

“Peace Weekend”

By Muhammad Abdullah

(Continued from last week)

When asked about the success of the “We’re All In the Same Gang” single and what promoted it, Concepcion had this to say:

“After I started thinking about some of the things my mom kept telling me, I tried to figure out a way to bring the gangs together to do something positive...I knew that the police would constantly harass me and try to throw a negative shadow on me...But I knew a lot of celebrities and I asked for their help...I thought about bringing together athletes and then I thought about rap groups...I asked myself a question about if I was to

produce a sports show or a rap show which one would the young people watch?...So I decided they would watch the rap show...I then got in touch with some rap groups, which about 50 of the rappers were former gang members and were friends of mine...I went to MC Hammer and others and they said, “Let’s do it”...I then went to REEBOK and convinced them that this would be rewarding because most of the big Tennis Shoe companies have outlets in South Africa except REEBOK, so I told them that they can make a statement about their support of anti-gang activity

and lack of support for Apartheid South Africa by sponsoring a video in the projects...I then convinced Warner Brothers that it would be a worthwhile project. They agreed...”

“I convinced many of my partners that we could make a statement that all people in the projects were not ignorant and that movies and videos could be produced in the projects...We were supplied with tennis shoes and T-shirts from REEBOK and most of the people in the video were gang members...I was able to bring many rival gangs together -- IcTho Al Capones, Hoover Groovers, the Bloods and others because I have relatives that are gang members...The record has gone gold and the responses have been positive...After we finished shooting the video, we all got together and partied...There were no fights and no bloodshed. I felt good about that...That had never happened before...”

A lot of gang members now want a chance to go straight and they have been asking me for “We’re All In the Same Gang” T-shirts and caps. I have been taking this message to different neighborhoods while promoting the record...It’s a start...I am only one person and we need more people to get involved...We need to provide

jobs to the people when they get out of prison or else they will continue to do the same things to survive...”

David Linton, Promotion Manager of the Los Angeles Branch of Warner Brothers Records said that the public response has been tremendous and that all proceeds from the singles and videos will go to charity. He thanked Michael for his vision and said that he was grateful to be a part of such a worthwhile project.

Concepcion encouraged members of the Anti-Drug groups to try the one-on-one approach to closing down crack houses and he urged the law officers present at the press conference to take time out and talk to the gang members with a caring attitude. He urged parents to see that their children learn to read and write and stay on top of their education.

With a successful weekend like “Peace Weekend” I believe that the community will grow from this brief experience. Larry Weekly and the KCEP staff along with EOB should be commended once again. This SENTINEL-VOICE reporter was proud to be a part of “Peace Weekend” and would like to thank all those who took the time to make Mr. Concepcion feel welcomed. Officers Carrington and Prater should

be commended for their commitment and for being present to secure Concepcion and his entourage.

The entire community can benefit from the dialogue and the commitment displayed by this event. If you don’t have the video or the single, buy it and share it with a friend. It

has the most positive lyrics of rap groups in a collective effort that I have heard this year. Remember, “we are all in the same gang.” Doctors hang out with doctors, lawyers with lawyers, scientists with scientists. God be with you Michael Concepcion and those like you! Keep up the good work.



Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams welcomes Concepcion to Las Vegas during “Peace Weekend.”

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