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Krumping and the Worm after school at the Ohrenberger

By David Ertischek

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West Roxbury -

Channeling their inner Beyonces, Chris Browns and Ciaras, Ohrenberger students break-danced, krumped and grooved to the melodic bass-driven hip-hop music last Thursday.

The 11 students, a group of fourth- and fifth-graders, were participating in a two-month after-school hip-hop program run in conjunction with BalletRox.

Led by professional dancer Sean Fielder, the group has been working on a choreographed dance they'll show in a future school assembly before the end of the school year.

After going over the dance steps, Fielder turned on the stereo, and instantaneously smiles were lit and feet started moving.

They throw in some "rock wit it, lean wit it;" some mock driving the car, and rolled on the ground as they pounded their fists on the stage to the beat.

"Ballin'!" announced Joshua Morency, as they did one of the moves.

"It's a fun experience because I like dancing. This is a way for me to express my dance moves and show people what I can do," said Jackie Agyure, 11. "I like the krump."

For ya'll out there who may not know krumping, according to the urbandictionary.com, krumping "is a style of dance that originated in the African-American community of South Central Los Angeles, California. It involves elaborate face-painting and freestyle dance moves usually performed in competition with other crews."

The students have been able to incorporate cartwheels or other moves into their choreographed dance.

Fielder is a laidback teacher who gets his teachings across in a smooth manner the kids appreciate. He counts off the moves with them, jokes with them and asks them who got every step correct after practicing the routine.

“I think it’s good to be around kids that don’t formally go to dance class,” said Fielder, a tap dancer who owns the Boston Tap Company, and has performed with famed performers such as Jimmy Slide and Savion Glover. “It’s getting a group of kids to move on the same level. It’s unexpected because they’re not used to the ‘5, 6, 7, 8.’ It’s to encourage kids; every child is different.”

After practicing their routine, Fielder led them in several games, including Red Rover dancing when the students split up on two sides of the stage; one student would dance across the stage, doing whatever moves they desired, and then tagged another dancer. The game then progressed to two kids at a time and so on.

Rihanna’s “Don’t Stop the Music” blares, and most of the kids strutted their personal styles.

Morency, 10, a tall fourth-grader, enjoyed moving to the music. “I want to be a rapper when I get older. But if that doesn’t work out, I can always be a dancer. It’s really fun.”

Morency’s patented move was when he would dance down to center stage and pop the hood of his sweatshirt onto his head.

Yohanna Perez, 11, had a go to move of effortlessly making her way into the middle of the stage and mixing in a cartwheel. At home she said she just puts on the music and starts dancing. “My favorite move we do is the 8-step cause it’s long.”

Fielder said he’ll see a student off to the side during a particular freestyle session and when the song changes, the student will get up and start dancing. He said sometimes it’s just that easy for a kid to start dancing: they need a song that they prefer.

The Thursday class is actually small compared to the Tuesday class with second- and third-graders, said Principal Steve Zrike. He estimated about 30 kids attend that session.

Zrike said he hopes the program is expanded to include Beethoven Elementary School students, as well as the Ohrenberger School Community Center.

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