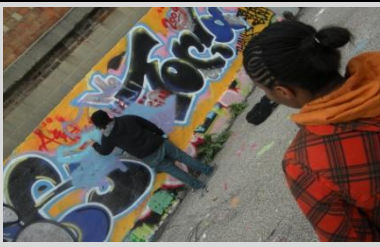


2009 Annual Report



www.elementz.org

Staff

Abdullah, Program Director

Frank Morris, Recording Studio Assistant

Anthony Williams, Assist. Showcase Coordinator

Tiffany "Suriah" Harmon-Sha'ir, Front Desk Secretary

Aprina Johnson, Dance Instructor

Ben "Dayst", Graffiti Arts Instructor

Apryl Reign, DJ Instructor

Board

Peter Block, President

Gavin Leonard

Tom Kent

Brook Westheimer

Diane Jordan

Christopher Smitherman



2009 in Review

Brother Abdullah, Program Director

2009 has been a year of new experiences for Elementz. Internally at Elementz we have made great effort to keep our focus on Hip hop; the art form that is so relevant to inner city youth and so vital in the first steps to building close relationships with them. We have worked hard to keep Elementz the safe, artistic, and family like environment that its members know and love. We have maintained consistent training in hip hop arts programs and have continued to instill in our youth the value of respect. We have also implemented newer programs based upon the needs and interests of our members such as Elementz monthly showcase, Elementz leadership committee, weekly GED classes and Legal Advice & Consultation. In 2009 Elementz held its first annual Award show to celebrate the talents of its youth. In 2009 Elementz trained many of its highly engaged youth to be able to fill leadership positions such as organization representatives, volunteers, and even employees

Externally we have strived to find further hip hop and leadership related opportunities that will contribute to building life skills for our youth. We have been featured on local media such as CET's program called Focus, and Channel 9 news. We have even been featured on national media such as WireTap magazine and The Nation magazine community. We

have built relationships with renowned hip hop and political leaders such as the national hip hop artist Wale and Congressmen Steve Driehaus. These leaders spoke to our youth about everything from the music industry to green jobs. Our youth were invited to attend Music and Media conferences such as the Allied Media Conference in Detroit, Michigan and the Put Me On Conference here in Cincinnati. In these conferences our youth learned important tools that are necessary for an artist to make it in the music industry as well as important tools for using media for the purposes of social justice. Elementz also taught youth in its leadership committee how to better represent themselves and Elementz in the community in terms of their artistic and leadership skills. This has led to several opportunities for Elementz to participate in newer venues and events such as performances at Cincinnati States Upward Bound program and the Black Family Reunion at Sawyer point. The leadership committee's training has also led to Elementz youth being able to teach leadership workshops to other youth in Cincinnati with partners such as the Teen Institute and YMCA Black Achievers.

In 2009 many doors have opened for Elementz and our reputation has grown more in the community. Moving forward we see a future that puts Elementz in the forefront of representing the community of those who love the positive power of hip hop and those who value the leadership ability of youth.



My Goal

By Nitty

Gettin rich is the mission but homie just listen
cause its bout more than that so sit and pay attention

I am trying to be more than what the god has givith
I am trying to be more than the goals I have listed

I am trying to be more than exquisites definition
I am trying to be more ... but I don;t think ya'll get it

I am trying to be the best father to my lil boy

So my goals is to be the best that I can be
and even after the money imma still be me

and get my mama out this hell hole
crazy ghetto streets
onto a house on the hill front porch with a swing

so Imma make sure .. make sure that we eat
and live big so believe .. believe in me

and betta believe imma always be by my son side yeah Jr. Nitty cause !!!

"Elementz has molded me as a person, It helped me to become a better person and trust myself"

Highlight: Art Form

This year Elementz provided its members with many artistic opportunities. This spring national recording artist *Wale* came to Elementz and youth were able to have an up close and personal interview session with him about the recording industry. When they were finished with the interview they also got to perform their songs and dance routines in the same music venue as *Wale* and other local recording artist *Fly U*, *Buggs Tha Rocka*, and *Moxy*. This summer Elementz artists were the featured musical performance at Cincinnati State's Upward bound program. Elementz left a good impression with Upward bound and its teenage participants. Elementz also performed for the first time this summer at the Black family reunion. During this opportunity Elementz four art forms were present as our youth DJ'ed, performed songs, performed dance routines, and youth from the Graffiti program even created art live on the spot during the performance. Elementz youth were also given the opportunity to attend the Put Me On Music conference this summer. This conference featured panelists from major record labels who gave advice on important steps to take to become a successful recording artist. Participants in the conference also got to make closer connections with the panelists once the conference was over. These were some of Elementz artistic highlights in 2009.

