

# ELEMENTZ

2010 Annual Report

[www.elementz.org](http://www.elementz.org)



At Elementz, we teach various components of Hip Hop that we see as essential “elements” of the culture and art form. Teens and young adults, ages 14-24, come to Elementz when we are open on Mondays through Thursday, between 2:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

## Thanks

Many individuals and institutions helped Elementz this past year. Our growth in youth served and programming happened with their considerable help. Their names will be listed elsewhere in this report, but it is important to know that our Board of Directors, our Funders and individual patrons, our Advisory Board, our instructors, and our youth leadership team all played a role, as did our individual artists who worked tirelessly to represent Elementz in front of the community.

I would particularly like to recognize Brother Abdullah, our Program Director, and part of Elementz for five of our six years, for his significant all around leadership and vision.

-Tom Kent, Exec Director

## Elementz Grows in 2010

2010 was an important year for Elementz, showing significant growth in program, number of youth served and a re-distribution in the age range of members. 2010 began with about 200 active members, and ended with over 300 active members, a 50% increase. Outreach to younger teens was initiated and resulted in an increase of teens ages 14-18 from 23.8% of our membership to 37.6% at year end. We continue to draw members from the inner-city communities nearest to Elementz in our West End location, as many of our members do not have access to transportation and must walk to the center.

We were able to significantly increase our programs in 2010. We instituted classes in all our art forms, designed specifically for teens and/or beginners, and hired instructors who would particularly focus on our younger members. We also instituted a new leadership program for teens, complementing our long-standing program directed towards young adults. In addition, and because of requests from our older youth members, we instituted advanced instruction in all of our art forms, designed to provide an entry into the professional arts world for our young adults who wanted to have either a part-time or full-time career in the arts.

## Why Hip Hop?

### What is it about Hip Hop that attracts and inspires youth today?

The roots of Hip Hop date to the 1970's and around found in African, Jamaican, Latino and African-American music. Hip Hop arose during the 1970's when block parties became popular in New York City. Block parties incorporated DJs who played popular genres of music, especially funk and soul music. DJs, realizing its positive reception, began isolating the percussion breaks of popular songs. Turntablist techniques, such as beat mixing/matching, scratching and beat juggling eventually developed along with the breaks, creating a base that could be rapped over.

Corresponding dance elements developed from the Latino influence of Puerto Ricans in the Bronx. During the early 1970s break dancing arose during block parties, as b-boys and b-girls got in front of the audience to dance in a distinctive and frenetic style.

Jamaican immigrants provided an influence on the vocal style of rapping by delivering simple raps at their parties, inspired by the Jamaican tradition of toasting. DJs and MCs would often add call and response chants, often comprising of a basic chorus, to allow the performer to gather his thoughts (e.g. "one, two, three, y'all, to the beat").

Later, the MCs grew more varied in their vocal and rhythmic approach, incorporating brief rhymes in an effort at differentiating themselves and entertaining the audience. Hip hop music was an outlet and a "voice" for disenfranchised youth as the culture reflected the social, economic and political realities of their lives.

When Elementz was founded in 2005, the founders determined that Hip Hop was a culture and art form that appealed to, and was understood b

inner-city urban youth, the target demographic for the Youth Center. Today, Elementz embraces Hip Hop as legitimate creative expression, especially rooted in the urban experience of our young members.

Conscious hip hop or socially conscious hip-hop is a subgenre of hip hop that focuses on social issues. It is not necessarily overtly political, but it discusses social issues and conflicts. Themes of conscious hip hop include religion, aversion to violence, African American culture, the economy or depictions of the life of ordinary people. Elementz encourages and performs conscious hip hop as a very good medium for creative expression for urban youth.

Elementz provides instruction in core "elements" of Hip Hop that are MC'ing and Recording Engineering, DJ'ing, Graffiti Arts and Dance. We also support variations on these core elements that would include developing beats, mixing, graphic design, poetry, and performance.



### Elementz Collaborates with the CSO & Pops

Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR), world-famous Haitian-American artist and composer visited Elementz youth on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010. He was in Cincinnati to hear the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra perform his composition, "Dancers, Dreamers & Presidents". Prior to the Friday performance, he spent two hours with Elementz youth, played the electric violin in his hip hop style, and even taught a couple of members how to play the violin. Afterwards, several members walked down the street to Music Hall to hear the world premiere of DBR's composition as guests of the CSO.

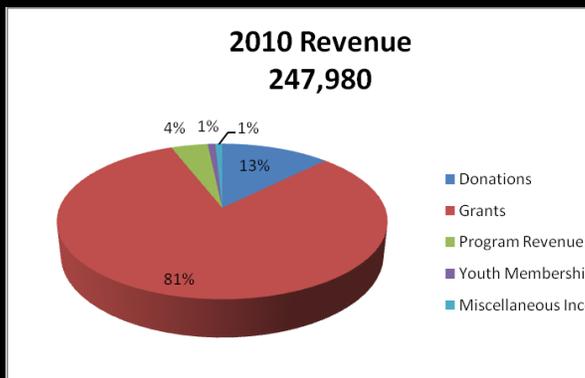
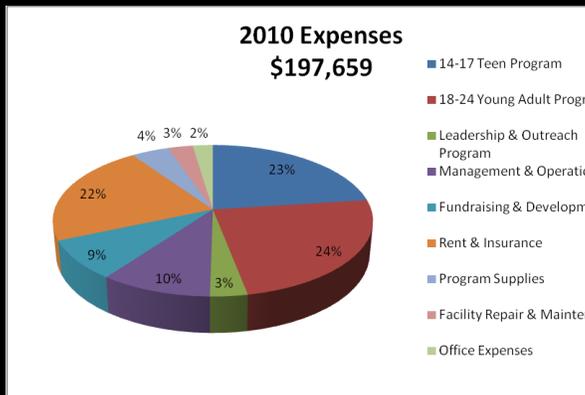
A few weeks later, four of our Hip Hop dancers performed on stage with the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra in Music Hall on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. We estimate that over 8,000 people saw us perform and we received positive feedback from the Pops conductor, John Morris Russell, and many others who enjoyed the three numbers when our group was on stage. Pops Conductor Russell told the Cincinnati Enquirer: "It's the first time we've had Hip Hop dancers; they did a Hip Hop Trepak from The Nutcracker and the audience went wild."

