

DATE: 4/28/09

SOURCE: Atlanta Journal-Constitution

HEADLINE: Young Singer Finds a Cause



Young singer finds a cause

Former Atlantan tackles homelessness. 12-year-old Oscar performer writes lyrics to help children.

By [Nedra Rhone](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

The first time Jamia Nash asks the auditorium of seventh-graders to keep time with her singing, they clap randomly.

The second time, the clapping is rhythmic but a little too fast.

The third time, Jamia lets her voice take over. Singing a cappella, her strong and clear tone fills the room, guiding students in the proper accompaniment.

The multitalented 12-year-old who gained widespread fame after performing at the Oscars last year, was singing a snippet of her newest single at Lovinggood Middle School in Powder Springs. The following day, she would debut the entire song during a Global Youth Service Day celebration at Cobb County Civic Center in Marietta.

"Time for Us" holds special meaning for the former Atlantan, who dedicated the song to homeless children after learning, among other things, that one in 50 children in America is homeless. All proceeds from the song will support the Campaign to End Child Homelessness run by the National Center on Family Homeless.

"When I was very young, I always wanted to do something about that," said Jamia, who now officially goes by her first name only. "I haven't experienced it, but I see it. If that was me, I would want somebody out there putting in the effort to save my life."

Jamia recently relocated to California, where she has a recurring role on the soap opera "The Young and the Restless." But between adjusting to a new school and a new set of friends, she found time with her father and manager, James Nash Jr., to search the Internet, watch television and learn enough about child homelessness to compose a song that seemed suited to the cause.

The effort produced a paean to young people in need, with lyrics like Jamia's favorite verse:

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"If we're the richest nation, how can we live our lives, acting like we don't see what's in front of our eyes. No more excuses, we've got to do what's right, all we need is love."

Released by the Popular Entertainment Group, the label founded by Jamia's father and Jason Janifer, the song is available on Amazon.com and is coming soon to iTunes.

Child homelessness is a weighty topic for anyone, particularly young people who have many other things competing for their attention. That's one reason Jamia is reaching out to people her age.

"I'm not saying kids are better than adults, but when I speak to them, I can relate to them more," she said.

She's willing to talk about almost anything, and the students at Lovinggood have lots of questions. They want to know if she's been stalked by paparazzi, if she ever gets nervous singing and if she has a private jet. No, no and no, she says.

When a student asks what she expects them to do about homelessness, Jamia takes advantage of the opening, "You can ... research all you can to find out more about this campaign," she said.

At the end of her visit, as she signs autographs — first name, curvy underline, heart over the "i"— two students commend Jamia for trying to make a difference.

Jamia thanks them and offers hugs all around. It's been a long day, but she says she isn't tired. She's already looking forward to the next performance.