

IAHHE Newsletter:
August 3rd, 2008



This year's IAHHE summer program was a joyous expression of positive energy and student identity. The goal of our summer program is to help students gain a sense of themselves and their history, develop literary skills, build vocabulary, and learn techniques for positive self-motivation.

Through the medium of hip hop students also learn how to think quickly, critically and contextually. They learn how to bring together various topics and see how individual ideas are connected together through threads of information.

Instead of receiving isolated facts in separate learning situations, the students connect all of these units of information and experience them through performance. The student develops the skills to bring these ideas together through learning how to freestyle rhyme and also how to compose rhymes that bring together the multifaceted areas of their education.

On a personal level, it was amazing to see close to 100 students on a stage in front of their parents and teachers chanting positive affirmations about themselves. Students who normally would not say anything were chanting at the top of their lungs and students who may say too much sometimes were also chanting the same positive words: "We don't need nothing else but health wealth and knowledge of ourself!"

It was a beautiful presentation and one that warmed the hearts of parents and staff alike.

The students created from start to finish a demo CD with positive lyrics. Each group democratically created the lyrics and the beat and a CD cover for each group was chosen from their designs. They performed the songs and rehearsed a skit that included the song in it.

The theme of the CD and the skit was their "Declaration of Importance." The storyline supposed that an alien came down to destroy the earth and gave the students an opportunity to save themselves if they could come up with some reasons why they were important in a document called a "Declaration of Importance."

Each student created their own list of important attributes and the groups collectively composed their rhymes from each other's list.

We are excited about continuing with this group of students in the afterschool program in the fall.