

# MESSAGE IN THE MEANTIME



January Winter 2007  
1st Quarter

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## King Day Celebration

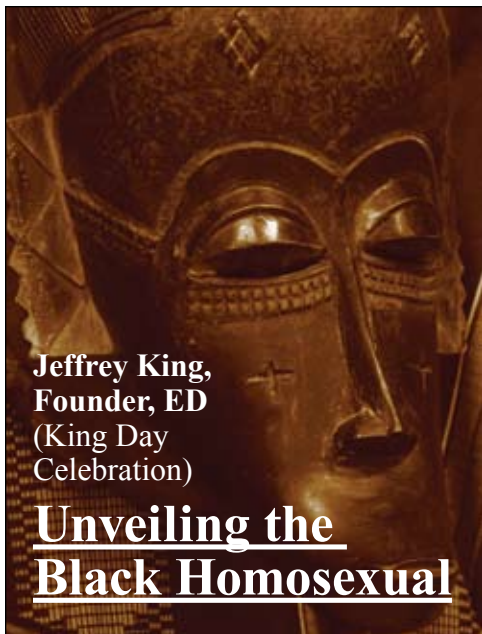


Karamo Brown  
Master of Ceremonies

Award Recipients  
Kevin Picket received  
the Kevin Spears  
Humanitarian Award

Earl Ofari Hutchinson,  
received the  
King Rustin Award





Jeffrey King,  
Founder, ED  
(King Day  
Celebration)

## Unveiling the Black Homosexual

**Black Homosexual** people have historically been an intricate part of the very fabric and foundation of the larger Black community. We are inseparable from Black people and the larger community. Our contributions have been many as we too have struggled side by side with our families, friends and love ones to fight for the freedoms that many of us now enjoy. The progression and advancement of our

people is just as much our focus as it is the next black man's or woman's. We often celebrate brothers like Bayard Rustin as he strategized and orchestrated the march on Washington during the civil rights movement of the 1950's. It should be noted that there were others who contributed as Black people denying their visibility as Black homosexuals as not to divert the attention from the larger causes of Black people of that time.

**We are still here and still committed** to the causes that largely impact our community. In addition we continue to face issues that more specifically devastate Black LGBTQ, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning people. Our efforts are often short changed by the unwillingness of prominent Black people like Oprah and Bill Duke to have a fuller conversation about Black homosexual men and women and the impact and devastation that homophobia, stigma, and HIV/AIDS compounded with all of the other issues that continue to impact Black people.

**The Ultimate Sacrifice** that is fueled by the fear of isolation and separation from ones people is devastating and many Black homosexuals will live their entire lives in secret because our community does

not accept or affirm those of us who are not heterosexual. Many of us continue to fight to have our voices heard above the attempts to demonize Black homosexuals. We fight to defend our right to be apart of the larger black community by trying to fit in. Developing neuroses of "straight acting" when appropriate and many of us who dedicate our lives to the church will even speak hell and damnation to ourselves.

We are politicians, clergy, parents, family members, artist, educators, and civil rights advocates who continue to fight for our collective freedoms. We fight and die for our country during times of war, we pay far too much in taxes as single people, tithe and serve in our local churches, raise children, educate our children, and love our Blackness, yet we remain invisible and misunderstood by the larger Black community. The desire for acceptance and inclusion not to mention fear of violence, has persuaded millions of men and women to hide very uncomfortably in the closet and rarely ever publicly defend themselves. Tolerance is not a solution.

Understanding is the foundation on which healing will take place in our community. Take a look around you and get to know more about the homosexual in your life.

## 7th Annual King Day Celebration

*The Power of Determination*  
By N'neka Hite

*"America has written a non-sufficient fund check,"* —Dr. Martin Luther King, I Have A Dream Speech—1963. Dr. King's famous *I Have A Dream Speech* echoed throughout the Village theater at the Ed Gould Plaza in Los Angeles Monday night. In the Meantime Men's Group sponsored and hosted their 7th Annual King Day Celebration welcoming all races, sexual orientations, and religions. Dr. Martin Luther King was honored by what one called 'a celebration for our ability to breathe together.' There was no end to the love and support shown that night as guests and speakers displayed their overwhelming appreciation for equality, diversity, and freedom by acknowledging the leaps and strides that have been made in an effort to unify and share the beauty of each other's differences. African drums filled the room with rhythmic appreciation for equality and unity. Lilly Ross serenaded the crowd with her acoustic melodies.

