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### **Concrete Roots Brings Bboying to Local Schools**

Gezim Topalli, of the Eastern Bloc crew with Concrete Roots, shows his bboy skills during a recent stop at Amherst Regional High School. For the past two years, Concrete Roots has been running a 'Class is In' program, aimed at bringing hip-hop cultures to youth through free instructions.

AMHERST – Jeff Lin likes everything there is about bboying.



*RAISSA TETANISH □ AMHERST DAILY NEWS*

The Grade 11 student from Citadel High, who is originally from Taiwan, was one of four members of the Eastern Bloc crew that made an appearance Monday at two local schools.

"I do it to relax. I study a lot and when I need to relax, I change to break," he said in reference to the style of dancing. "It's my hobby." For the past two years, Concrete Roots has been offering Class is In, a program for students at schools in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Drew Moore, who teaches bboying and hip hop classes and is a founding member of Concrete Roots, introduced Lin and three other Eastern Bloc

members, Gezim Topalli, Gerzen Faradgiv and George Grigoryan, to students at Amherst Regional High School in the afternoon, however they were at E.B. Chandler Jr. High earlier in the day.

“The response has been pretty positive,” said Moore after two shows at the high school where students learned some of the history on both hip hop and bboying.

“It’s great to see youth that are fully dedicated to this and that push themselves to do their best. They get really engaged and keep at it.”

Moore said Concrete Roots takes members on the road to teach others about bboying (or bgirling for females).

“There’s no reason why this can’t be happening in every school, not just in the city,” he said.

Moore told students at the high school that the Eastern Bloc crew practice a few hours each day to improve their skills.

“Their skills are now at a national level for competition,” he told the students while telling the crew to cover their ears. “I don’t want their heads to get bigger.”

Moore’s interest in the style of dance came about in the late 1990s thanks to the video It’s Like That by Run-DMC vs. Jason Nevins.

In 2007, Moore started hanging out with bboys in the Halifax area.

A year later, he formed Concrete Roots with Tony Ingram, Chris Beck, Igor Geshelin and Michael Richard, registering the company two years ago this past Sunday..

The goal is to develop the bboy scene in Nova Scotia, including in rural areas, by offering workshops in schools and communities.

Three local organizations came together to bring Concrete Roots to the schools - Maggie’s Place, Amherst Schools Plus and Child and Youth Strategy.