

# Press Release

Contact: Chéree Thomas  
Phone: (517) 347-7000

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## **MCADSV QUESTIONS MESSAGES IN HIP-HOP**

On April 6, 2007, the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) made a bold statement when it held its workshop entitled; Hip-Hop and You Don't Stop: An Exploration of "Gangster Rap" and The Movement to End Violence Against Women. This groundbreaking work was co-facilitated by MCADSV Women of Color Task Force steering committee member Kalimah Johnson and MCADSV staff Chéree Thomas. It was a coordinated effort to send a clear message that there is **no** room in our society for lyrics that spew misogyny, homophobia and perpetuate violence toward women and children of color.

On April 14, 2007, a Hip-Hop Summit will be held in Detroit, MI. MCADSV Women of Color Task Force members will be there presenting positive perspectives to change in the Hip-Hop industry. Our message is not one of disdain for Hip-Hop, but one of opposition to the lyrics that have and continue to leave

scars on women of color. The words of former Radio Personality Don Imus speak volumes to the irrefutable damage of words that depict women of color as less than human.

Furthermore, we understand that the messages that are put forth to us by Gangster Rappers may not necessarily represent the views of those artists. We understand that messages of racism, sexism and homophobia are a direct reflection of those who control the industry and profit from promoting stereotyping images of African American women and men. The use of their privilege allows them to send messages of hatred to marginalized communities without repercussion. It is time for this to end.

This is not about censorship, but about choice. We are choosing to demand respect for women and children of color. We are choosing to not be silent about the pain that is felt each time our ears are pierced with derogatory statements. We are choosing not to deny that domestic and sexual violence are real in all communities. We choose to stand for those who may not have the ability to stand for themselves. We choose not to be silenced. We ask Hip-Hop artists to choose self-respect and dignity. We ask Hip-Hop artists to choose to uplift the women and children in the community by not surrendering to the trinkets that are given to them by the industry in exchange for the reputation of African American women and men.

Hip-Hop is a culture that has been taken over by the media industry and tainted. We want it back. We wish to restore the dignity that was present in Hip-Hop before the mid-eighties and the Hip-Hop that reflects positive rhymes to the community but no longer gets airplay. We ask your support in ridding society of misogyny, homophobia and **all** violence against women and children. Let us be coordinated in our stance against all forms of oppression. As it was shown in the Imus media frenzy, **When Standing in Solidarity, Our Voice Will Be Heard.**

Chéree Thomas

MCADSV