



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



The 411 Initiative For Change & Amnesty International's Hip-Hop Musical Connects 30,000 Students to Human Rights Education

Nov. 3, 2005. Ottawa – Facilitated by Canadian non-profit youth organization **The 411 Initiative For Change (411)**, with the guidance of the human rights organization **Amnesty International**, Canadian musicians are using their music as a medium to provide human rights education to high school students and to empower youth to become active members of the global community. This highly effective program will reach **30,000 youth** in rural and urban centers across Canada as part of a national concert tour into high schools from **Oct 17 – Dec 9, 2005**.

The Honourable Raymond Chan, Minister of Multiculturalism, who attended one of the high school performances in Toronto, emphasized the importance of supporting critical programs, such as 411's, in order to embrace Canada's multicultural and diverse social fabric. Minister Chan addressed students and faculty – affirming that through this program, young Canadians, *“are going to set the example to model for the rest of the world!”*

The educational hip-hop musical bridges arts, culture, heritage and social development through a dynamic 'edutainment' performance called “The Barbershop Show.” 411 and Amnesty International envision a culturally diverse and inclusive Canada, a country that truly respects human rights at home and abroad. *“Shared citizenship and understanding can be fostered through cultural exchange; this production engages students on the issues, experiences and realities that frame the lives of our peers and classmates who may be refugees or immigrants, including armed conflict, violence against women and girls, and child labour and poverty,”* explains 411 Executive Director, Tamara Dawit. *“Young Canadians who are speaking out and taking action on human rights are the drivers of change – in Canada and internationally.”*

Amnesty International Canada is supporting The 411 Initiative for Change with human rights information, advice, resources and in-school representatives. The organization has one of the most successful youth activism programs in Canada, with at least 10,000 youth members and more than 400, mostly school-based, youth groups. Encouraging human rights awareness and activism among youth – through projects such as the 411 Initiative for Change – is a key element of Amnesty International's work.

“Youth are the key to building respect for human rights,” says Shauna MacLean, Amnesty International's Youth and Student Program Director. *“That's why this partnership with The 411 Initiative for Change is so exciting. These performers really know how to make human rights feel real and urgent. They really get people engaged.”*

In the words of one Toronto high school teacher: “Something special was exchanged between the staff and students with the performers – students were moved emotionally and inspired to be active persons in our society. This program supports teachers by reinforcing a lot of messages we try to get across to students.”

The production features powerful songstress **Melanie Durrant**, whose performance challenges abuse and violence against women in our communities, as well as discussing the importance of equal access to education for all children. Hip-hop artist **Shohn Booth (Rikoshay)** uses his music to explore the effects of poverty on children around the world and how youth can live responsibly to protect the human rights of their peers. Poet **Dwayne Morgan** discusses the realities of being a refugee and the experiences of children in armed conflict and war. The production is hosted by music industry veteran and former professor on hip-hop culture **Will Strickland**. Following the performance, the musicians engage the students in interactive discussion sessions, challenging youth to take an active role in their collective futures, while encouraging them to develop their own individual forms of self-expression through art or action.

The unique nature of **The 411 Initiative For Change's** model of using artists and music as key agents in social change – from within the education system, demonstrates innovative, timely and effective response to the growing need to practice sustainable models for social development.

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Performances open only to members of the media visiting the following cities: Toronto, Oshawa, Guelph, London, Kitchener, Windsor, Stittsville, Ottawa, Dunrobin, Gatineau, North Bay, Sudbury, Charlottetown, Halifax, Calgary and Winnipeg.
*Refer to following page for dates, times and school information for National Capital Region schools open to media.

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Human Rights Education Tour Schedule National Capital Region

City	Date	School	Address
Stittsville	Nov. 7	9:00AM Sacred Heart HS	5870 Abbott Street
Stittsville	Nov. 7	12:30PM Sacred Heart HS	5870 Abbott Street
Ottawa	Nov. 8	9:00AM St Patrick's HS	2525 Alta Vista Road
Ottawa	Nov. 8	1:00PM Woodroffe HS	2410 Georgina Drive
Dunrobin	Nov. 9	9:00AM West Carleton SS	3088 Dunrobin Road, RR2
Dunrobin	Nov. 9	11:40AM West Carleton SS	3088 Dunrobin Road, RR2
Ottawa	Nov. 10	9:30AM Colonel By SS	2381 Ogilvie Road
Ottawa	Nov. 10	1:00PM Colonel BY SS	2381 Ogilvie Road
Gatineau	Nov. 11	1:00PM Symmes HS	701 du Plateau Blvd

Human Rights Education Tour Schedule National Tour Dates (Nov – Dec)

City	Date	School	Address
North Bay, ON	Nov. 15	9:00AM Silver Birches P.S.	65 Marshall Ave
Sudbury, ON	Nov. 16	9:00AM Saint Francis	691 Lilac
Sudbury, ON	Nov. 16	1:00PM Bishop Alexander Carter	539 Francis Street, Harnmer
Charlottetown, PEI	Nov. 29	9:30AM Cardigan Consolidated	RR6, Cardigan
Charlottetown, PEI	Nov. 29	1:30PM Colonel Grey Senior HS	175 Spring Park Road
Summerside, PEI	Nov. 30	10:00AM Three Oaks Senior HS	10 Kenmoore Ave
Kinkora, PEI	Nov. 30	1:30PM Kinkora Regional HS	54 Anderson Road
Fall River, NS	Dec. 1	9:30AM Lockview HS	148 Lockview Road
Halifax, NS	Dec. 1	1:30PM St Patricks Alexander JH	2277 Maitland
Tantallon, NS	Dec. 2	9:00AM Tantallon JH	3 French Village Station Road
Halifax, NS	Dec. 2	1:30PM Highland Park JR HS	3479 Robie Street
Calgary, AB	Dec. 5	9:00AM Central Memorial	5111- 21 St. SW.
Calgary, AB	Dec. 5	1:00PM Lord Shaughnessy	2336 53rd Ave SW
Calgary, AB	Dec. 6	9:30AM Dr. Norman Bethune	315-86 Ave
Calgary, AB	Dec. 6	1:30PM West Island College	7410 Blackfoot Trail SE
Winnipeg, MB	Dec. 7	10:00AM Sisler HS	1360 Redwood Ave
Winnipeg, MB	Dec. 7	1:00PM Chapman School	3707 Roblin Blvd
Winnipeg, MB	Dec. 8	9:30AM John Pritchard	1490 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg, MB	Dec. 8	1:00PM École Viscount Alexander	810 Waterford Avenue
Winnipeg, MB	Dec. 9	9:00PM St. Boniface Diocesan HS	282 Dubac Street
Winnipeg, MB	Dec. 9	1:00PM Human Rights Conference	U of Winnipeg 515 Portage Ave

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