



贊助人：梁唐青儀女士 Patron: Mrs. Regina Leung

July 2014

My dear friend

This year we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the foundation of the “School of Hip Hop.” However, the School of Hip Hop began almost by accident.

We began to notice that some of the young people on the streets at night did not feel comfortable when they were approached by social workers who asked for personal details such as where they came from and what they were doing and so the idea of a 24-hour drop-in center was born which offered the young people the initiative in approaching us in a safe environment. We eventually started up the “Hang Out” in Kwun Tong in 2002.

As part of the program at the Hang Out we wished to recruit some “double-out” youth (out of school and out of work) to be Program Assistants to keep the activities moving and the center functioning. From time to time we had come across young people dancing Hip Hop on the streets and in public parks. They loved dancing but wherever they went local residents complained about the noise, the police told them to move on and they were constantly being scolded by their parents for “wasting their time.” We told them that The Hang Out had opened and they could go and dance there if they wished. After a while they brought their friends and then other young people began to ask them to teach a few steps.

This group provided the ideal source for the first Program Assistants. They all loved to dance and would spend all their spare time (and spare cash) doing this. But most of them were school drop-outs and held dead-end jobs such as delivery or cleaning workers. To offer them a job where they got paid for doing something they loved was something quite new. They also had additional chores in the center such as organizing and leading other activities, cleaning etc...

We employed the best six dancers as Program Assistants. None of them had finished secondary school and they were doing casual jobs such as waiting in restaurants, delivering soft drinks and so on. Now that they were “instructors” they began to feel that what they loved was valuable too!

In 2004, we successfully applied for a grant from the Govt. officially to start up the “School of Hip Hop.” Since then the school has gone from strength to strength and even until today is the only organization of its kind in Hong Kong.

A team of dancers from our School won a competition in Shanghai and so qualified to represent the whole of China at an international competition in Germany. One of the instructors from the School was eventually employed by the Academy for Performing Arts in Beijing and three of our students were accepted by the Academy for Performing Arts in Hong Kong. Others have left our School to set up their own dance studios. These are only some of their accolades!

Instructors from our School now go into Band 3 schools to teach Hip Hop as an extra-curricular activity. But if staff are asked to provide “dancing training” in a school or youth center, social workers go together with the instructors as part of the team. The dancing provides a medium through which marginalized youth can be engaged and their life-style issues addressed. The goal is NOT simply to teach dancing but to engage, support and empower these otherwise alienated and disaffected young people. The instructors in our School have themselves had similar experiences so they too can support the social workers – those who have been the journey know the road!

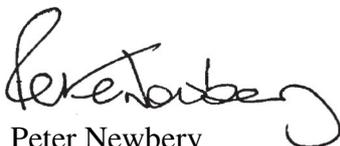
This year as part of the celebrations for the 10th Anniversary we organized a large scale, one-day event called “YO! Dance it up!” in Shatin. Throughout the afternoon, groups of students from schools we had been working in provided non-stop Hip Hop performances in the open area outside the Shatin Town Hall. Then in the evening, from 8.00pm until 10.00pm there was a Gala Performance in the auditorium of the Town Hall by many of the (now not so young!) people who had been with us over the intervening years since we began in 2002. Mrs. Carrie Lam was the guest of honor.

It really was a moving experience. To meet all these old friends and see how settled they are, struggling for their goals and living out their dreams was so heartwarming. To see the smiles on the faces of these young people when they got up onto the stage to do what they loved – dance – was most gratifying. Our work and our efforts over the years had indeed born fruit.

Through Hip Hop, young people can be helped to work through their feelings of alienation, develop their talents and build a positive self-image and feelings of self-worth which will enable them to fulfill a meaningful role in society and live a productive life. What more can we want?

It is not possible to continue this wonderful work without your help and support. I appeal to you to make a generous gift so that more and more young people can see that they have talents and can strive for their dreams.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Newbery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Peter Newbery
Executive Director