

KeizerCommunity

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LEFT: McNary junior Ricky Perez started the Aztec Rhythm Club at the high school. RIGHT: He is pictured with students Eddie Lopez, back, left, Ryan Randolph, Andres Garcia, bottom, left, and former McNary student Jesus Mendoza, who is now a volunteer for the club.

KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley

Breakdancing added at McNary

By **DEREK WILEY**
Of the Keizertimes

After a conversation with his older brother, Ricky Perez decided he wanted to be more active as he began his junior year at McNary High School and join a club.

But looking through the list, there wasn't one that interested him.

So Perez decided to start his own—Aztec Rhythm, better known as breakdancing.

He went to Ryan Somerville, a teacher at McNary who told Perez to “stop telling me what you’re going to do and come back and tell me what you’ve done.”

Perez soon returned with three friends, Ryan Randolph, Eddie Lopez and Andres Miranda, and said, “This is my B-boy club.”

He then filled out the appropriate paper work and Aztec Rhythm was added to the

list of available clubs at McNary.

“To me being the leader would surprise a lot of people in the halls because they see me as the kid who is just there,” Perez said. “I think it’s going to be really cool when they figure out I’m a leader here.”

Perez was introduced to breakdancing in the eighth grade. He went to sessions twice a week at the Boys and

Girls Club in Salem. But quit after six months.

He played soccer in the eighth grade but hadn’t been a part of anything in high school.

“One day I came to my senses, I don’t do anything with my life,” Perez said of starting the club at McNary. “I’m practically wasting my time so what can I do to volunteer my time?”

Somerville is supervising the group and said the only problem is Perez wants to

meet everyday.

“When I told them I can’t supervise every single day because I’m busy, he wouldn’t take no for an answer,” Somerville said. “He goes and finds other teachers to supervise them the other days of the week. He’s unstoppable. He’s fantastic. It’s really neat seeing him at that age grow into this leadership.”

“It’s been an everyday thing,” Perez said. “We love breakdancing so much that we want to get really good at it and practice and practice and we can one day be recognized for that.”

Breakdancing isn’t completely new to McNary. In 2013, the high school hosted a B-boy dance battle as a fundraiser with crews from all around the Pacific Northwest. Former students, Jesus Mendoza and Ricky Sanchez, who are now volunteering with the club, used to breakdance at school assemblies.

“There wasn’t a club and that’s why I think it’s important to do things like this be-

cause when we would do stuff like this we’d get in trouble,” Mendoza said. “The teachers that supported us were ‘why don’t you try to do assemblies’ and that’s where we were able to express ourselves. Keeping people busy is how you keep them out of trouble.”

Perez looks up to both Mendoza and Sanchez, who he calls “legends in the game.”

“They are great role models to look up to,” Lopez said. “They inspire me a lot to keep pushing and move forward.”

Perez has mostly kept the club quiet but looks forward to impressing his fellow students at an upcoming school assembly.

“I don’t want people to know just yet so at the right moment it will be a huge surprise to the whole school,” he said.

“That’s how I’m going to start bringing in people. I really want it to be just a hang out, something people can do and just have fun with it. It’s something different here at McNary.”

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their favorite costumes, dance, eat and drink. The new menu includes passed hors d'oeuvres, herbed chicken or eggplant parmesan, sides served family style, and desserts. There will also be hosted beer and wine.

Tickets are \$70 per person until Oct. 21, and then they're \$80 per person. Each ticket includes entry to the event, the live and silent auctions, and the after party with drinking and dancing. There are only 400 tickets available for this year's event, so grab seats as soon as possible.

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