

Just Sayin'

"Just Sayin'" is a lively, animated, fun-loving brother from Rosedale, Queens by way of Brooklyn. As an Emcee, the music he creates and performances he delivers are a direct reflection of his emotion and passion.

But don't get it twisted. It isn't all about fun and jokes. "Just Sayin'" is a brother with knowledge who knows who he is. He is a direct product and representative of The Golden Era of Hip Hop striving to create timeless contributions to music and global culture.

A man of achievement, "Just Sayin'" is a living example of the motto, "work = play." On stage, "Just Sayin'" is a free-spirited, wild, animated showman. Off stage, Keith Julian Richards is a focused, driven, business-minded individual who thrives on excellence and an incessant need to learn, create, and achieve. His music is a testament to the human spirit and experiences that everyone can relate to.

We asked him to share his experiences with VHL.

First I heard that my Aunt LaVerne had VHL. Then my mother began to have problems. I still did not realize that it might touch me.

In 1998 after I completed my sophomore year of college it really hit home. I remember it like it was yesterday. It was my 19th birthday and I started having dizzy feelings that evolved to constant fatigue and nausea. I tried to be strong for my family, especially for my mother because I know she worries about my sister and me even when we're feeling fine. But all of my symptoms just became worse and worse and it never dawned on me that I might have VHL until my sister said to me, "Mommy's crying because she thinks you might have VHL."

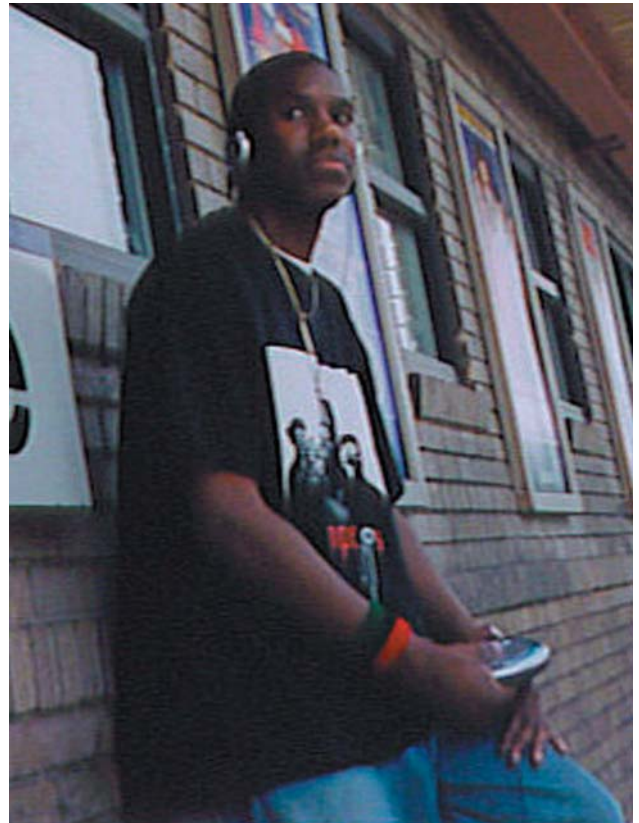
Eventually they took me to the hospital. I was there for a week of tests, but the doctors had not figured it out. They were about to release me. But my mother spoke up and demanded they do an MRI of my brain and spinal cord. That's when the hemangioblastoma was found on my cerebellum.

"...Never doubting the word of a physician.

But if I gotta choose I'll always go
with mother's intuition."

My Aunt Tena was the first family member I saw after I got the news. She helped me calm down and make sense of the situation and really gave me the feeling that I would be okay. Two days later I had my surgery, and about six days later I came back home. I decided to take that fall semester off from school to recuperate. In the Spring of 2001, through study, patience, and prayer, I received my Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Delaware. I'm currently working as a Case Planner for a non-profit agency in Jamaica, Queens, New York, while pursuing a professional music career.

My mission and purpose in life is to use the power of music as a springboard into activism and spreading public awareness about VHL among many other happenings in my



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community, the African-American community, as well as the world community.

My mother and Aunt have endured much more hardship than I have at the hands of VHL, but they've never complained, so why should I?! Everybody has something to deal with, and this is mine.

My experience has definitely made me appreciate life more and every day I have with family and loved ones. I get regular checkups and urge everyone I know to do the same. I maintain a fresh haircut and my scar just adds a special uniqueness to my already good looks, if I do say so myself! So I'm still fly!!!

"...And I can't complain.

Life's been good to me thus far.

And I keep a fresh cut around my surgical scar."

Notes: "I'm still fly!" is slang for "I'm still fine, looking really good!" Look for a sample of Keith's CD at

MOST PEOPLE WONDER
IF THEY'LL GET CANCER
...WE WONDER **WHEN**



The Cancer Research Fund and the VHL Family Alliance International are dedicated to improving diagnosis, treatment, and quality of life for individuals and families affected by von Hippel-Lindau disease and related tumor conditions. They provide information in 8 languages, fund research, and help connect people with the best available medical information.