



A SECOND CHANCE TO BLOSSOM: YEM HONORS LEADERS AND YOUTH ON JOURNEYS FROM TRAUMA TO TRANSFORMATION

For Immediate Release

March 12, 2008. New York, NY. The Youth Empowerment Mission, Inc. (YEM) celebrates transformation and community outreach at the **2nd Annual Blossom Awards** on Thursday, March 20, 2008, 6-9pm at LOLA IS SOUL in Soho. www.lolaisoul.com.

The 2nd Annual Blossom Awards salute outstanding examples of leadership, empowerment, and self-determination. This year's honorees include: **Essence**, leading lifestyle magazine for African-American women; **Cheryl McKissack**, CEO of professional design and construction firm The McKissack Group; **Emma Jordan-Simpson**, Executive Director of the New York Children's Defense Fund; and **Felicia Fonrose**, Owner of Nu Yu Day Spa. Radio host Raqiyah Mays (98.7 KISS FM's "Wake Up Call") will guide the evening program.

YEM's 10th Anniversary theme, "A Second Chance: Making Good on a Promise", focuses on the prevailing needs of mentorship, career education and community wellness and support. In 1998, a revolutionary *Essence* cover story, "Gang Girl", accounted a decade (1988-1998) of life from one of New York City's most notorious high school gang's female leaders, Isis Sapp-Grant. The deep recollection of her painful rise, fall and rebirth not only touched the hearts of readers; it became a highly controversial depiction of the problems surrounding the nation's troubled youth- drugs, violence, sexual abuse, and hopelessness.

Ten years later, Isis Sapp-Grant has blossomed from a promising girl gang-survivor, into a Community Activist, Founder & Executive Director of the Youth Empowerment Mission Inc. (YEM). Dedicated to providing young people and families in high-risk environments with real alternatives to violence and delinquency, YEM is a landmark resource for Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn and urban communities at large. Sapp-Grant states, "In this 10th Anniversary year, we celebrate these milestones and embark on our second decade with renewed purpose."

YEM has been recognized both locally and nationally for helping to transform the lives of girls and young women in crisis. In the past decade, YEM has helped over 800 young people and their families avoid the pitfalls of gangs and delinquency and achieve positive life outcomes. YEM school and community workshops have provided real solutions as well as hope and motivation to thousands of youth and adults across New York City and other cities looking for answers to the problem of youth violence. YEM's signature program, the *Blossom Program for Girls*, instills and encourages the vital leadership and life-skills required of young girls to move successfully from being victims of circumstance to becoming victors of self-fulfillment.

For event coverage, and to learn more about YEM's 10th Anniversary "A Second Chance: Making Good on a Promise" 2008 campaign, visit www.girlsblossom.org and contact Trina Morris, Style Root Inc. 718.789.9290 / trina@style-root.com.

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