; and the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council (hhsyc.org), in association with the following sponsoring countries: Argentina; Belgium; Czech Republic; France; Grenada; Italy; Jordan; Lichtenstein; Monaco; Slovenia; Sweden; Tanzania; Turkey; United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern held the 5th Annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations (UN) in New York City. The Youth Assembly comes at a time when the United Nations celebrates “International Youth Day” (August 12). Over 800 Youth Leaders convened at the UN to discuss world issues and initiatives to address the United Nations 8 Millennium Development Goals, which are to: 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2) Achieve universal primary education; 3) Promote gender equality and empower women; 4) Promote youth empowerment and activism; 5) Reduce child mortality and improve maternal health; 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; 7) Ensure environmental sustainability; and 8) Develop a global partnership for development.

For the second year the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council coordinated the Hip-Hop MDG Summit to help prepare the world’s future leaders for the tasks of achieving the MDGs by 2015 with an emphasis on *Reducing Poverty and HIV/AIDS; Improving Education and Women’s Rights; and working to reduce Global Conflict and Gun Violence*. They presented a report to participants about the progress of projects launched at last year’s Youth Assembly which include: the “Hip-Hop Against Poverty” campaign and the “Read 2 Succeed through Hip-Hop” project. Participants were afforded an opportunity to take part in the filming of 2 Reality TV Shows entitled: “Hip-Hop at the U.N.” and “THUG to SNUG”. Each will also be supported by a Documentary. A vote was also taken requesting that the Youth Assembly Members lobby to have the United Nations establish Resolution 53/25 as the “International Decade for a culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World” for a second time. The first resolution

was created by Dr. Valdov in the year 2000. When the participants were asked if they had heard of the resolution most were not aware of its existence. To help fight poverty Youth Leaders received the Prescription Discount Drug card courtesy of KJR Sales. The card cuts the cost on Prescription Drugs during a period when the economy is slumping and families are looking for ways to save money.

During the 3-day event participants took part in a series of activities designed to prepare them for the Leadership roles that will soon be their responsibility. This year's Youth theme was *"STEP UP: Taking Plans Into Action."* Participants filled the UN Conference Rooms to hear words of wisdom from an array of talented speakers such as Dr. Arun Gandhi, the grandson of the great Mahatma Gandhi; philanthropist Kathy Ireland; Mildred Crump, president of the Newark City Council; Casey Harray, program director of Save the Children of Darfur; James Quilligan, speechwriter for the Prince of Jordan; Pete Griffin of MTV; Rev. Jesse Jackson; Charles Fisher and Former NBA Star Kevin Johnson.

The goals of the Youth Assembly are to: 1) Provide access to and information about the work, successes and current challenges of the United Nations; 2) Promote increased youth participation in United Nations programs, its agencies and Non-Governmental Organization affiliates; 3) Strengthen a commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; 4) Connect committed youth with opportunities, mentors, colleagues, and new associates; 5) Recognize the artistic and diplomatic efforts of young people already in humanitarian initiatives.



**L to R: Edward Ortiz, Patrick Sciaratta, Autum Ashante, Shariëff Fisher, Ahmad Armando Quazi, Charles Fisher, Jill Jones, former NBA star Kevin Johnson, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Randy Fisher and Jermaine LaMont**



**Charles Fisher & Pete Griffin of MTV**



**Mark Liddell, C. Fisher, Dr. Gandhi & Dave Walsh**

"It has been a long week but I know that we have made an impact on tomorrow's leaders. Working with Dr. Valdov and the FAF has been an experience that has changed my life forever and all those that have had an opportunity to be a part of this worthwhile initiative. Through the Reality TV Shows: "Hip-Hop at the UN" and "THUG 2 SNUG", we will be able to spread the word about the MDGs and the mission to reduce Gun and Gang Violence in the US and abroad. Through the "Hip-Hop Against Poverty Campaign", the "Read 2 Succeed through Hip-Hop Project" and our fight against HIV/AIDS we will be able to give our youth and young adults the tools to be effective leaders and make this a better world" stated Charles Fisher, Founder and Chairman of the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council. "I am looking forward to our work with the many celebrities that are a part of our literacy program, our new partners at the Murray Grey Foundation, Senate Minority Leader Malcolm Smith and Operation SNUG, Microsoft, and Reginald Bowman, president of NYCHA's Tenants Association, representing the untapped power of public housing to help us find the resources to become global advocates for social change" ended Fisher.

