

## AUDREY'S SOCIETY WHIRL



By Audrey J. Bernard  
Lifestyles/Society Editor

"We all deeply appreciate Russell Simmons's efforts to assist our widows and children," stated Daniel J. "Rusty" Staub, chairman, New York Police and Fire Widows' and Children's Benefit Fund before presenting iconic entrepreneur, humanitarian, fashion czar and record mogul Russell Simmons with a special award for his extensive philanthropic endeavors" at the New York Police and Fire Widows' and Children's Benefit Fund gala dinner on Tuesday, November 13 at the New York Hilton grand ballroom to raise money for the Fund. "Russell Simmons has been instrumental in bringing hip-hop to every facet of business and media over the past thirty years, so for not resting on his achievements, but for turning his extreme cultural influence into positive meaningful action, we are delighted to honor Russell," concluded Stephen J. Dannhauser, chairman, Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP and president of the Fund's board.

Over 800 guests from the worlds of law enforcement, business and entertainment including Daniel Simmons, Tangie Murray, Damon Dash, Minister Benjamin Chavis, Jonathan Jackson and Porschla Coleman turned out for the annual gala that was co-chaired by Kevin Parker, global head of asset management, Deutsche Asset Management, David G. Tisch, managing member, LSV Advisors LLC, and William Von Mueffling, president & CIO, Cantillon Capital Management LLC, and raised \$1.4 million benefiting New York's widows and children of fallen police officers and firefighters.

The dinner afforded the Fund a perfect opportunity to celebrate the launch of the "Answer the Call" marketing campaign composed of the Fund's new Public Service Announcement voiced by actor Harrison Ford and videos detailing the moving stories told by two of the funds beneficiaries, Rita Williams & Eileen Bellew.

Since its inception in 1985 by Rusty Staub, the Benefit Fund has distributed more than \$105 million to the families of New York City Police and Fire personnel who have been killed in the line of duty. Though the Benefit Fund was initially created to assist families of New York City Fire Fighters and Police Officers, it now includes the families of Emergency Medical Services and Port Authority Police as well.

Starting in 1987, the Benefit Fund provided 320 families with

# Children's Benefit Fund raises \$1.3 million at 22<sup>nd</sup> annual benefit saluting pioneering hip hop entrepreneur and humanitarian Russell Simmons



Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, Stephen Dannhauser, Russell Simmons, Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta, Rusty Staub



Rita Williams, widow of NYPD Detective Keith Williams & Eileen Bellew, widow of NYFD Lieutenant John Bellew



Friends and family of Rita Williams far right widow of Detective Keith Williams



Stephen & Beth Dannhauser, Danny Simmons



Russell Simmons, David Tisch



(seated) Tangie Murray, executive director, Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation; honoree Russell Simmons, artist Victor Matthews, David Rosenberg of Unifund (standing) Sharon Sanders, Porschla Coleman, Damon Dash, Gary Foster, vice president, Rush Communications

annual financial assistance. Now, the commitment has grown to nearly 700 families. The need has certainly increased, but the Benefit Fund's mission remains the same: helping chil-

dren and spouses who lost a loved one in the line of duty, charged with the task of keeping OUR families safe.

For more than 22 years, the New York Police and Fire Wid-

ows' and Children's Benefit Fund has stepped up to help those families. Immediately after the death of a First Responder, the Benefit Fund delivers the family a check to help

them through the uncertain times such a tragedy can bring. After the initial crisis, the Benefit Fund provides each family with financial support and a network of friends ready to lend a hand.

(Photos: Ron Jordan Natoli)