

Hip-Hop and Chess

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Shaminder Dulai Photo

By Dr. Alan Kirshner

I regret that I was unable to attend the Hip-Hop, Chess and Life Strategies Exhibition on Friday, February 23, due to a prior commitment. I first met Adisa Banjoko two years ago when his son attended a Success Chess School Summer Camp in Fremont. I am happy to see that he has acted on a dream we talked about at that time--creating a Hip-Hop Chess organization to help young people who may be at risk to find a positive direction in life. The San Jose Mercury covered the event:
<http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/local/16774630.htm>

Even though this event was not the usual fair covered on this page and I do not have any games to insert, I believe that activities of this nature are also under the mission of CalChess. I am inserting a press release and a few of Shaminder Dulai's photographs to provide all those who may be interested with a more detailed story

of the event:

Historic Hip Hop, Chess & Life Strategies Exhibition and Tournament Creates New Friends and Rivalries in the Game of Kings

San Jose CA, Feb 26th, 2007- Adisa Banjoko and Leo Libiran, founders of the Hip Hop Chess Federation announced the world's first Hip-Hop & Chess Exhibition and Tournament was a huge success. Friday, February 23rd 2007 Banjoko hosted the first of many Hip Hop, Chess & Life Strategy Charity Exhibition and Tournament at the MLK Jr. Library, in San Jose, CA. The goal of this free event was to help empower youth through education and entertainment.

Rappers, award winning martial arts champions and many others volunteered their time for Bay Area youth. DJ QBert, Starks, Yogafrog, Award winning director Kevin Epps Straight Outta Hunters Point, T-K.A.S.H., Bay Area Hip Hop icon DJ Kevvy Kevv, The Natural, Izz Thizz, graff writer Scape One, Casual from Hieroglyphics, Okwerdz, Apakalips from the Universal Zulu Nation, and tons of B-boys, DJ's and MC's descended upon San Jose to bring out the youth. International Master Vinay Bhat, of the East Bay Chess Club, made a special appearance. D.Lamont Robinson of Academic Chess taught new and advanced players the nuances of the 64 squares. He gave participants tips to improve their strategies in life and on the boards. Some of the martial artists dedicating their time included Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Brown Belt Paul Schreiner, Brown Belt Denny Prokopos and Black Belt Alan Gumbly Marques.

World renowned DJ QBert came through with his time clock in hand. He was dominating folks in speed chess. There is little irony in the fact that the DJ with possibly the fastest hands in turntablism loves speed chess. However, without the clock, filmmaker Kevin Epps was able to wear Q down in a fantastic display of intellectual tactics. Izz Thizz, Scape Martinez and Okwerdz had some tough matches as well. DJ Kevvy Kev was nothing less than dominating in his matches through the evening. Many unknown chess snipers came through to wreak havoc on the set. These skilled unsuspecting guests put up a fight that knocked out all the martial artists, including yours truly. One of the most memorable matches of the day was watching an 8-year-old nicknamed 'The Zen Master', defeat Casual from Hieroglyphics! Casual was one of the main supporters of this event and his presence was invaluable.

There is much enthusiasm for the next event to be held in May of 2007. We will have 'Hip Hop, Chess & Life Strategies II'. Expect to see many more MC's, martial artists and entertainers. We will continue to teach life skills while everyone has fun. Banjoko plans to host tournaments similar to these in other parts of the nation throughout the year.

Kevin Epps was excited about the night's event stating: "It was an amazing. It is more than chess--it is about community. Just talking to the youngsters made it all worthwhile. This is definitely gonna grow."

The response from the rap, chess and Hip Hop community was overwhelming. Prospective sponsors and artist from Chicago, New York and the UK called me requesting we bring the event to their cities and countries. We are happy the demand is growing and it is with great pride that we announce that we have teamed up with State of Minds portal co-founder to create the International Hip Hop Chess Federation.

Leo Libiran, co-founder of the first Hip Hop web portal www.stateofminds.com will help spearhead the creation of the Hip Hop Chess Federation. "The purpose of the Hip Hop Chess Federation is to use Hip Hop and chess to help young bright minds actualize their potential," stated Leo Libiran. The site will be up in a few weeks. For now, those interested in learning more about the rapid evolution of Hip Hop and chess can visit <http://www.myspace.com/hiphopchess>. "We are going to enrich the world one city and one mind at a time," stated Leo Libiran.

This event was free of charge and cost because of all the volunteers and sponsors. Sponsors for this event included www.stateofminds.com, www.onthemat.com, www.hiphopcongress.com, www.academicchess.com, www.successchess.com



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