



NYC Student Initiative for AIDS, Inc.

Until we find a cure everyday is world AIDS day.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIGHT APATHY TOUR LAUNCHES WITH GREAT SUCCESS

NEW YORK, NY (September 27, 2004) – Fight Apathy Tour heads to Columbia University, after receiving overwhelming praise at its packed New York University launch earlier this month. Organized by the NYC Student Initiative for AIDS, the tour aims to raise awareness about the global AIDS crisis on college campuses in New York City.

The Fight Apathy Tour is the first student-produced campaign of its kind, launched during a key election year where AIDS has grown into a significant political issue. It utilizes a fresh approach in engaging peer audiences with its serious subject matter through direct interaction with award-winning spoken word artists and musicians.

"I loved it. It was really intense and definitely worthwhile. Its less dry, you know, than telling people facts. It's effective and artistic, and I think it got a lot of people aware of things in a different way," says Dan Tirer, an NYU sophomore who attended the NYU show on September 17th.

"Fight Apathy is more than a tour, it's a movement," says Carlos Andrés Gómez, creative director of the tour and a featured poet on HBO's Def Poetry Jam. Gómez has also shared the spotlight with legendary wordsmith Saul Williams and Ursula Rucker (featured on The Roots' albums) and opened for Wyclef Jean (of the Fugees) and Toots and the Maytals.

According to Gómez, "Too many young people think they're immune to the HIV/AIDS crisis, but the overwhelming majority of us are infected with apathy. This tour serves to challenge that inaction and disinterest, meeting it head-on with relevant substance, plausible solutions, and stripped-down emotional honesty."

Gómez is joined by Celena Glenn, former host of the Nuyorican Poets' Café and currently ranked second in the World Individual Poetry Slam; Brent Shuttleworth, whose music has been described as "organically fresh rhythms, which fuse together with lyrics that could eat rust and spit them back out as steel;" Clara Sala, recipient of the 2003 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Poetry; and Postmidnight, one of the hottest poets breaking through the slam scene.

The Fight Apathy tour differs from other AIDS campaigns because it is entirely free and will not accept donations at the show. Each show is followed by artist-led workshops designed to open dialogue between students concerning issues involving HIV/AIDS.

"The workshop was amazing. The artists are incredibly passionate and informed. I definitely learned a lot," says Danielle Laura, an NYU freshman who attended both the show and workshop. "I think the concept of the tour is wonderful. The whole idea is us doing something. Money is not enough right now. It needs to be people getting involved."

Organizers have already begun preparing for an expanded national tour in 2005.

UPCOMING TOUR DATES

Columbia University – October 2nd & 3rd, 2004

Pace University – October 5th & 6th, 2004

St. John's University – October 14th & 15th, 2004

Lehman College – November 3rd & 4th, 2004

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For more information see www.fightapathy.org or contact:

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THE PERFORMERS

Celena Glenn - She is a former host of the Nuyorican Poets' Café, a two-time National Poetry Slam Champion, and currently ranked second in the World Individual Poetry Slam. Celena is featured in *Spoken Word Revolution*, a new anthology narrated by the creator of the poetry slam, Marc Smith, and *Urban Scribe*, a documentary about the lives of contemporary poets. She has been featured in *Serum*, a Swedish poetry publication, *UNTOLD*, a London based culture magazine, *Composite*, a fashion magazine out of Japan, and will be appearing in an upcoming documentary by Slam Channel.

Carlos Andrés Gómez – Carlos is a political agitator/passion instigator turned poetry/spoken word innovator from Philadelphia. Recently, Carlos was featured alongside Saul Williams on the Def Poetry Jam website. He was the 2001 Pronoun Showdown Philadelphia Grand Slam Champion and a member of the 2003 Nuyorican National Slam Team. Carlos has appeared on PBS, WHY?, and MTV. He has shared the stage and opened for musical acts such as Immortal Technique, The Slip, El De Sensei of The Artifacts, Maya Azucena, and Reel Big Fish. He has released two poetry collections, *March forth...first* and *Shades of Silence*.

Clara Sala – Clara is a poet, educator and native New Yorker. Raw, lyrical, and sensual, her words evoke her HIV experience, the courageous journey she takes through sex, death, awakening, and ultimately love. Recently, she was the feature performer for International AIDS Day at Vassar College and The University of Massachusetts. She is a recipient of the 2003 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Poetry, as well as two Pen American Center Grants for Writers and Editors with AIDS, in 2000 and 2001. She has been published in numerous journals, and is currently working on her first book of poetry, *The Edge of Creation*.

Postmidnight - Postmidnight is also one of the hottest young poets on the spoken word scene. He's slammed and performed across the country, read his work on several radio stations, and done work with various non-profit organizations ranging from schools to soup kitchens. He's the author of 2 screenplays, a stage play, and 5 chap books - *Common Sense*, *Unconventional Criminal*, *Mentally Disturbed*, *Schizophonic*, and *Troubled Youth*. Postmidnight has also produced 3 spoken word cds – *moonshower moods*, *Soap (EP)*, and *Phoenix*.

Brent Shuttleworth - A vocalist, songwriter, guitarist, and poet, at just 22 years-old, he has already become a much sought-after musician and artist of global acclaim and notoriety. He has toured extensively throughout North America and abroad, from Cape Town, South Africa's famous Arm Chair Theatre to Montreal, Canada's Casa del Popolo to the intimate bars of Prague, Czech Republic and back to the United States' Kimmel Center in New York City. He has shared the stage with such diverse, acclaimed fellow artists as George Clinton and the P-Funk All-Stars, De La Soul, and Pete Yorn.

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ABOUT NYC SIA, INC.

NYC Student Initiative for AIDS Inc. (NYC SIA), is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded by several NYU students in June 2002. NYC SIA aims to address the absence of AIDS from the everyday lives of students, and to raise significant funds to fight the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in the developing world.

Each year, the group chooses an international AIDS relief organization to support financially. NYC SIA raises funds primarily by hosting AIDS benefits and operating a discount card program sponsored by local merchants throughout Manhattan.

In its 2004 fundraising year, NYC SIA raised \$9,800 for Africa Directions, a youth center in Zambia's M'Tendere township that provides HIV/AIDS education, counseling, testing and peer outreach. The organization also sent Africa Directions a laptop computer, an item that the center requested to facilitate outreach presentations. In 2003, NYC SIA donated \$4,600 to Doctors without Borders.

The group has won wide praise for its work and has been featured on national television and at the 2004 International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand. According to NYU Dean William Long, "NYC Student Initiative for AIDS is a model grassroots movement of young people that has heightened awareness of the current state of AIDS, raised funds for relief and research, and generated a contagious spirit of activism in their fight against AIDS and apathy; and they have done so with creativity and compassion."

Bob Holman, owner of Bowery Poetry Club says, "Never have I found a more forthright, hardworking, on point crew than the NYC Student Initiative for AIDS. A great show, a great crowd, a great cause. Book this tour -- you're doing yourself a favor. And the world will thank you."

NYC SIA is an organization actively seeking to involve student communities in the fight against AIDS through artistic and educational means. NYC SIA supports initiatives that treat, educate and care for people affected by HIV/AIDS in developing nations.

For more information, interviews or bookings, please contact:

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