

Ludacris Lifts High School Students Spirits With Surprise Show

Contributed by Dave
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Students at Poinciana High School in Kissimmee, Florida, got an unexpected thrill Wednesday when Ludacris and tourmates David Banner and Chingy put on a surprise show for them. Luda and company decided to make the appearance after receiving an e-mail from Sophomore Class President Nada Taha, detailing the school's struggles in recent weeks and asking the rapper to help lift students' spirits.

In the month of February alone, Poinciana students Josue Rivera and Sergio Badia were killed in a drag-racing-related car accident and English teacher Katherine Kaehlert succumbed to breast cancer — all this as students were heading into two weeks of state testing.

"I get a lot of e-mails," Luda told the Orlando Sentinel. "I knew we could make it possible because we were in town. And with all the people here passing away, we felt like it was a good thing to do."

The crew was in Florida to perform at Orlando's House of Blues and took time out to do a 30-minute pep rally-style set for the school's more than 2,000 students, who, by all accounts, couldn't have been more excited.

"This house was rockin', and if you didn't hear the screaming, you were more than a mile away!" Poinciana High's Web site proclaimed under the banner headline "It was Ludacris ... and Friends at PHS today!"

Though Taha and administrators knew about the concert well in advance, students were told only that there would be an afternoon assembly with a special guest. It was rumored that everyone from Willie Nelson to Martha Stewart to Jeb Bush would be visiting, but in the end, the reality was probably a lot more surprising — and welcome.

"It was just amazing," Poinciana High principal Debra Pace said. "I was a little apprehensive about if the kids would get too excited and it's taking a risk, you know, because not all of the things Ludacris says are school-appropriate, but his message to our kids was really positive and my kids responded in a positive way."

In addition to the impromptu show, Ludacris's nonprofit organization, the Ludacris Foundation, donated \$5,000 to the school to help fund its non-violence incentive program.