

LIFESTYLE

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By Stacey Smith

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She said she realises that some parents are a bit sceptical of sending their children with

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She explained how the name was chosen for the camp. "We had what I guess you could call an inter-centre competition where people from each centre had to think of a name and then put it in a hat."

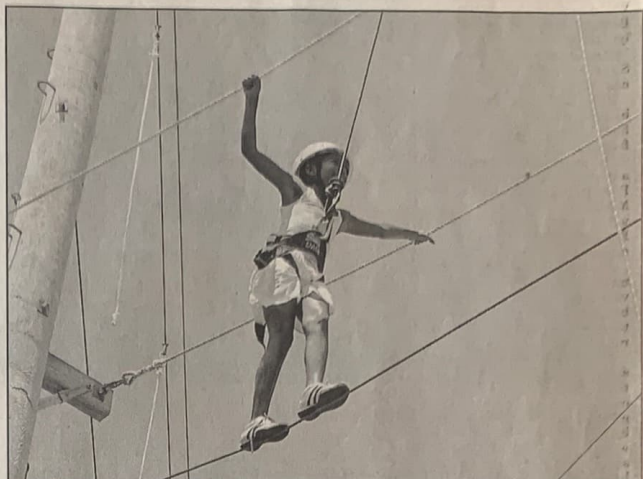
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react to their personalities accordingly," she stressed.

Even so, she said it's rewarding because, "although you only get to know the children for a short period of time sometimes you grow attached to them and it can be hard to see them leave."

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So why the decrease in numbers this year? "I think that we advertised it (the camp) enough, but I guess it's just not catching on."

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However, Ms Gilbert also considered the fact that the Camp is still rather fresh. "This is only our second year so the programme is still fairly new to people."

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This is the second year the camp has run. "I also think it's because of the fact that the camp is new that we're not getting the people that we would like to," she said.

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Of Camp Pequot, Ms Gilbert said: "It's an excellent programme and it's good - especially for older kids - because there aren't that many camps out there for them." She also said there are plans to add more new and exciting things next year.

Nine-year-old Sinae Smith attended the camp both this summer and last summer. "It was really fun and we went swimming every day and I got taught how to kayak, snorkel and fish," said the youngster.

She said she also learned at Camp Pequot "that the Indians used to be in the United States before all the Americans."

Sinae added: "The counsellors were fun and nice - they always joined in on the games with us."

Individuals interested can go to any one of the three centres (St. George's, Hamilton or Somerset) or the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, which is in the Perry Building on Church Street, Hamilton, to register.



Gliding along: (left to right) Tzadik Donville, Tjuan Swan and Sean DeGraff kayaking.

Former hustler highlights Miami's grimy side

By Brett Johnson

NEW YORK (AP) - For Miami hustler-turned-rapper Rick Ross, the rise to the top hasn't exactly been meteoric. He toiled for more than a decade in the city's music scene, appearing on mix tapes and on albums by fellow hometown rappers, including Trick Daddy and Trina, before having breakout success of his own.

So when Ross recently got his first chance to hold the jewel case and flip through the liner notes of his debut solo CD, "Port of Miami," the laid back, bald-headed MC was nearly giddy.

"Just seeing the album, just looking at it... It's legendary," 28-year-old Def Jam artist says, sitting in offices of the record label, transfixed by the disc's artwork.

"When you're young, first having dreams about being a rapper, I remember going into the local mom and pop stores, and seeing the Def Jam logo on the vinyl. Being a fan of LL Cool J and now being on this level, it's an honour."

Ross, who stands six-foot tall and weighs about 300 pounds, acknowledges that his good fortune is largely due to his runaway hit, "Hustlin'." A local sensation that eventually gained national attention, the song features ominous organs, stuttering hand claps, a hypnotic chorus ("Every day, I'm hustlin'") and

Ross' deliberate rhymes about Miami's grimy side. He declares: "See all these killers around me? A lotta drug dealing 'round me/going down in Dade County."

Upon recognising the record's buzz, several labels vied for Ross' signature. But after taking a meeting with Def Jam President Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter and its chairman, Antonio "L.A." Reid, Ross joined the label's roster, which includes rap luminaries such as LL Cool J, Kanye West and Nas.

"It was the ultimate motivational record," says Shakir Stewart, the label's senior vice-president of A&R who also recently signed Atlanta rapper Young Jeezy. "The hook is not just about drug trafficking. Everybody hustles. Every day people hustle."

