

The 18th Annual All-Star Gospel Celebration Draws Capacity Crowd for an Unforgettable Night

A Love Letter to the Bay



Berkeley, California Feb 26, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - The 18th Annual All-Star Gospel Celebration (ASGC) was a resounding success, filling the venue to capacity with notable figures and attendees from afar. Themed "A Love Letter to the Bay," the event highlighted the profound impact of faith and community on the lives of NBA stars, legends, and local heroes during a memorable evening at the beautiful CIEL Creative Space in Berkeley, CA. Despite the Northern California rain, the spirit of the event remained undeterred.

Co-hosted by former NBA player Maurice "MO" Evans and National Basketball Wives Association (NBWA) member Dru Evans, the celebration upheld its status as the premier gospel event of NBA All-Star weekend. The evening showcased electrifying performances from a diverse lineup of artists, including comedian J-Red, Motown Gospel sensation Ariel Fitz-Patrick, GRAMMY®-nominated soul singer MAJOR., acclaimed saxophonist Angella Christie, hip-hop artist Miles Minnick, and Stellar Award winner Lena Byrd Miles.

The evening's highlight was the 2025 Slam Dunk Honors presentation, which recognized individuals for their outstanding contributions on and off the court. NBA Hall of Famer Gary Payton received the 2025 Slam Dunk Off-the-Court Award and shared heartfelt reflections on the importance of faith and community service. He emphasized his roots, stating, "I grew up in church and attend every Sunday," and concluded with, "People think we just get here and have talent. Don't believe that. God had a lot to do with that."

Joining Payton, legendary NBA champion Elvin Hayes accepted the 2025 Slam Dunk Living Legend Award. He inspired attendees with his insights on legacy and service, noting, "...the most important thing this week is that we will be honoring God. He carried me through 16 years of NBA seasons."

Kevon Looney, forward for the Golden State Warriors and three-time NBA Champion, received the 2025 Slam Dunk Game Changer Award. He expressed gratitude to the NBA Chaplains for helping him through challenging times, sharing, "My mom and dad's prayers got me here. I pray for myself and my

teammates and thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Lastly, Ay'Anna Moody, Senior Director of Social Impact for the Warriors Foundation, was honored with the 2025 Slam Dunk Community Service Award, recognizing her dedication to uplifting the community.

The event also gained energy as local heroes were honored for their outstanding contributions to the community. Recognized were Pastor Mike McBride of *Live Free USA*, who moved mountains to ensure ASGC shined, and community advocate Mistah. F.A.B., Taylor Jay of *Taylor Jay Collections*, and Steve Hagler of *LearnUP*. Additionally, Cecilia Capers Apelin, CEO and founder of CIEL Creative Spaces, was awarded for her significant contributions. Her heartfelt speech, emphasizing the importance of compassion and commitment to service, moved the audience to tears.

Tomeka Holyfield, the creator and executive producer of ASGC, expressed, “Berkeley, California, truly exceeded our hopes and dreams. Each year, the All-Star Gospel Celebration shines a light on the profound power of faith in our lives. We are honored to celebrate the remarkable achievements of others by sharing their uplifting stories of faith and community service. The heartfelt narratives from our hometown heroes to NBA legends and champions touched our souls and inspired us all. It was a night of unity and joy!

ASGC is dedicated to uplifting and inspiring, showcasing the heart and resilience of those making a difference through community efforts. As a prelude to the awards, Live Free USA organized a "Dear Community," panel discussion addressing pressing community issues and exploring solutions. "Our Dear Community panel afforded local leaders a voice to describe the unique intersection of Bay Area sports, culture, and activism which fuels peacemaking and positive change for so many of us who live here," said Pastor Michael McBride, Executive Director of LIVE FREE USA.

Pastor McBride continued to express his sentiments, “ASGC provided a platform to uplift the spirit and elevate heroes whose journey inspires us to embrace hope and joy as we pursue our dreams. It was indeed a Love Letter to The Bay, with abundant love and joy, serving as a blessed kick-off for All-Star Game Weekend!"

Visit Berkeley's mission is to cultivate and promote Berkeley as a desirable destination while enhancing its economy. Jeffrey Church, CEO of Visit Berkeley, added, “Berkeley is a beacon of light and inclusivity, and bringing such a diverse group together during a celebration of the Bay Area highlights the heart of our city. Visit Berkeley is proud to have been part of an event that uplifts and connects us.”

“We needed to curate an experiential intersection of sports, faith, culture, and activism that featured Bay Area artists, influencers, and players who embrace this fusion, Pastor McBride concludes.”

The 18th Annual All-Star Gospel Celebration further solidified its reputation as a must-attend event during NBA All-Star weekend. ASGC continues to raise funds for important causes, including breast cancer and autism awareness, sickle cell disease research, and bone marrow transplants.

Partners Shoulder Up, Live Free USA, Visit Berkely, Becker Boards, and California Black Freedom Fund supported the event.

For more information, please visit [www.allstargospelcelebration.com].

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