

Hip Op-eration

Dance Academy

History

How did the Hip Op-eration Dance Academy™ get started?

After surviving an abusive childhood and repeated trauma in the Christchurch Earthquake in New Zealand on 22nd February 2011 (where nearly 200 people lost their lives), Founder of The Hip Op-eration Dance Academy™, Billie Jordan, used these experiences as a catalyst for improving the lives of older people in her community. Moving to a small island off the East Coast of Auckland, New Zealand (Waiheke Island) and suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, she noticed her constant fear of death was something shared by many of her elderly neighbours. So she decided, 'why don't we all leave this life dancing'.

Billie drove around the island and recruited 80 senior citizens aged 65 to 96 to join her initiative 'The World's Oldest Flash Mob'. They performed on 9th August 2012 and the video of them on YouTube now has over 3 million views.

The World's Oldest Flash Mob Performance, August 2012

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIMd5KFG1vQ>

During this process she noticed no-one seemed to have any expectations of senior citizens to do well or reach a high standard of performance. So she decided to try and change the world's view of senior citizens and the lives of her neighbours.

She set up a hip hop dance mega crew called the Hip Operation Crew™ with the lofty goal of performing at the World Hip Hop Championships in Las Vegas in eight months time. All members had to be aged 65 years and over. 46 members of the original Flash Mob joined the mega crew to strive towards achieving this audacious goal.

With no experience in dance or older people, and not receiving any payment for all her time and expenses, Billie had her work cut out for her. However, she was determined to bring out the true potential of her elderly neighbours and show them, and the rest of the world, you can overcome any obstacle at any age - and achieve positive social change in the process.

Billie also approached film production companies to document the Hip Operation Crew's™ journey, so her dancers would have a nice memory of their experience to share with family and friends long after they had left this world.

It was soon apparent that this mission to get 46 of her elderly neighbours to the World Hip Hop Championships and liaise and assist with the production of a documentary film was a fulltime job.

So Billie did not return to paid work and dedicated every waking hour over the next eight months to achieve this very difficult mission. She knew that if she believed in her dancers, they would believe in themselves. She was incredibly driven in her mission to give her neighbours the experience of a lifetime.

She transported dancers to and from rehearsals, did odd jobs for them around their house, took meals to some of the elderly members when they were sick, accompanied them to the doctors or pharmacy or supermarket, worked tirelessly at fundraising, sponsorship and promoting the group, wrote and dispatched media releases all over the world, choreographed all the dance routines, organised social outings for the Dance Crew and hosted the documentary film crew - often transporting them around the island, cooking meals for them and organising film permits when needed. However, no matter how worn out she was, she always kept her eye on the end mission to give her neighbours a wonderful unique experience which would help them realise their true capabilities and inspire others.

Although all her time was voluntary and Billie sold some of her possessions to keep afloat, the financial hardship was the least

of her challenges, as teaching and managing a large group of elderly people twice her age was very demanding. Some members had dementia, many had disabilities, a few were not pleasant to deal with and there were people with a wide range of personalities, attitudes, and ages (there were 30 years between the youngest and oldest) that required constant management. However, despite this she always taught the dancers with patience, positivity and humour. Her greatest reward was when she saw this group of people, who were once strangers, transform over time, become a tight knit crew and learn how capable they were; the things they thought were obstacles, really weren't. They realised that, no matter how old they got and what physical or mental obstacles they faced, they really could achieve anything; the world was their oyster!

They reached the goal and 27 members of the Dance Crew who could travel flew to Las Vegas and performed at the World Hip Hop Championships in August 2013.

Performance at the World Hip Hop Championships, 2013

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90sXcZwOSuw>

The group then went on to perform to an audience of 15,000 at the Taipei Arena in Taiwan in 2014 and are in the Guinness World Records as the oldest dance troupe in the world.

The feature documentary film about the crew's journey to the World Hip Hop Championships, called 'Hip Hop-eration' has

been winning awards and receiving standing ovations in film festivals all over the world and is considered the most successful documentary in New Zealand's history.

Feature Documentary Film Trailer, 2014

<http://hiphoperationthemovie.com/>

In early 2016 Hollywood purchased Billie Jordan's Life Rights and plan on making a blockbuster film about her and the Hip Op-eration Dance Crew™.

In October 2016 Billie was made 'NZ Woman of the Year'.

In June 2016 Billie was awarded the MNZM (Member of the NZ Order of Merit) by Her Majesty the Queen.

<http://www.newshub.co.nz/nznews/woman-behind-hip-operation-makes-queens-honour-list-2016060516#axzz4Afsygvcb>

In 2015 Billie won the Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year award in the Local Hero category, did a Ted Talk and spoke at the Beehive (New Zealand's office of Government).

Billie Jordan Ted Talk, 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saRWpSqQpPA>

The Hip Op-eration Crew™ is now a Master Dance Crew of seven core full-time members aged 72 to 97 years old. They

continue to wow audiences and won their division at the Auckland Regional Hip Hop Championships in February 2016 - scoring higher than a crew whose members were up to 88 years their junior!.

Performance at Auckland Regional Hip Hop Championships, 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kw54bjRttw>

Members of The Hip Op-eration Crew™ are an integral part of the Hip Op-eration Dance Academy™ and some are Master Instructors. In the Hip Op-eration Crew™, one member is legally blind, one is profoundly deaf, three wear hearing aids, two have had open heart surgery, one has had a stroke, one has kidney disease and all have arthritis. The average age is 80 and they remain in the Guinness World Records as the oldest dance troupe in the world to this very day.

Over the past four years people have contacted Billie Jordan every day wanting to become involved in the initiative. Because of this demand, Billie decided to make the Hip Op-eration Dance Crew™ experience available to people around the globe. By becoming a Hip Op-eration Dance Academy™ Instructor you are playing a major role in changing the way the world views aging.