

**NYCHA CHAIRMAN JOHN B. RHEA
NYCHA'S 41ST ANNUAL TALENT SHOW
SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2011 – 2:00 PM
APOLLO THEATER, 253 W 125TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY**

Good afternoon, NYCHA. To all of our performers; to their families; our residents; colleagues; friends; and honored guests—welcome to NYCHA's 41st Annual Talent Show.

While we come today ready to compete, we recognize that today's program is also a celebration. With hard work, with commitment and with courage, our performers have honed their talents and today they share their gifts with us. So we celebrate each of you; and in celebrating you we also celebrate the best of NYCHA.

I think it's only appropriate that we're back in one of the greatest theaters in the world—Harlem's legendary Apollo. We stand where Ella Fitzgerald first captivated an entire city at age 17. We stand where Jackie, Tito, Jermaine, Marlon and Michael announced that although they were from Gary, Indiana, the world would become their home.

We stand in the shadow of Aretha Franklin; James Brown; Luther Vandross; Lauryn Hill...and today—Alondra Contreras; Mia

Anjou; Shemar Dudley; Rasheeda Brown; Christine Rivera; Silvia Cunningham.

We celebrate each of you and we wish you success today—and every day—as you live out your dreams.

To our host—the very funny and talented Jimique Straker—we’re so excited to have you with us. Thank you.

To our production team, musicians, and talent coaches—thank you. Your energy and your commitment are an inspiration.

To our Assistant Deputy General Manager for Community Operations Deidra Gilliard; to NYCHA’s Creative Arts team—Juan Santiago, André Le Clech and Antonio Pantojas; and to all the men and women of Community Operations who work so hard to make our talent show a world-class program year after year—thank you so much. We wouldn’t be here without you.

I want to thank our community partners, especially the New York Knicks. I’m so excited that the Knicks are back in the Playoffs and I wish them all the best on their playoff run.

I also want to thank our judges—and we have some of music’s heavyweights with us today. I’m almost afraid to call their names for fear of making our contestants nervous, but I know that when NYCHA shows up, we show up ready. So, let me thank Tony Riley; Kathy Jordan Sharpton; Mercy Greene; and a special thank you to one of NYCHA’s own—our brother and friend, a man who’s always there when we need him—Kiss FM legend Bob Slade.

Thank you all for lending your genius to our program.

Thank you also to our director. Anyone who has ever performed on the stage or screen knows just how important—and difficult—a job the director has, so I want to thank Director A. Gregory Harris.

And to you, our audience—you’re the most important people here.

The saying is, “The show must go on;” but the show isn’t a show unless there is an audience to appreciate and celebrate it. So thank you for coming out today and supporting our performers.

On behalf of Commissioner López, Vice Chair Youssouf, and everyone at NYCHA, welcome to our celebration. Our home is

your home—so when a voice touches you or a dance inspires you, let our performers know it. Now, make yourselves comfortable and get ready for the one and only NYCHA Talent Show.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.