

Hip-Hop Inaugural Ball A Huge Success: Russell Simmons, LL Cool J, T.I., Young Jeezy, Bow Wow And MC Lyte Co-Host Sold Out Black Tie Charity Gala To Benefit The Hip-Hop Summit Action Network



Photo: (from left to right) Spliff Star and Busta Rhymes

The Hip-Hop Inaugural Ball was a fundraiser for HSAN, the world's largest coalition of hip-hop artists and entertainment industry executives, to continue its non-profit work for education advocacy and other empowerment programs for young adults throughout the United States.



Photo: (from left to right) Young Jeezy and T.I.

T.I. affirmed, "When Reverend Yearwood and the Hip Hop Caucus reached out to me to join them in their efforts to get out the youth vote, I thought, 'Why me?' as a convicted felon under house arrest. But I realize now that it's all God's plan and exactly the way it's supposed to be. All of the hardships I experienced turned out to be a blessing. Young people on the street relate to me because I have already been through what they are now going through. When I speak to them about the importance of voting, they pay attention." As T.I. held up his award, he uttered, "Now that I'm headed to prison and when I'm in that cell alone and the lights go off, I will always remember this moment."

"I told my wife ten years ago that this day would happen and she didn't believe me," LL Cool J shared. "Well, honey, I was right! This is an amazing time period for those who have to see in order to believe. Now you see."

"I want to thank Barack Obama for showing us that you can make your goals as big as you want to," Young Jeezy emphasized.

Young star Bow Wow explained, "This was my first time voting, and I realized if the kids can listen and recite my words, then why can't I preach the word of positivity and get the fans to vote."

"Tonight was a pivotal moment, not only for hip-hop, but also for the entire world that has been positively impacted by hip-hop," shared Valeisha Butterfield, the Executive Director of HSAN. "We celebrated the inauguration of Barack Obama. We celebrated the outstanding contributions of hip-hop leaders to make this particular inauguration possible. We not only had the hottest Inaugural Ball, we had one of the most meaningful."

The evening wrapped up at 2am with hip-hop icons, leaders and revelers joined in a spirit of unity around the promise of a new era for America ushered in by the election of Barack Obama.

"It is without any doubt that the Hip-Hop Inaugural Ball is now a part of the history of the transformation of America," concluded Dr. Benjamin Chavis, President/CEO of HSAN. "We were more than witnesses to history. We are the participants in helping to shape the present and the future. People from around the world came out to celebrate with us. Barack Obama's inauguration and the evolution of hip-hop culture have a defining congruence and, as a result, America and the human family around the world will never be the same."

The exclusive radio partner for the Hip-Hop Inaugural Ball is CBS Radio WPGC 95.5 FM. The premiere online media partners

were Global Grind, www.globalgrind.com, Politico.com and the celebrity, gossip and entertainment news site Young, Black & Fabulous, www.TheYBF.com.