

LongShot: A true role model for youth

Written by Josh Georgiades
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Hip Hop is the most popular music for young people today. Chad “LongShot“ Heslup is a highly respected hip hop emcee. An emcee is a lyricist who speaks or raps over musical beats. LongShot was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. Most of his lyrics reflect family, role models, and the struggles of society. He grasps the pain and suffering of the masses of people in America. He has the amazing ability to connect to people’s difficulty with love and respect.

LongShot grew up as a ward of the State of Illinois. He moved from place to place; he lived with his grandmother and more foster homes than he can remember. He finally ended up in a program called, ‘Boys Hope’, which was a great experience for him. He graduated from high school and entered Drake University in Iowa on a football scholarship. An injury put an end to his football dreams.

Life is so fantastic that when one door closes, another one opens. For LongShot, his next dream was poetry and music. In 1999 he created a book of poetry called *Scream of the Butterfly* . It was

followed by a single, dubbed *Happiness is Hard to Find*

, which paved the way for his first solo CD in 2003, called, *Open Mouths Fed*. To date, he has produced 5 full length CDs:

Civil War Pt. 1 & 2, Sacrifice, Issues,

and

Addicted

. In March 2011 LongShot was a finalist for a Vita.Mn contest, of which he was on the cover of their weekly paper. He was also on the cover of the Star Tribune variety section. He has made Minneapolis his home for the last two years.

LongShot worked with students at WE WIN Institute. WE WIN is a non-profit organization dedicated to the academic and social success of all children. With programs in north and south Minneapolis, WE WIN serves children from pre-kindergarten through 10th grade. He created a song for the children called *WE W.I.N.* He played the song which created great excitement amongst the children. He taught them how to create their own original spoken word compositions. The students performed their masterpieces for the emcee. The children were totally engaged. LongShot was a magnificent role model and an example of African American

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excellence.

LongShot recently completed a mixtape late in 2010, entitled, *LongShot is the Future of the Chi* which is available for free download on his MC LongShot Facebook page. He is releasing a new mixtape on April 1.

Josh Georgiades: Your song, WE W.I.N. was a teaching tool for youth at WE WIN Institute. How did you come up with song?

LongShot: I came up with the idea for the *WE W.I.N.* song just by playing with the letters in my head. I didn't know if *WE W.I.N.* stood for something as words or if they were just the title of the program. I came up with *WE W*
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eighborhood, and then I wrote the song.

JG: You have now come multiple times to visit WE WIN children, giving lessons on rhyme scheme, telling your story, and opening up for personal questions, how has that affected your life?

LS: Having the opportunity to talk with our youth has affected my life in a very positive way. Like many of the kids in the WE WIN programs, I come from a challenging family life. So for me to be able to talk to them and give them encouraging and positive words has meant the world to me. Kids need care! They need to see that people: parents, teachers, mentors and others in their life take an interest in them and what they are doing. I was blessed to have people in my life like that as a young man, and so any time I can give back in that capacity I try to take advantage of it.

JG: The students rap along to every word of your *WE W.I.N.* song, how does that make you feel?

LS: First of all, *WE W.I.N.* is OUR song! It's actually more of their song than it is mine. For the kids to embrace it the way they have is incredible! I wanted to create something that they would be proud to sing... I wanted to make an anthem for the program and for what I feel the program stands for: Unity in the Community!

JG: WE WIN students have come to the studio with you and put their voices on the chorus of two of your songs. What can you tell us about the songs?

LS: Having the children in the studio was an awesome experience. It gave them a chance to see how a song is put together and it gave them a chance to add their own imprint on the art. The two songs we did were called, *Grow Up* and *I Told U*. They are about growing up and beating the odds placed against you.

JG: What is the most pressing need for this generation's youth?

LS: I think guidance is the most pressing need for any child of any generation. We need our parents, first and foremost, to be the leaders and role models of our youth. It all starts at home.

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JG: What would be your words of wisdom for today's youth?

LS: My message to the youth is always the same: work hard for what you want. Hard work is no guarantee for success, but without it you don't have a chance. No matter where you come from, no matter the odds against you, you can be what you wanna be.

JG: You have a new mixtape coming out. For those that don't know, a mixtape is normally a free CD with songs that aren't on the album, which are generally downloadable on the internet. What are the details of your next mixtape?

LS: The new mixtape is called Live from Gravebomb. The title is named after the studio I record from. The songs on the mixtape will not be on my next album. . I don't like to 'sit on' songs I write, so if I decide that the songs are not album material, I like to 'leak' the songs, or put them out for free for all to love and hear. I'm really excited about the new material. 18 new songs will be on it, including the *WE W.I.N.* song. April 1st is the release date.