

# 'And the Beat Goes On'

*Breakdown, a hip-hop dance troupe, puts on a show every year that sends most of its proceeds to charity*

BY AMY LIGHTY  
PULSE REPORTER

Breakdown, a Eugene hip-hop dance troupe, puts on a show every year that anyone from three to 89 years old can enjoy and appreciate.

Beginning in October, Breakdown holds auditions for a performance six months out, and the dancers work hard for eight hours every Sunday to create an amazing show they can be proud of.

"Our dancers have incredible dance backgrounds. There's usually about 80 to 100 dancers that try out, and we can take no more than 55," Breakdown director Lindsey McMahon said. "They blow me away when I watch them, and I can't believe that they're here in Eugene."

Not only does the group work hard to produce a great show, but the dancers also work hard to give back to the community. Every year, Breakdown gives the majority of its proceeds to charity.

This year the company chose to donate its money to Eugene's Relief Nursery, a daycare center that attempts to prevent abuse and neglect.

"The families that go to this place are anywhere from just overbooked and overstressed and need somewhere to drop their kids off, or some where there's abuse or substance

abuse involved and they need to get their kids into a safe place," McMahon said.

But the nursery isn't the only charity Breakdown will give to this year — Breakdown donates money to the hip-hop community as well.

"P.U.M.A. is a new non-profit organization, which started with the intention to train children and adults in working in the music business, meaning they get real world experience working on things like promotions, advertising, marketing, studio engineering and multimedia," said Michael Kay, CEO of Northwest Beat, the company that produces Breakdown. "It's being established in a real world setting in the sense that they'll actually be interacting and working in a community and letting people know about current music."

Members of Breakdown also feel it's important to immerse themselves in the charity they're working for.

"Last year, we gave our money to the Turnaround School. They're a school that helps children, teens and young adolescents who tend to get in trouble a lot," said Jordan Klindt, administrative director of Northwest Beat. "Not only were we able to give some money to them, but we actually went to the school and performed

for them and hung out with them. This year with the Relief Nursery, we took our dancers on a tour so that they can see where their money is going to and what they're dancing and working so hard for."

Working hard will have its benefits when Breakdown performs on March 5, 11 and 12 at Churchill High School, and also on April 2 in Portland. This year, the performers are trying something new, using their hip-hop dancing to tell a story of two star-crossed lovers.

Based on "West Side Story," "And the Beat Goes On" is the tale of a group of dancers who live in a town dominated only by hip-hop. Fighting causes the group to split in two, forming the Crows and the Doves. McMahon said that each group is defined by two different hip-hop styles: one is jazzy and technical while the other reflects street hip-hop.

"It's probably not going to be what people expect," Kay said. "We're a Eugene dance company, but it looks like an evening at Broadway. People in the audience are really excited and really entertained, and they just can't believe that we have something like that going on around here."

Tickets are on sale at CD World and West Moon Trading Company. Prices are \$10 for adults and \$7 for children 10 and under.

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