The night was privy to notable activists and guest speakers. In the Meantime Director Jeffrey C. King stressed the power of determination and the impact of focused attention. He made a call for African Americans and Americans as a whole to step up to the plate and continue the quest for change and equality.

"As we step out on the ultimate faith, we should see a brilliant light at the end of the tunnel." King spoke. He stressed a need for change in the way people think, "Our success is contingent on our faith and belief in ourselves," King said. HIV and AIDS awareness was folded into the theme and given the title as the new cause that African Americans should share. King called for people of all genders, races, and religious backgrounds to have the right to love openly.

**"We must begin to take on the challenges of the days and times that we live in."**

—Rev. Al Sharpton

Earl Wooten spoke reverence to Dr. King's life work. His sincere dedication to the life works of Dr. King was felt throughout

his speech. "The true aim of Dr. King was the elevation of the social construct of human kind that we are aware of our oneness in God," Wooten said. There was a much talk about equality and the need for tolerance in gay and lesbian relationships within the African American community.

With a warm introduction from King, the mellow crowd welcomed the Master of Ceremonies, MTV's *Real World* and Community Activist, Karamo Brown. The audience listened actively to his compelling story where he outlined his rise to success in the entertainment industry and his dedication to activism. Brown introduced award recipients and the nights Keynote speaker Jasmyne Cannick.

Cannick expressed her desire to run for office and stressed the need for openness and tolerance of the homosexual community. The night concluded with a reception catered by Harold and Belle's.

Free HIV/AIDS screening was available as well as condoms and counseling. All of these perks made for a night of true celebration as respect was paid to the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



# In The Meantime Youth Have a Voice

By Herndon L. Davis

**Greg Wilson** possesses both the compassion and the sincerity that is often missing within the Black LGBT community. In fact he is absolutely determined to empower and inspire others around him to greater heights by sharing with them his own path of excellence. Greg is the Youth Coordinator of MYLIFE MYSTYLE, a component of In the Meantime Men's Group. In this capacity he works closely and specifically with Young Black Gay Men whether they're just coming out sexually or struggling with other challenges, such as the insecurities or issues of life.



Greg's amazing planning skills and innovative freshtake on life helps to take away the edge from homophobic weary youth as he shines a guiding light for them to follow towards a much more promising and rewarding future.

The following is a candid conversation with Greg Wilson where he provides insight about his thoughts on the challenges and insecurities of Young Black Gay Men.

## What do you think are the biggest challenges of Young Black Gay Men?

I think the biggest challenge black gay men are facing today is infection. It seems that over the past few years, being gay has appeared as a trend in the community. Everyone is trying it. (LOL!!) But [seriously] it also indicates, based on the facts, people are experimenting and having unprotected sex. Most are unaware of the consequences of this risky behavior. I think infections of not only STD's but also HIV has reached the level that it has because a lot of men I have spoken with indicated that using a condom with a man is acknowledging and admitting that you are gay. Though I disagreed, I found



it to be quite interesting that men would risk their health to live up to other people's perception, seeking acceptance, and also for their own psychological reasons.

## What do you think are the biggest insecurities of Young Black Gay Men?

I think the biggest insecurities of young black men are acceptance and perception. Perception because the way we are perceived by others is totally important. Many gay men wonder why we can't be received, accepted and considered as normal as heterosexual men. I feel it becomes an insecurity when this alone challenges a gay man and forces him to live into the stereotypes of a closeted or Down Low man. Many of these stereotypes come into play with gay curious or bisexual men who don't want to lose the respect of their friends or family based on what may be pleasurable to them sexually.