"Using Think MTV as a forum to address the MDGs and end global poverty is the key to helping the poor and disadvantaged. I will do whatever I can to help the "Hip-Hop Against Poverty" campaign accomplish its goals at the UN" stated Pete Griffin of MTV.

"Speaking to the world's future leaders is the first step towards creating a global coalition that can bring healing and real change to issues that affect half the world, which lives on less than \$2 a day. I am inspired and will support the "Hip-Hop Against Poverty" campaign because I believe that our youth and the Hip-Hop Community can make a significant impact on national and global poverty" said Jesse Jackson, Founder, Rainbow/Push Coalition.

"My grandfather stressed the importance of Family Unity, love and respect and if we can teach these principles to our youth we can change the world. Using the power of education to end poverty is essential if we want to address the root cause of the problem. Hip-Hop is an art that is supported by young people and if it can be used to encourage our youth to support a campaign like "Hip-Hop Against Poverty", then I believe it can serve the global needs of the poor. Working with "Operation SNUG" to reduce Gun and Gang Violence is a challenge that my organization would love to undertake because reducing violence and conflict through nonviolent

means, a tactic strongly used by my grandfather, is essential for public safety and global peace” stated Dr. Arun Gandhi.

“Basketball is a competitive sport and now that I am retired I have time to use my civic and academic skills to help future world leaders achieve their personal and business goals in life, as well as support the “Hip-Hop Against Poverty’s” campaign to address national and global poverty” ended former NBA Phoenix Sun Star Kevin Johnson.

“This is a sad week for us all because we have lost Bo Taylor, a true leader in the war against Gang Violence. I am here at the UN to bring Bo’s message to the world and it gives me great pleasure to educate future world leaders about Bo’s great work and our need to reduce gun and gang violence. I also want to use my resources to further support “Operation SNUG” and the “Hip-Hop Against Poverty” campaign, which will help keep Bo’s work for Peace and Economic empowerment in depressed communities in focus” stated Stan Muhammad.

“It’s great to be here at the UN, the seat of world power, and as President of NYCHA’s Citywide Council of Presidents representing over 800,000 residents in Public Housing I know that we can use the power and influence of the world to support the “*Power in Public Housing*” campaign and the “*Vote for New Hope*” Project. It is important that Public Housing residents know that there are global opportunities for them to explore and through the United Nations, “Operation SNUG” and the “Hip-Hop Against Poverty” campaign we will be able to bring the influence and resources to the residents of Public Housing and truly make a difference in the lives of our youth and all residents” ended Reginald Bowman, President of NYCHA Citywide Council of Presidents.

“It feels good to be here for another year serving our future world leaders, giving them the tools they need to be productive leaders for global change. As the program director I am excited about the work we are doing to service their many diverse needs. Our “Hip-Hop at the UN” Reality TV show and documentary is in a great position to get the word out to young people worldwide about the MDGs. Through the “THUG 2 SNUG” Reality Show we will also be able to address the issues of gun and gang violence amongst our youths and young adults, here in the US and worldwide. Launching both of these projects at the UN during this historic conference will allow us to make a real difference in the lives of our youth and communities suffering from crime and poverty and I’m glad that our youth were able to be a part of the filming” ended Jermaine Lamont, program director, HHSYC and TV Show Producer.

“Being blessed with a rare opportunity to address over 800 youth leaders at the UN was an exciting moment in my life and I enjoyed every minute of it. We are now in a unique position to help tomorrow’s leaders become productive citizens in their community through the “Hip-Hop Against Poverty” campaign, “Operation SNUG” and our Film Ventures. We will be a voice for the poor and a flashlight for those who are looking for a way to end global poverty and conflict. Together we can now provide the resources that will stop the pain and suffering that is experienced in poor communities in the US, but even more so in the poorest countries on earth” said Ahmad Armando Quazi, director of Global Affairs, HHSYC and TV Show Producer.

“I am very pleased with what we have accomplished through our various projects and collaborations with the United Nations over the last 3 or 4 years. Presenting the progress report to the youth about the “Hip-Hop Against Poverty” campaign and the various activities with Hip-Hop artists reminded me of how far we have come. We now have a clear vision of the future and what needs to be done to help the world’s young leaders accomplish their many goals. We will continue to work with young people all over the world by coordinating Summits, filming our TV projects, and using our relationships with celebrities to help young citizens achieve the Millennium Development Goals here in the US and abroad” stated Randy Fisher, executive director of the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council.