Still, Ross' gritty depictions - more "Scarface" than "Miami Vice" - are a far cry from the glamorous images of bikini-clad models, expensive resort hotels and pastel Art Deco architecture most associated with South Beach.

Instead, "Port of Miami" reflects a hard-knock life about 20 miles away in Carol City, the lower class, predominately African-American suburb where Ross, born William Roberts, was raised.

"It's a real hardcore place," says Ross, adding that many of

his friends are either dead or incarcerated. "And at the same time, you got to see some of the finer things being near Miami. That made me a big dreamer."

As a teenager, Ross looked to petty drug dealing, rapping and playing football as ways to realise his dreams. ("At 15, I was writing rhymes, songs with structure, choruses, bridges, intros," Ross says.) He even received a scholarship to play at Albany State in Georgia, with an eye on signing a lucrative NFL contract. But only two weeks passed before Ross knew he wouldn't be the best student-athlete.

"I said to myself, 'I can't waste these peoples' time. I can't even do my times tables,'" he recalls.

Though Ross is vague about when he left the drug trade alone to focus solely on his hip-hop career, he credits another Miami rapper - Luther Campbell of 2 Live Crew fame - as being a huge inspiration. Soon after returning from college, Ross linked up with childhood friends Elric "E-Clas" Prince and Alex "Quezi Pucci" Bethune to sign to their management company, Poe Boy Entertainment. That relationship led to him doing local shows and signing a joint deal with Trick Daddy's Slip N' Slide label, which is now under the Def Jam umbrella.

However, he still stayed connected to the streets and that

rugged sensibility gives "Port of Miami" its edge.

"I ain't going to talk about (stuff) that ain't poppin' in the streets," Ross says. "If I'm talking about it, it's very relevant."

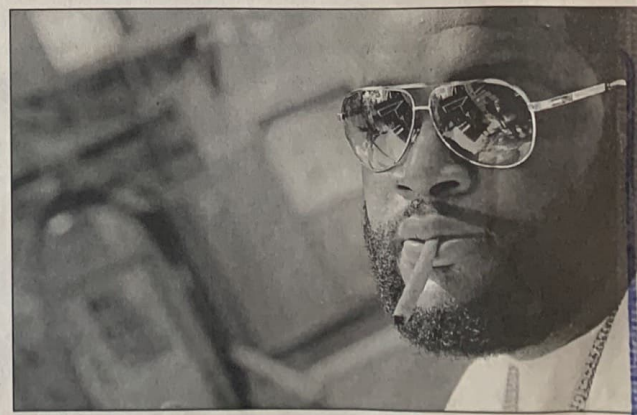
The disc is mostly an unapologetic send-up of familiar 'hood themes: the low-level cocaine

trade, sex and living the high life. And Ross is supplied with some stellar production from hip-hop's hot beat makers, including Jazze Pha, Cool & Dre, and the Runners, who did his breakout hit, "Hustlin'."

Ross considers "Port of Miami" a portrait of Sunshine State

culture and hopes it will become a gritty guide to the region, as much as any Ice Cube album was for West Coast hip-hop.

"When you heard an Ice Cube album, you knew their slang, the automobiles of choice, the weapons, the gangs, the colours. He made you familiar," Ross says.



Changed man: Rapper Rick Ross photographed in New York recently

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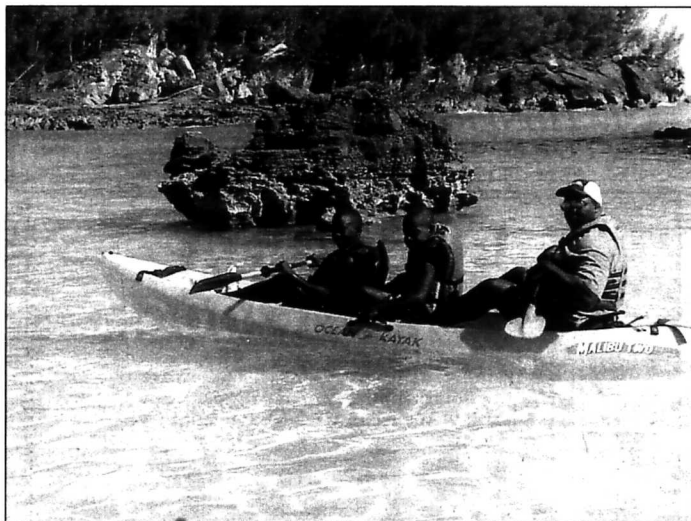
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