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Title: Church Hits 'The Spot' For Youth; Local Church Provides Nightclub Atmosphere For Youth

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Youth near and far now have a fun and safe place to hang out on the first Friday of every month, and it's called "The Spot."

The brainchild of Genesis Missionary Baptist Church's Annual Explosion Youth Ministry, The Spot, a hip-hop venue, is changing the way local youth kick off their weekend.

Created to mirror an adult nightclub, minus the alcoholic beverages and explicit music, The Spot is a place where teenagers can relax, have fun and even feel grown-up.

"After realizing that hip hop held the attention of our youth in a unique way, and that it wasn't a fad but indeed a culture, we decided to utilize it to reach our youth," explained Rev. Lamont Smith, assistant to co-pastors Tecoy and Ellington Porter of Genesis Missionary Baptist Church.

The Spot, which comes alive in the multipurpose room at the Dr. Robert Porter Center, is transformed into a night club complete with dimmed lights, seating area, stage, big screens playing Christian rap videos, smoothie bar that sells drinks and homemade food.

The Spot offers a plethora of entertainment. The stage has welcomed artists such as Spec, J.B. Platinum, AGAPE, S.I.S.T.E.M., Speak Life Fisherman and Suga-T.

Though organizers were delighted to unite these artists with local youth, they were especially delighted when Suga-T visited The Spot because of her popularity among youth and her inspiring message.

Suga-T, born Tenina Stevens, is the sister of Bay Area rapper E-40 and is a member of The Click.

Suga-T, first known for her tales of living a hard life and surviving the streets, is singing to a new beat these days praising the Lord and thanking him for her salvation.

Tiffany Randolph, an active youth at Genesis Missionary Baptist Church is a faithful attendee of The Spot.

She said before attending the The Spot she had no idea that Christian hip hop even existed.

"The music here sounds exactly like the music they play on the radio stations. It isn't until you really listen that you notice the message is

different," Ms. Randolph explained.

Cesar Davis, youth pastor at Genesis Missionary Baptist Church, says the key to hosting a successful club is keeping the music and entertainment flowing, but the unique aspect of The Spot is the discussion that goes on once the dancing is over.

Following the entertainment organizers of The Spot gather the youth and talk openly about tough issues that are often ignored at school, or at home -- topics such as sex, drugs, and violence.

"We speak about real issues, we talk about life," Pastor Davis said.

Pastor Davis likes to remind youth that God has been around longer than anyone else has, and that he knows every path.

"We're human, but I tell the youth like my dad told me, the first time you mess up it's a mistake but the second time it's a bad decision," Pastor Davis explained.

Whether you're looking to hear some good clean music, enjoy entertainers of all sorts, eat some delicious food, or have a friendly conversation, Pastor Davis encourages all teenagers to visit The Spot, located at 2800 Meadowview Road, held the first Friday of every month.

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