“Being at the UN for a second year is exciting for me and I hope that my poem to empower women will inspire those in attendance so that they can go out into the world and make a difference” said 10 year old poet/actress/community activist Autum Ashante.

“As head of the Murray Grey Foundation I am moved by the program and work that I have witnessed over the last several days by all parties involved. I am honored to be a part of this international movement for social change and I want to applaud the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council and their UN partners for creating a global movement that will save a lot of young lives” said Mark Liddell, founder, Murray Grey Foundation.

“As a community activist and business executive I have been involved with a lot of projects in my days but none with the enormous potential displayed by the HHSYC to help young people to become agents for justice and social change in a major way and I am honored to be a part of this global movement” said business executive Dave Walsh.

“As an intern for the HHSYC I have been involved with the Youth Assembly for 2 years now and the knowledge that I have obtained about the MDGs and my civic duties to improve the world will allow me to be more affective as a student, community and business leader” said Bianca Payton, Student Intern, HHSYC.

“Using the power and positive influence of Hip-Hop to promote the MDGs will give our participants a powerful tool to take action and make a difference. Working with the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council over the past 2 years has been a joy and I know that together we will help the UN achieve the MDGs and give our young leaders the training to Step Up and take action and become better global citizens” states Patrick Sciaratta, Executive Director, Friendship Ambassadors Foundation.

“Working with the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council to educate and empower young people is a perfect platform for tomorrow’s leaders. Through the Youth Assembly and the Hip-Hop Culture we have created a new platform to address the Millennium Development Goals and I am excited about the way our young leaders have embraced our collective approach to use Hip-Hop Artists to bring global awareness to the MDGs. Partnering with the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council has truly enhanced the value of our Youth Assembly Program and has provided additional opportunities for our future world leaders to go out into the world and help the UN achieve the MDGs by 2015” ended Dr. Elaine Valdov, Secretary General, United Nations Youth Assembly.

In order to improve the conditions on this planet, we must start with our children and this event provides a foundation to implement solid ideas that will truly make a difference for us all.

### **About the United Nations Youth Assembly**

*The vision of the Assembly, as created in 2003, by founders Dr. Elaine Valdov, Secretary General of the Assembly and Patrick Sciarratta (Executive Director of the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation) is to create substantive opportunities for increased youth involvement at and surrounding UN activities, commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, personal career development with an eye toward professions in civil society, and by extension the promotion of democratic values, international partnership and a renewal of commitment to the United Nations and human security.*

*The Youth Assembly is an annual gathering of hundreds of young people from around the world who seek practical ways to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, global networking and social entrepreneurship skills as well as meeting with and contributing to civil society. The Youth Assembly is about showing how one person can make a difference by engaging with the challenges of the present and being an educated and active citizen. The Assembly has grown to become a major gathering of young people as well as specialized, keynote speakers and workshop leaders at the United Nations. Each year, it provides avenues for students and young professionals (18-26 years old) to learn about and become involved with programs that address global and local issues, network among a large international group in attendance, and become engaged and empowered to take leadership roles in their communities.*

### **About Dr. Elaine Valdov**

*Dr. Elaine Valdov is a psychotherapist, peace and human rights activist and conflict resolution specialist. She lectures internationally and is best known for her “championship of causes” and development of peace initiatives for the United Nations “International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World”. Elaine has over 25 years experience as a director of mental health programs and creative arts therapies. She is the co-founder of “Kids’ Corner”, helping youth and family victims of the World Trade Center Disaster. She coordinated the 9/11 family programs of “The Universal Hug for Peace”, “Finding New Hope” and “Little Heroes” -- arts based programs to assist in the healing from 9/11 and to promote the universal message for peace - sponsored by Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, Rotary Club International and Lions Club International. She is also the Special Liaison for 911 Family Relations, providing clinical expertise and conducting “Life Skills Coaching”.*

*Dr. Valdov’s present international work includes being: a NGO Representative to the United Nations, Co-Chair of the “Executive Committee of NGOs Affiliated with the United Nations DPI - Outreach Committee”, President and Founder of the “International Institute for a Culture of Peace” and “Beyond Borders”, and International Advisor for Humanitarian Affairs for “The World Council of Peoples for the United Nations”.*

*She has held the following positions at United Nations Headquarters: Chairperson of the “United Nations NGO Committee on the University for Peace”, Chairperson of the “Executive Committee of NGOs Affiliated with the UN DPI”, Vice-Chairperson of the “Millennium NGO Forum” and Director of the “Campaign for a Culture of Peace” -- part of the United Nations’*