***"Elementz has motivated me to give my all in everything I do."***

-a member



## 2010 Financials



Elementz was awarded \$25,000 in December through the Pepsi Refresh Contest. Pepsi selects 1000 ideas each month from people, businesses and non profits and provides funding for the ideas that gathers the most votes. Elementz supporters voted daily during November by texting, on the Face Book and on the Pepsi website.

The money awarded will support our program of Hip Hop Dance, Audio, DJ'ing and Graffiti Art.

### Elementz Board of Directors

#### Tysson Betts

The Procter & Gamble Company

#### Peter Block, President

Author & Consultant

#### Faith Daniels

WMOJ

#### Diane Jordan-Grizzard, Secretary

Beech Acres Parenting Center

#### Tom Haggerty

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#### Tanzee Miller

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#### Gavin DeVore Leonard

Ohio Center for Progressive Leadership

#### Elle Morris

LPK

#### Fred Neurohr

WellPoint Inc.

#### Christopher Smitherman

Smitherman & Daley Group

#### Brook Westheimer

Watercourse Technology

### Elementz Advisory Board

Donald Hancock

Chaun Leggett,

James Marable

Roula David

Amanda Gray

### Assets

Property & Equipment \$ 19,208

Security Deposits \$ 3,525

Other Assets \$ 100,063

Total 122,796

### Liabilities & Equity

Liabilities \$ 40,593

Equity \$ 82,203

Total Liabilities \$122,796

## OUR FUNDERS

*Elementz is very grateful to our donors and funders. We received grants from the following in 2010:*

The Andrew Jergens Foundation

ArtsWave's Multicultural Arts Partnership Program supported by Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation, and Procter & Gamble

Christ Church Cathedral

The Greater Cincinnati Foundation

The Harmann Family Foundation

The Ira Block Foundation

The Manuel D. & Rhoda Mayerson Foundation

The Jack J. Smith Charitable Trust

The Pfau Family Foundation

Robert H. Heakir Foundation

Sutphin Family Foundation



## 2010 PERFORMANCE & EVENTS

- Hip Hop Dance Classes at Newport Boys & Girls Club, sponsored by ArtsWave
- Hip Hop Dance Classes at Covington Boys & Girls Club, sponsored by ArtsWave
- Break Dance Workshop with Olive Dance Theater
- Census Canvass, sponsored by the League of Young Voters
- Know Your Rights Youth Program, sponsored by the Urban League
- Featured Performance of Hip Hop Dance with the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, Holiday Concert
- Music Live Summer Concert Series
- Best of the Best Beat Battle
- Hip Hop Dance Classes for St. Vincent de Paul
- Hip Hop Performance for State Associations of Addiction Services
- Graffiti Art Show at PAC Gallery
- Hip Hop Performances at Black Family Reunion
- Hip Hop Performance at Holiday on the Hill Festival
- Hip Hop Performance at the Fine Arts Sampler Weekend at Music Hall
- Best of the Best Beat Battle
- Red Bull 3restyle Competition
- Four Square Dance Party
- Put Me On Seminar
- Black Family Reunion
- Bioncologists Beat-Boxers Demonstration
- Commissioned Graffiti Art Hangings for the YMCA Mentoring Center. Walnut Hills



## MEET QUOTEZ

Henry "Quotez" Knight lives on Cincinnati's West Side and attends UC. "I don't rap, I-soule" Is what Quotez says about himself. Quotez regularly performs in our Showcases and is part of our LEADS team. Here he talks about himself in his own words:

*"Right now as far as life is to make it out the situation I'm in, which is "the struggle." To do so, I have my music but school as well. Student at the university studying as a comm major with a focus in PR. Right now, it's a process of shooting for the stars and hoping to hit one. "*

Here is one line from a longer piece that reflects his optimism:

*If it ain't a dream  
What's the point of chasin'*

## Graffiti Gallery Show

In August, Elementz had its first ever Graffiti Art Show at PAC Gallery in Walnut Hills. Organized by instructor Ben "Dayst" Thomas, Elementz artists displayed and sold their own artwork. The rest of the Elementz artists showed up on opening and closing nights for a great show of Hip Hop music and dance. Even the Mayor Mallory showed up to see the show and congratulate the artists.

The work to the left is a major piece produced by artist Dayst and was the first piece of several sold to art patrons.

Elementz conducts Graffiti classes for beginning and advanced students each Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

## Partner Recognition

- Celebration of Black Music/United Way
- Give Camp
- AD2
- OTR Fresh
- Papa Johns
- IndieByChoice
- UC College Conservatory of Music
- Zone CG
- CBX Enterprises
- LaBoiteaux One Stop Deli
- Ohio Justice & Policy Center
- Lower Price Hill Community School
- Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
- YMCA



B.James photos