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Bronx Council on the Arts hosts Poetry Showcase and Celebrity Rap Battle

(Bronx, NY — April 3, 2015) Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA), Bronx WritersCorps Program, hosted a **Poetry Showcase and Celebrity Rap Battle** on March 20, 2015 at Horizon Juvenile Detention Center. BCA's Sharon Little, Director for the Bronx WritersCorps, organized this event which had more than 60 participants in attendance. The event featured a short open mic and "mock" rap battles between the center's residents before moving on to the main event — A rap battle between celebrity lyricist DNA and K-Shine which was judged by the youth themselves! DJ Beans kept the gym jumping with his lively tunes and the Bronx's own Oun P performed one of his hits. TREND\$ and Def Jam Recording Artist and Bronx Native Mikey Jay took part in the Q & A session for the youth that followed the event.



Pictured (l. to r.): K-shine, B Smoove, Oun.P, Rafael Torres, Sharon Little ALL Lyrics, "Brother" Earl Majette and DNA.

The Bronx WritersCorps is celebrating more than twenty years of giving voice to Bronx youth through weekly afterschool workshops led by a roster of talented teaching artists. Horizon is one of six WritersCorps sites that hosts regular workshops where youth, ages 13-17, benefit by learning public and professional presentation techniques, improving language skills, enhancing their writing skills and developing a higher sense of self-esteem. Each site produces a year-end poetry anthology and participates in an annual youth poetry showcase. Bronx WritersCorps teaching artists operate in six under-served South Bronx sites: three BronxWorks family shelters, Good Shepherd Services and Sheltering Arms Non-Secure Detention (NSD) Residence and NYC Administration for Childrens Services Horizon Juvenile Detention Center.

Upcoming Teen Merit Awards: The 2015-16 season of Bronx WritersCorps will launch its first WritersCorps Teen Merit Awards. To be eligible youth must be an active participant of the WritersCorps Spoken-Word workshops and be between the ages of 13 to 17. To be a winner of the merit award participants must have an academic grade average of B or higher. The participants with the highest grade average win. For information on the WritersCorps Teen Merit Award, call 718-931-9500 x12 or e-mail Sharon@bronxarts.org.

Sharon Little, a 15-year veteran with BCA, has been the Director for the Bronx WritersCorps program for the last three. Over the years, she has elevated herself to achieve her Associate Degree in Communications & Marketing. Her goal is to awaken the public to this hidden jewel Bronx WritersCorps through which the Bronx Council on the Arts has been giving voice to at-risk youth for more than 20 years. Her growing reputation and vision for this program has led to the creation of an annual field trip to the Urban Word Poetry Final Slam at Harlem's famous Apollo Theater for the past two years, and enabled her to establish the program's first Celebrity Jams this year in Horizon Juvenile Center. In September 2015, she plans to introduce the First Merit Awards into the program's three shelters.

The artists who helped make this event a success are: **Gerald "Oun P" Allen** who began Hip Hop career at 9 years old when he started rapping along-side his Father and Brother Ty-Tracks; **DNA**, a Queens-based battle rapper on several different Leagues, including SMACK/URL, King Of The Dot and Grind Time; **Darnell "TREND\$" Dominguez** who wrote his first mix tape in 2005, won his first award in 2015 and is adding acting to his ever-growing list of credits; **K-Shine**, one of Harlem's own and true, is a Hip-Hop battle rapper and Dot Mob recording artist with an extremely large voice matched with hardcore punch-lines; **Mikey Jay** is Native American Trinidadian mainstream recording artist, music producer, actor, film producer, philanthropist and community activist from the Southeast Bronx. **"Brother Earl" Majette** is a longtime teacher and performance artist and has been a teaching artist for BCA for the past seven years. Among his many credits, he has produced five albums, been featured in several anthologies, spotlighted on Def Poetry Jam.com and acted in five films. **Rafael "Divine" Torres**, another BCA teaching artist, began his career with rap songs of survival in Spanish and English. He helped pen the music to the Grammy-nominated "Guajira" and has performed at Madison Square Garden, Lincoln Center and Central Park Summer Stage.

For more information on the Bronx WritersCorps, call 718-931-9500 x12 or e-mail Sharon@bronxarts.org. Funding for this program is provided by the [New York City Department of Youth & Community Development](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycc/html/index.html).

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