

## **April R. Silver:** *social entrepreneur • activist • writer/editor*

April R. Silver is a social entrepreneur, activist, and writer. She heads AKILA WORKSONGS, Inc. (AW), a communications agency that services the unique needs of progressive artists, activists, advocates, and organizations. Since 1993, AW has provided a variety of premium services to a diverse roster, ranging from emerging poets to hip hop artist/actor Mos Def to The Ford Foundation. The company is also known for creating Put On BLAST!™, a widely trusted email marketing service that houses over 32,000 subscribers nationwide.

Ms. Silver is also editor of the anthology *Be A Father to Your Child: Real Talk from Black Men on Family, Love, and Fatherhood* (Soft Skull/Counterpoint, 2008). In 2006, she was a TV talk show host on BETJ's *My Two Cents* (first two seasons).

*The Howard Years:* Silver received her English degree from Howard University where she was a nationally respected activist. She helped lead the historic student protest of 1989 and was later elected as the second woman president of Howard's student government (educator, poet Ras Baraka, son of Amiri and Amina Baraka, was Vice President). While there, Silver was founding president of **The Cultural Initiative, Inc.** (CI) and co-produced the nation's first hip hop conference - origins of the hip hop education movement. In its inaugural year (1991), CI highlighted then newcomers **Common** (then Common Sense), **Busta Rhymes**, and other hip hop artists. Many Howard and conference alumni, such as **Sean Combs**, credit CI as playing an essential role for their progress in the entertainment business.

*As Educator and Volunteer:* After graduation, April remained as head of CI. She went to work as an assistant for legendary rapper **Doug E. Fresh**. After that period, she went on to fulfill a childhood dream: to teach junior high school. As an English teacher in some of NYC's most neglected communities,

April established extra-curriculum programs that focused on the literary arts, academic achievement, and personal development. She was regularly recognized as a highly effective teacher. Silver's passion for education led her to later serve as Project Director for a high school-based literary arts program at Medgar Evers College/CUNY (sponsored by the Center for Black Literature). She currently serves as a professional development consultant for the program.

As an active volunteer, Silver has or continues to serve on many boards and honorary committees, including the **International African Arts Festival** and the historic **Hip Hop Nation** exhibit at the **Brooklyn Museum**. She also founded the artist-activist organization **Co-Motion** (in response to NYPD's brutal killing of Amadou Diallo) and co-founded **HipHop Speaks!** (townhall meetings and performance showcases conceived by Kevin Powell). Since 2001, Silver has also served as a funding panelist for the **Brooklyn Arts Council**. In keeping with her mission of helping others, April ensures that AKILA WORKSONGS donates thousands of dollars worth of service to artists and organizations annually.

In 1998, Ms. Silver became a member of the **NY Chapter of the Recording Academy** (aka **The GRAMMYS**). In 2000, she conceived of and chaired the chapter's first hip hop and R&B conference. In 2004, she did the same with **PoetrySpeaks!** (featuring Mos Def and **Miguel Algarin**). Since then, she has served intermittently on the Board of Governors and currently chairs the spoken word committee.

In 2005, Ms. Silver turned much of her volunteer work toward the Hurricane Katrina relief movement. A month after "the storm," she founded **Artists For Life**, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting Black artists in crisis.



**For more information, please visit [www.aprilsilver.com](http://www.aprilsilver.com)**

Media & Lecture Management by AKILA WORKSONGS, Inc. | [akilaworksongs.com](http://akilaworksongs.com) | 718.756.8501

## **April R. Silver:** *social entrepreneur • activist • writer/editor*

*As a Business Leader:* In 1997, Silver founded the email marketing service now known as **Put On BLAST!**™ It is highly regarded as a powerful tool for creating public awareness campaigns for arts and activism topics. A few years later, Silver was tapped to head the **Nkiru Center for Education & Culture, Inc.**, a literary center and bookstore co-founded by Talib Kweli, Mos Def, and their parents. Her business leadership has brought her to the front cover of *Network Journal* and to the attention *Essence*, where she was profiled in 2002.

*As Writer, Editor, Lecturer:* As a writer, April's essays on popular culture, gender politics, personal development, and current events have been published in the *NY Daily News* and throughout the blogosphere, including *allhiphop.com*, *davey.com*. By June 2010, her writings are scheduled to appear in no less than six new anthologies, academic journals, and syndicated blogs. Her own blog is at [www.aprilsilver.com](http://www.aprilsilver.com).

Silver's first book is "*Be A Father to Your Child*" (Soft Skull). **AOL Black Voices** calls it a "powerful, and groundbreaking anthology." **Mothering Magazine** adds: *Be A Father* is an "*artfully designed anthology that addresses the intersection of hip-hop with issues of black masculinity and parenting...*" and describes its content as "*moving and authentic...*" **Foreward Magazine** claims "*Editor April R. Silver has turned her first book into a must-read for anyone involved in the black community.*"

Ms. Silver has lectured, moderated, or facilitated workshops at over 200 schools,

colleges, universities, and conferences - from University of Wisconsin to NAACP National Convention to National Council of Teachers of English's Conference. Her core topics range from gender politics to social entrepreneurship to "arts+activism" issues, amongst others (inquire about her lecture topics). In 2008, she was selected as a keynote for the Presidential Lecture Series at Medgar Evers College and she gave her first college commencement keynote at SUNY, New Paltz in the spring of that year. She has had the honor of sharing the podium with luminaries such as **Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Sister Souljah, Kevin Powell, Bill Cosby, Rev. Al Sharpton**, and many others.

### *Media and Distinguished Awards:*

For her 20+ years of service as an activist and a supporter of the arts, Silver has been honored with many awards and honors. Additionally, for her opinions and activism work, she has been featured, profiled, or quoted in or on *CNN, Time Magazine, Newsweek, The Washington Post, The Washington Times, Ebony Magazine, ESSENCE Magazine, Ms. Magazine, NY1 News, BET News, KISS FM (New York)*, and many other local and national outlets. Internationally, she has appeared in *ADLIB* and *Black Music Review* (Japan), *Black Echoes* (London), and on *Radio Netherlands*. She is also a commentator on WBAI Radio's weekly media roundtable on *Wake Up Call*.

A was born in Queens, New York; raised as a teenager in Los Angeles; came of age in Washington, DC, and currently lives in Brooklyn, NY.

### **Select Memberships and/or Advisory Boards**

African American PR Collective • African Voices's *Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival* • Black PR Society of New York • NY Association of Black Journalists • Howard U. Alumni Club of NYC • R.E.A.C.Hip-Hop • The Schomburg Center • WBAI FM Radio

**For more information, please visit [www.aprilsilver.com](http://www.aprilsilver.com)**

Media & Lecture Management by AKILA WORKSONGS, Inc. | [akilaworksongs.com](http://akilaworksongs.com) | 718.756.8501