"Elementz is unique in two ways. First it is successful in attracting 14 to 24 year old urban youth. It is one of the few programs that focuses on their gifts and strengths rather than trying to make them different and that is why it works. Second, it is a hip hop arts center. Young people come to produce music not to listen to it. They come to produce art and dance. And when they walk in the door, they are led by people like themselves who have discovered that they can find in Elementz a sense of real family, respect, discipline and creativity that the street cannot offer. There is nothing else like it in the city."

Peter Block
Elementz Board President



Community Comments

Elementz’s passion for hip hop and social change is alive and contagious! The positive spirit of the staff members makes one believe anyone can dance and there is a song in all of us.

Liz Carter
Executive Director
The Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Through its varied programming, Elementz recognizes that providing access to multiple arts disciplines is key to developing a thriving community.

Naimah r. Balal
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

Elementz Values

1. We treat all people with respect.
2. We believe in the leadership ability of youth.
3. We encourage innovation to create programs of relevance.
4. We are committed to community-based leadership and grassroots connections.
5. We work to keep our decision-making transparent and open.
6. We value accountability to ourselves and our community
7. We believe in the positive power of hip hop culture.

Youth Survey Results

- 36% members are between the ages of 14-18
- 63% between ages 19-24
- 72% Male, 28 percent female
- 93% African American
- 35% of members come from nearby neighborhoods
- 69% come 3 or more days a week
- 89% of members don’t attend other after school programs
- 60% of our members are not in school or a GED program
- 37% of our members have finished high school
- 75% of our members don’t have a GED
- 30% of our members have children
- 80% participate in Audio
- 23% participate in Hip Hop Dance
- 5% participate in DJing
- 16% participate in Graffiti
- 41% come for Elementz Showcase
- 95% say they can relate to staff
- 98% say they feel safe at Elementz
- 61% of members say Elementz should expand programs/space/ etc.
- 100% of members said that Elementz has helped them feel inspired
- 79% say they have improved in Audio, 17% in Dance, 15% in DJing, 66% in leadership
- 100% of members understood some components of Elementz mission

New Programs in 2009

Through Elementz efforts to provide youth with relevant opportunities and resources we have initiated several new programs this year.

Elementz has provided its youth with monthly Showcases which encourages members to display their talents in hip hop arts to the Community. In these showcases Members are challenged to perform and display material based upon the theme of respect so that people of all ages will be able to attend the showcase.

This year Elementz also partnered with The Ohio Justice & Policy Center to provide our youth with access to free legal advice and advocacy in matters such as child support, getting a record sealed, and other criminal record issues.

Elementz also partnered with Lower Price Hill Community School to provide our youth with GED classes and college advising.

2009 Membership Statistics

Total Members: 497

Average Weekly Attendance: 152 members a week

Average Monthly Attendance: Members attend Elementz 588 times a month

Average male to female attendance: 76% Male to 24% Female

Average Members per program: 303-Audio, 42-Dance, 19-Djing, 9-Graffiti

Total New members: 200



Leadership Program

Elementz has been able to provide its youth with a variety of leadership opportunities in 2009. The Elementz Leadership Development Committee (also referred to as The LEAD) is composed of highly engaged youth who are interested in developing leadership skills and representing Elementz. In 2009 Members of the LEAD attended weekly meetings which focused on topics such as self preservation, ethics in art, diversity, professionalism, justice for humanity, and the future of Elementz. Members of the LEAD were given opportunities this year to go on field trips to local and national conferences, to participate in leadership workshops and to represent Elementz at several events. In May the LEAD participated in a leadership workshop with Teen Institute which gave members of our committee the opportunity to help instruct other teens and children in leadership. At the end of the workshop members of the LEAD also performed a song that they had recorded called "My Goal Is" which reminded youth from Teen Institute about setting goals. The LEAD also participated in the YMCA Black Achievers program this summer which

focused on reminding Black youth about the importance of setting goals and being successful. One of youth from Elementz member committee also was a panelist giving advice to teens while others performed inspirational songs. This summer members of the LEAD were also able to travel to Detroit to take part in The Allied Media Conference. This conference features a series of workshops hosted by organizations throughout America that use Media for the purposes of social justice. All of the experiences that the LEAD partook in this year reinforced many of the subjects that are discussed in meetings.



Elementz members comment:

Elementz gave me a start on my music career!

It boosted my confidence, its really encouraging to be around so many creative people!

Elementz Showcase

Liberty and Central Parkway
January 20, 2010
6-7 p.m.

A special showcase of the Elementz youth in a special performance for Elementz friends and the Cincinnati community. Family-friendly and free parking in the Cincinnati Ballet Parking Lot.

Thanks to our generous supporters



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The Ohio Justice and Policy Center
Lower Price Hill Community School

And our Founders

Gavin Leonard
Islord Allah