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**Y U GOTTA CALL IT GHETTO? Book Release**

***East Oakland youth challenge stereotypes of their generation and their neighborhoods and offer their eye witness opinions in new poetry anthology***

**Oakland, CA (Thursday, May 19, 2010)** – “Successful,” “smart,” “blessed,” “caring,” and “helping the community,” are some of the top responses that nearly 30 middle school, high school, and college-aged youth from East Oakland answered in response to the question “describe who or what you want to be in the future.” These youth, hailing from the East Oakland Youth Development Center (EOYDC), took part in the *Routes to Resilience* research project, spearheaded by LeConté Dill, doctoral candidate at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health. These youth live, go to school, and work in the “killer corridor” of East Oakland. Confronted by risks and stressors in their homes and communities on a daily basis, they still have a huge sense of hope for their lives.

In addition to participating in interviews, and data analysis, the young people participated in a poetry workshop series that resulted in 95-page book entitled “Y U Gotta Call It Ghetto?” Their poems center around the themes of coping with violence, seeking refuge at EOYDC, and relying on their faith. In the poetry anthology, as the title suggests, they ask the reader ‘why do you gotta call it ghetto?’ The ‘it,’ up for interpretation, can refer to East Oakland, or Black or Latino youth, often relegated to negative stereotypes.

*Y U Gotta Call It Ghetto*, out this month, can be purchased by contacting EOYDC directly, Marcus Book Stores, or borrowed from the Oakland Public Library. ***The youth will be reading excerpts from the book and signing copies on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, from 4-5pm at the 81st Avenue Branch Library (1021 81st Avenue, at Ruidsdale) and on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8pm at Marcus Bookstore (3900 Martin Luther King Jr. Way).***

YU Gotta Call it Ghetto website <http://www.yugottacallitghetto.com/> EOYDC has been serving youth and families in East Oakland since 1978. For more information call (510) 569-8088 or visit [www.eoydc.org](http://www.eoydc.org).

“The spirit of the young people of EOYDC is felt deeply on the pages of this book of poetry. *Y U Gotta Call It Ghetto?* is the testimony of the life that is theirs now, their longing for what they know it should be, and their conviction that they will not be trapped by circumstances they did not create. I'm very proud of these young people and the honesty they express on these pages—some profound and hopeful; others basic and raw, but never defeated. This book is an example of the opportunity for good that is just waiting to be cultivated in our young. And it should get the attention of us all.”

**-Pam Moore, Anchor, KRON 4**

I Come From  
I come from God  
I come from my wonderful family and friends  
I come from my ancestors  
I come from East Oakland  
I come from poverty  
I come from dirty streets  
I come from violence  
I come from independence  
I come from false advertisement  
I come from EAST OAKLAND!!

**-Sha'Quea Pratt**



They assume that  
every teen  
from Oakland  
is gang affiliated  
a criminal  
a dropout  
But that's not the case  
**-Genesis Preciado**