



BECAUSE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN NO LONGER BE LOST TO VIOLENCE AND POVERTY.
TRUTH, TRUST & TRANSFORMATION

News Release

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Roca's 3rd Annual Benefit Concert raises over \$125,000 to Help Massachusetts' High Risk Young People Move out of Violence and Poverty *Grammy Award Latin Salsa Sensation Jerry Rivera, Grammy Award Winner and Producer Mya, and host of "The Ramiro and Pebbles Morning Show" on Jam'n 94.5 Ramiro Torres, Delivers Outstanding Performance*

(Chelsea, MA) – Tonight **Roca's VIP Reception and SOLD OUT Concert was sponsored by TD Bank and TD Insurance** and was centered on **redemption**. Redemption is in all aspects of Roca's work, from helping young people address the hard issues in their lives to engaging community partners in difficult discussions. The event **brought together celebrities such as** Latin Grammy Salsa Singer Jerry Rivera, Grammy Award winning singer, actress, and producer Mya, and radio personality from Jam'n 94.5, Ramiro Torres. Together, they **spoke to the audience about what the world can do differently to stop losing so many young people to violence and poverty and spoke highly on Roca's High Risk Intervention Model**. The benefit concert also honored the musical talents of Roca participants and celebrated the young people making positive changes in their lives.

In its 23-year history, Roca, the nationally recognized non-profit organization has helped more than 20,000 high-risk young people change their lives to become productive citizens.

"Roca, first of all, is a wonderful organization. They do so many positive things for the young people and for the communities-that's exactly what I stand for, and that is why I am here today... This event and Roca is so wonderful because it's all about the improvement of the young people's lives and getting them to a positive path," said Mya.

"Roca needs to be recognized for their relentless work and for never giving up on these young people. It's an honor to perform today for an incredible organization-but I think I



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take more from being here and learning from all the young people stories, than I could ever offer. I commit to spread Roca's vision and mission in my industry of work, because they are doing something different!" Jerry Rivera stated. One example of the lives Roca changes is Ciara Appleberry who spoke at the event. Ciara lost her brother this past September to senseless violence. Ciara works at Roca and keeps her brother's legacy alive by telling her own personal story of change and redemption.

"Losing my big brother is a feeling that I can't quite explain. There are no words to ever describe a family tragedy like this. But I do feel like Roca is a great support system for me whenever I do have one of my "I miss my brother moments". I am a leader and a peer mentor in Roca. Five years ago I never would have thought I would be who I am today...a leader, a mentor, and a young woman that continues to positively change my life! I also think that it's important to celebrate and honor my brother's memory by continuing to serve others while working on myself" Appleberry said.

Among those who attended the fundraiser were Boston Police Department Commissioner Ed Davis, Chelsea Police Chief Brian Kyes, Chelsea City Manager Jay Ash, and President of MassInc, Greg Torres. Molly Baldwin, founder and executive director of Roca remarked about the need for even more services today as there are even more young people in need.

"Roca has tremendous support from a host of sources law enforcement, private donors and philanthropies as well as federal state and local government officials and we are so grateful. But the challenges our people face today are greater than ever and we need to find more resources to help them." Baldwin remarked. In fact after 23 years in Chelsea, Roca has established its first new operation since its founding in Springfield to help that city with the challenges it is facing with gangs and crime. Roca has been working with Hampden County Sheriff Mike Ashe to form a partnership to help high risk youth in Springfield with the model that has been so successful in Chelsea. Roca Springfield began July 1, 2010.

For more information about Roca visit www.rocainc.org.

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