



Rockaway Woman Honored by Ex-Prez

By DONALD BERTRAND
Daily News Staff Writer

Far Rockaway's Nichelle Brown will share the stage with giants of industry today as she receives a Point of Light Award from former President George Bush at a Manhattan luncheon.

A former single welfare mom, Brown said yesterday she used to be involved with gangs and "on the train to nowhere... I had no interest in school and ended up being pregnant, so I dropped out."

She continued, "I had no goals that I was working toward for my life. Every day I was just waking up, taking care of my daughter, and then when I got a chance, [I would] leave my daughter with my mother and just hang out."

"I hung out all night with the gangs and the drug dealers in the street," she said.

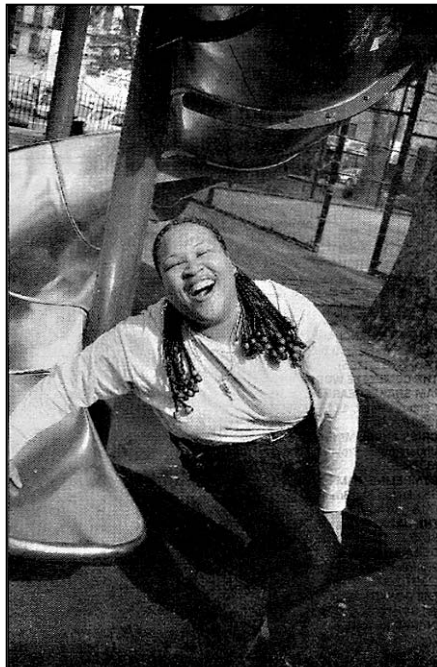
Brown, 33, said that all changed in 1990.

"I was a single parent on welfare and not working and not in school," she said, but she did have a love of performing and lyric writing. A friend gave her a flyer for the All Stars Talent Show Network.

"I thought it was just a talent show," said Brown.

But it was much more demanding, requiring participants to work on all aspects of staging a talent show.

For her first audition, she brought two friends as background dancers for



DEBBIE EGAN-CHIN
ALL-STAR Nichelle Brown is due to receive Point of Light Award today from former President George Bush in Manhattan.

her rap act.

"When I got in the show, I realized I wanted a bigger showcase, so I came back with six friends — all males," she said.

"I felt that my presence as a female rapper would be stronger with males behind me supporting my performance."

For the semifinals, she had 12 dancers, and in the finals at Town Hall, 25 dancers, men and women, backed her.

Brown scooped up the Grand Prize trophy and a \$1,000 prize, and more — she was hooked. She began working as a spokeswoman for the All Stars Talent Network, the flagship program of non-profit All Stars Project Inc.

The talent show's goal is to get youths to perform and produce the shows as an alternative to violence and to help them grow more positively.

Brown brought the show to Far Rockaway.

"I wanted other young people [to] get involved and experience what I did," she said.

"She went door-to-door in her community, handing out flyers, and so many young people came and auditioned and got involved," said Pam Lewis, director of youth programs for the All Stars Project.

Brown also has gone back to school, and is enrolled in Empire State College while working full time as a keyboard specialist.

Her ambition is to be a social worker or youth counselor when she finishes college.

Also receiving Point of Light awards will be executives from 3M, Cargill International, EDS, MTV Networks, Washington Mutual and Legacy Health System.