

**Loving Hip Hop with Our Eyes Wide Open**  
**Screening of “Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes”**  
**December 2, 2006**

**Discussion Questions & Response Summary**

***What do you think are the effects of this kind of music?***

- I think that it is just all about killing our brothers and killing our community
- It really makes people look at women like they are just objects, like a chair or a lamp
- I don't think it has any effect. I think the people are just going to do what they are going to do regardless.
- I think that is just makes you think what you already think – if you think that women are bitches and hoes, it just confirms your ideas.

***What can we do about it?***

- To be honest, I don't really think that there is much we can do about this.
- We can do what the young women at Spelman did. We can take a stand.
- We should create our own positive music, with positive messages even if it doesn't get played on radio or doesn't make money. Not everything should be about making cash.
- This film should be shown to all people and youth. Schools should show the film and have discussions.

***If you had to write a rap, what would you rap about?***

- My self and my life
- The struggle out there on the streets
- My messed up teachers and school

***If you were a hip hop artist, would you sell out and change your lyrics to get a record deal?***

- Most youth said that people had to do what they needed to do to survive.
- YWAT members said that most of the young people at their tables said that money talks so they felt that everyone would change their lyrics if they were being honest.

***How does hip hop affect you personally?***

- Many people talked about how much they enjoy listening to hip hop. A lot talked about the beats. A couple of youth mentioned that it is like their poetry. Others talked about the fact that hip hop was a whole culture not just music. They felt that hip hop was unfairly being criticized because people only thought of it in terms of the music but the young people said that it was a whole way of life.

***Why do the people who control the media want to portray these negative images of people of color?***

- YWAT members felt that they weren't even able to get at this issue. Their conversations didn't get to address the root causes. Only one group [Emilya and Scott] were able to probe this issue and talked about corporate interests and oppression.

### **Overall Assessment of the Discussions**

- For some reason, many YWAT facilitators had several young men of color at their tables. This affected the dynamics of the conversation in particular in the cases where both YWAT facilitators were young women.
- Many participants in the discussion groups felt that women who wore certain types of clothing are in fact sluts and bitches. They opinions on this were not changed by viewing the film. One young man said that “all female second name is bitch/ho.” The YWAT facilitators attempted to engage this young man to probe his thinking. However, they felt that this proved unsuccessful.
- Some YWAT members felt that youth were “putting up fronts” and acting “cool and detached.”
- A couple of young men raised the issue that women need to “take the blame.” They agreed with the premise that some women were “sisters” and others “bitches” depending on how they dressed.
- One young woman said that some female rappers are calling themselves “bitches.” She felt that the film should have addressed this issue as well.

### **Next Steps**

- The YWAT plans to continue with its “Engaging Young Men as Allies in Ending Violence against Girls and Women” project. YWAT members felt after this discussion that there is so much work to be done to deal with the deep seated misogyny and homophobia that exists in our culture. The YWAT felt that sustained intervention and dialogue was needed and hopes to provide spaces for those to occur.
- The YWAT is planning to host a train the trainer for young men who are interested in learning more about addressing gender violence. They plan to do this in April 2007. They thought that it was important for men to hear more from other men about this issue.