



Workshops introduce youth to African drumming



Alex Addy (center) with the Obo Addy Legacy Project leads MacLaren youth in a drumming lesson during spring break.

By [Sarah Evans](#), OYA Communications
April 15, 2016

Tasha Triplett started the session in The Station at MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility by writing a thought-provoking question on the white board: Can hip-hop be a force for positive change?

A teacher with the [Obo Addy Legacy Project](#), Triplett wanted the youth in the room to see parallels between African arts and culture — the focus of the nonprofit — and the culture they experience in their lives.

The answer to Triplett’s question was a resounding yes, which she demonstrated by showing a variety of videos by artists who use hip-hop to inspire social and political change. Examples included M.I.A.’s “Borders” on the migrant and refugee crisis, Olmeca’s “The Browning of America” on the country’s changing demographics, and Ana Tijoux’s “Shock,” supporting Chilean student protests for accessible education.

It was the last of four sessions of spring break workshops in March led by the Obo Addy Legacy



Tasha Triplett discusses hip-hop artists who use their music to inspire positive change.



Project, which runs educational programs on African culture in schools throughout Oregon. The MacLaren youth divided their mornings between learning West African drumming and exploring hip-hop. The nonprofit hosted similar programs last year at North Coast and Hillcrest youth correctional facilities; up next are the Tillamook and Oak Creek facilities.

“We’re trying to connect young people with African culture by helping them see it’s not just some exotic thing from another continent,” said Susan Addy, the nonprofit’s executive director. “Drumming has a certain



magic about it. It makes people happy and positive, and OYA youth need that kind of influence in their lives.”

The positive impact of the drumming was obvious for many of the youth as they gathered in a circle to follow the lead of Alex Addy, son of Susan and the late Obo Addy. Using traditional Ghanaian drums topped with goat skin, they listened closely to Alex’s directions. Most seemed unafraid to pound out beats, and they smiled as the chorus of drums filled the space.

The day ended with guest artist Marcus Cooper introducing them to “krump” dancing, a style of street dance.

“Part of the value we hope the youth get from the experience is seeing that we took the time to come in and work with them,” Susan Addy says. “We hear this a lot from the youth. They are thankful that we brought in all these artists who wanted to spend time with them and give them something they will benefit from.”

Watch a short video of the youth drumming with Alex Addy: <https://youtu.be/1NpGAR9fyZs>



Guest artist Marcus Cooper gives the youth a lesson in “krump” dancing.