And this is where the insecurity of acceptance comes into play. No one wants to compromise the stability of their support system meaning family, friends, relationship, by forcing upon people information that may not be of relevance for them to attain. I don't go around broadcasting my sexuality. But does that mean I'm in the closet? NO! It simply means I only volunteer necessary information. A lot of gay men don't want to worry their mothers or grandmothers with their sexual orientation! It's ok to be empowered, but is it necessary to tell people that don't even want to know who you are having sex with? So acceptance is a big insecurity, and I feel this may be the reason so many people choose not to define their sexuality.

## What advice would you give to Black Gay Male Youth?

I would say get educated! I think it is extremely important to not only educate yourself for you, but also to attain the information in case your friends or family come across risks and may need guidance.

## It's your life! You need to know more....

The more you know, the easier it would be to save your life and the lives of your friends. We all know someone that is infected with HIV, whether they tell us or not! It affects us all!

## What advice would you give to Young Black Gay Men, in marriages or heterosexual relationships?

I always believe in loyalty. I think in any relationship and marriage, that honesty and loyalty are the greatest foundation. Cherish the one you are with and don't lose that spark you had at the beginning. Keep the relationship fresh and new. Make it something you can't wait to go home to! I know many people get into these aspects of a relationship and then cheat. If you feel the need to get your groove on, then it must mean it's time to move on. Keep it real!

*Herndon Davis is an author, lecturer, and TV/Radio Host. He can be reached directly at [www.herndonadavis.com](http://www.herndonadavis.com)*

## Soulful Salon

By Ronald Jackson

The Soulful Salon's artists collective is the brainchild of Ronald Jackson and Jeffrey King with Mark Durham being one of its founding members in 2005. Responding to the need that artists should be in the company of other artists for collaboration, inspiration and encouragement. Soulful Salon has become a safe haven for Los Angeles based artists to commonwealth every third Sunday of the month.

From these gatherings grew other activities and events for the purpose of encouraging, supporting and promoting artists of all mediums. The most notable event is Third Thursday: An Unplugged Live Arts Experience billed as The Harlem Renaissance Revisited on the West Coast. With the support of Jewel and Rhue of the Jewel's Catch One who have graciously donated facilities and staff, Soulful Salon has watched Third Thursday grow into one of the preeminent Open Mic/Spoken Word/Artist Collective spots in Los Angeles where performers can flourish, thrive and grow.

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The CDC visits In The Meantime

*Ain't I Black Yet is a poem that speaks to the pain of having one's identity questioned and invalidated based on other's need to prove that the level of their Blackness supercedes that of their sister or brother. This is an act that is non-productive, divisive and even destructive. This poem teaches us that ethnic or cultural identity begins inside of the individual as do racial experiences. Racism, however, is a collective journey that cannot be dismissed as a result of perceptions of culture or individual stance on cultural identities.*

## Ain't I Black Yet

A Poem for Black America  
By Ifalade Ta'Shia Asanti

**This hair, These eyes, This skin, These hands,  
This voice, These feet, This journey, This land.**

**Ain't I Black Yet?~**

**I was there the day that Martin was crowned  
Cried on the morning that Malcolm went down  
Marched the evening Kennedy was shot  
Shielded my children until the fire hose stopped  
I just wanna know, Ain't I Black Yet?**

**I was in Watts for the 1960 uprising  
Returned to L.A. when Rodney King arrived  
Stood up to be heard when Natasha was shot  
Wrote another poem when Maxine exposed  
the CIA plot**

**I wish y'all would tell me, Ain't I Black Yet?**

**Gave birth to a Black child in 1981  
Taught Black children to read in 2001  
Helped birth my grandchildren in 2004  
Helped fight Apartheid on South African  
shores**

**Has it happened—Am I Black Yet?**

**Mama is Black last time I checked  
Daddy was Black last time when I went back  
Sister and Brothers were Black last time we  
spoke**

**I represent my people everytime I vote  
You tell me, Ain't I Black Yet?**

**I praise a Black God, know Africa is my true  
home**

**Comb my hair with a pic, been burnt by a  
pressing comb**

**Speak an African language, in fact, more than  
one**

**Know my African history better than some**

**Please let me know...when I become Black  
I've written checks to Black organizations  
I've shopped Black instead of caucasian**