*“World Week of Peace” – a proclamation set forth by the UN General Assembly, calling for cease fires, conflict resolution forums, increased humanitarian aid and peace education programs. She was the Co-Convener of the “Seoul International Conference for NGOs”, bringing over 10,000 NGOs and civil society together to plan positive strategies for the new millennium and has also overseen the NGO development of 5 major United Nations NGO Conferences.*

*Dr. Valdov’s education includes: BS - Indiana University, MA - New York University, Ph.D. - Open University for Complementary Medicines (created out of an initiative of the United Nations World Health Organization), Psychotherapy Institute Certification - Institute of Socioterapy (Psychodrama, Sociometry and Group Psychotherapy) and Ph.D. Studies in Clinical Psychology – Oxford, NYU and Fielding Institute.*

*She has received the following awards – “The University Medal of Highest Honor” – Kyung Hee University; “Honorary Doctorate” – Mexican Academy of International Law; “World Love and Peace Prize” – Federation of World Peace and Love; “Woman of the Year” – Youths of the UN.*

### **About the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation**

*Founded by Fulbright Scholar Harry Morgan and well-respected travel professional Cappy Devlin, Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, Inc. (FAF) has facilitated international travel and exchange programs as an independent foundation since 1973--and for more than 15 years prior to that as an informal program supported in large part by Lila and DeWitt Wallace (founders, Readers Digest). Since its inception, FAF has cultivated international affiliations and representation in order to fulfill its mission: Promote Peace through Cultural Exchange. The FAF is a non-profit organization that provides meaningful group travel opportunities and concert performance tours promoting peace. Using the arts for peace, dance, music, choral (choir), and other performing and academic groups receive real interaction during their travels, both on the performance tours and special projects like our annual Youth Assembly at the United Nations, reconciliation and relief programs, and other special group travel opportunities. The arts-based healing program Finding New Hope, United Nations related travel, and fiscal agency services assisting emerging nonprofit travel and peace organizations that share FAF’s goals augment the main bulk of our work: nonprofit, customized group travel, concert tours and cultural exchange worldwide. FAF does not charge a fee for such services and a portion of each tour is fully tax deductible as allowed by law to each participant or their family. Patrick Sciarratta is the Executive Director.*

### **About the United Nations**

*The United Nations (UN) is an international organization whose stated aims are to facilitate cooperation in international law, international security, economic development, social progress and human rights issues. The United Nations was founded in 1945 to replace the League of Nations, in the hope that it would intervene in conflicts between nations and thereby avoid war. The organization began with fifty countries signing the United Nations Charter. The organization's structure still reflects in some ways the circumstances of its founding. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council, each of which has veto power on any UN resolution, are the main victors of World War II or their successor states: the People's Republic*

*of China (which replaced the Republic of China); the French Republic; the Russian Federation (which replaced the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics); the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and the United States of America.*

*As of 2007, there are 192 United Nations member states, encompassing almost every recognized independent state. From its headquarters in New York City, the United Nations and its specialized agencies decide on substantive and administrative issues in regular meetings held throughout each year. The organization is divided into administrative bodies, including the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Additional bodies deal with the governance of all other United Nations [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Nations\\_System](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_System) agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The United Nation's most visible public figure is the Secretary-General. The current Secretary-General is Ban Ki-moon of South Korea, who assumed the post on January 1, 2007.*

### **About the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council**

*The HIP-HOP SUMMIT YOUTH COUNCIL (HHSYC) was founded in 2001 by its Chairman, music industry veteran, community activist and author Charles Fisher. It is a non-profit, 501 (c) 3 tax exempt organization located in New York, New York. The HHSYC has positioned itself as an effective voice for youth on a host of issues that confront them daily. Our goal is to "change the game" by improving the image and unity within the multi-billion dollar Hip-Hop industry and use its positive influence for the empowerment of youths and young adults. Randy Fisher is the executive director. The mission of the Hip-Hop Summit Youth Council is to work as an advocacy group to protect the rights, interests and future of our youths and young adults while addressing a host of issues that confront them daily. By partnering with schools, the entertainment industry, private and government agencies we have created a unique network that provides the resources to help young people fulfill their social and academic goals. Through the use of Hip-Hop we have bridged the communication gap between our youths and adults and have earned the trust and respect of both.*

For additional information visit [www.hhsyc.org](http://www.hhsyc.org)