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Choice

Words

Reproductive Justice and Making Real Change

February 14th, 2008 by Kathleen

I am 20 years old and love hip hop and feminism. I was pissed off about women and hip hop. **I was no longer satisfied complaining.** I wanted to be active and do something productive, and that is how **Momma's Hip Hop Kitchen: The Soup Kitchen for the Hip Hop Soul (MHHK)** began.

I know this sounds trite, but God does work in mysterious ways. I almost did not end up going to Atlanta this summer to attend the **US Social Forum** as a **Reproductive Justice Youth Ambassador** with Choice USA. If I didn't go then I would have never met **Lah Tere** from Rebel Diaz (my partner in crime with this event) and I would have never been inspired to engage in social justice activism through art — especially through the medium of hip hop. If I had not applied to work at **PEP**, then I would have never received the guidance to create a new project, and explore my passions, and create a connection with it and reproductive justice. Funny thing is days before I even emailed Lah Tere she had a dream to do something similar. Our paths crossed and this amazing event came into fruition.

I am at the happiest point in my life right now. I am doing what I love and I feel the love coming from others as well. When I sent the fundraising letters out, I said in it every little bit will count, and I've received small amounts to more generous amounts. It doesn't matter. Every person, no matter if they are pro-choice or pro-life, wealthier, or struggling, the fact that they felt connected in some way to this event means the world to me. I've received donations from some of the most conservative people that I know, but they donated to this event because they believe in changing the face of hip hop and women.

Last night I held the Meet & Greet for the artists last night participating in MHHK. Last night when we all sat around the circle someone said that we aren't changing hip hop, but we are changing how hip hop treats women. Last night made me feel so wonderful. I wish I could express myself better with words, but at the current moment I cannot. We gathered in East Harlem in a donated space and sat around a room in chairs. We began with the simple act of introducing ourselves. We said who we were, why we were there, and what this event means to us.



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Some of the comments made last night around this event were:

- â€œThis event holds us as women and ourselves to a higher level.â€•
- â€œThis is feminist leadership through the medium of hip hop.â€•
- â€œWe can aim high and be up here.â€•

However, the comment that meant the most to me, came from a participant that initially did not want to do the event because there is a pro-choice aspect to it, but when it is looked at through a reproductive justice framework, the issue is not just abortion, its about the broader spectrum of social justice issues such as economic and political discrimination, racial injustice, and the hierarchies of race and class that exist in the US and abroad.

The comment that was made was *â€œItâ€™s not what I feel; itâ€™s about what everyone deserves to chooseâ€•*. While she mentioned that she would emphasize not choosing abortion, she did recognize an individual womanâ€™s right to determine her own reproductive destiny.

It became personal for me when one artist said she felt she â€œlost some of [her] artistic sideâ€• but this event awoken her spirit. When she entered the working world, she had to focus all of her energy on supporting herself and just surviving. She thought she would have to give away her artist side and her passion of singing. It was tough for her to come to terms with why she â€œcouldnâ€™t have somethingâ€• she wanted *â€œso bad but couldnâ€™t have at the timeâ€•*. She felt so honored that we asked her to be a performer at MHHK, but the truth is that I am so honored that she even accepted and agreed to our invitation. These amazing female artists are doing this purely because they want to create change. We want our daughters, sisters, nieces, etcâ€•, to realize that hip hop is a vehicle of change, and women demand and will receive respect. We women as people are multifaceted and we have all this love and oneness. We are reclaiming hip hop and the abuse that we have suffered in the past. We will forgive, but wonâ€™t forget. But we will move on. We are starting a movement to save the soul of women in the world.

Please check out the wonderful talented ladies for MHHK!:

[Lah Tere of Rebel Diaz](#)

[Patty Dukes](#)

[Attiyah](#)

[Zera Priestess](#)

[Ce-Ce](#)

[Free Flowin of Read Nex](#)

[DJ Laylo](#)

[DJ Chela](#)

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This entry was posted on Thursday, February 14th, 2008 at 3:06 pm and is filed under [activism](#), [youth leadership](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

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