**I employ my people, even those who've been  
incarcerated**

**Use my journalism to make sure our work is  
celebrated**

**And I keep wondering—Ain't I Black Yet?**

**I love a woman who looks like me Brown skin,  
eyes and locks that swing free**

**You say this love erases my Black**

**I say if you didn't give it, you can't take it  
back**

**I'm so glad I'm Black.**

**God painted this skin a beautiful brown  
God designed the path I would travel down**

**God gave me a soul just like She has**

**And my soul is as Black as yours is**

**I think I just might be Black.**

**I will keep on raising my fist to the sky  
Been doing it forty years, some got the nerve  
to ask me why, Was a painful day when I  
realized you hated me too  
After all I have done, after what we've been  
through**

**In case you didn't know, we're both Black.**

**I was there on the slaveship right next to you**

**I was on the plantation, in the fields too**

**I was at the uprising when we burned the  
crops**

**I shot the video of you being beaten by cops**

**I never forgot you were Black.**

**I taught Martin how to organize so we could  
be free**

**I'm the spirit of Bayard, Zora and Baldwin set  
free, When Angela Davis put her fist to the roof  
That was me, your son, daughter and  
grandmama too**

**Here's a subtle reminder: They were Black.**

**Five on the Black hand side that's me**

**I can make grits, eggs and sausage for three-  
Your favorites: Luther, Sylvester and Johnny  
Gill**

**Cheryl Swoops and Isabel Sanford, you know  
the deal**

**The most important thing to remember: they are  
Black.**

**We Black and I keep wondering why can't you  
see**

**when you look in the mirror at you, yeah,  
that's me**

**This poem is so you won't forget: We are Black.**

**This hair, These eyes, This skin, These hands,  
This voice, These feet, This journey,  
This land Black.**

**I've traveled from the slave dungeons  
to America with you**

**On the underground railroad,  
that was me too**

**They see me when they look at you  
Though you seem too blinded by your need to  
prove**

**Whose black and who ain't is not determined  
by hate or love**

**Blackness is chosen by the Woman above**

**In case you didn't know, She made me Black.**

**So you tell me, ain't I Black enough yet?**

**A mother, a father, a U.S. war vet**

**The babies you abandoned, they were raised  
by me**



## Soulful Salon

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The Soulful Salon meet every third  
Sunday from 3 pm until 5 pm.

As time moves forward, the energy of Soulful Salon has only grown with the addition of Breeze Vincinz, C. Jerome Woods, Imani Phoenix, Jamez Smith, Donald Willis and Dale Guy Madison on board as organizers and producers. Acting on a suggestion by Frankie Lennon, one of the original members, the Soulful Salon now collaborates with Unity Fellowship's Talking Drum creative writing workshop that takes place the first Wednesday of every month.

The Soulful Salon performance, every  
Third Thursday at Jewel's Catch One

In addition, the Soulful Salon has launched a Book Club this year. The Soulful Salon Book Club, under the moniker of the Book Club for those with Soul, is a forum that fosters literacy and community among African Americans residing or working within the Los Angeles area. Book selections will focus mainly on titles that *address issues* that exist within the wide diaspora of African American culture. The first reading of Soulful Salon's Book Club is the aptly titled "Soul City" by Touré. The Soulful Salon's Book Club meets the last Friday of every month.

The Soulful Salon has collaborated with In The Meantime, ATB, Gentlemen's Gentlemen, and the Black AIDS Institute and looks forward to working with them in the future as well as ULOAH and other organizations that support our community.

The Soulful Salon continues to meet every third Sunday from 3 to 5 p.m. Organizational and business matters are discussed from 2 to 3:30 p.m. The second half, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., is the opportunity for all Black artists to display, share and discuss their works with other Black artists in the Los Angeles area.

The Soulful Salon is dedicated to providing an enriched space to bring out the art in everyone, from the experienced professional to the beginning novice. The only requirement for participation is your willingness, your integrity and you.

For more info on SS events, activities and locations, go to [www.soulfulsalon.com](http://www.soulfulsalon.com).