

## Chris Rock's wife, Malaak, takes Bushwick teens under her wing

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Sunday, June 28th 2009



Rosier/News

Malaak Rock (center) mentors Brooklyn center teens (left to right) Joshua Hall, Queen Clyde, Mariah Ralph and Shawn Todd.

She's married to one of the biggest names in comedy and hangs with [Hollywood](#) hot shots. But to the kids at a [Brooklyn](#) community center, she's just Malaak.

Over the past year, Malaak Rock, wife of comedian [Chris Rock](#), quietly has taken 30 teens from the [Salvation Army Bushwick](#) Community Center under her wing. They go to dinners and movies, on college tours and trips to [South Africa](#), [New Orleans](#) and [Washington](#).

Malaak Rock, 40, was drawn to the center because it's the same neighborhood spot where Chris Rock hung out as a kid - and sometimes still shows up with his wife.

"[The kids] either call me Mom, Ma or Auntie. I'm there for everything," Malaak Rock said. "I believe in these kids. I've gotten to know them. I know their innermost secrets."

When one of the teens was jumped by a group of kids near his school, Rock was right there, along with the boy's mom, to persuade the teen not to retaliate and instead change schools.

"I told him, 'You have to keep your eye on the prizes.' He did it. He changed schools."

Malaak Rock chose the kids - who range from 11 to 15 - through essays, recommendations and interviews.

"I want them to realize that yes, you may live in the projects, you may not have the best school, but you have the ability to go to school," she said. "When you compare it to the type of global poverty that they experienced in the shantytowns in South Africa - it's different."

The kids in the Journey for Change program even get a bit of homework - they have blogging assignments.

[Shawn Todd](#), 16, who has never been outside the [U.S.](#) before the [Africa](#) trip, didn't expect to see children who couldn't go school.

"It was bad. Real bad. Different from Brooklyn. The garbage, the stink. They only had one room. Some kids had no shoes," Shawn recalled while at the center recently.

Moments later, the teen was scolded by Rock for skipping an event and changing his e-mail address without telling her. But Shawn didn't seem to mind too much.

"She does things to open my mind," he said. "She took us to see 'Slumdog Millionaire.' I didn't want to see it at first, but now I know what's going on in a different country and change that needs to be made."

Rock plans to host a pool party for the kids at her [New Jersey](#) home later this summer.

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