



**SOCIAL WORK THROUGH HIP HOP**

**Press Release: November 14th, 2016**

For immediate release:

### **Hiphop Pioneer to receive Meritorious Service Cross from Canada's Governor General David Johnston**

Stephen “Buddha” Leafloor, 57, is a Canadian B-boy Elder, street dancer, youth outreach worker, speaker, and social worker. On Friday, November 25, 2016, he will receive the Meritorious Service Cross at Rideau Hall in Ottawa from Governor General David Johnston. This award acknowledges those who bring “considerable benefit and honour to Canada” and recognizes Stephen’s years of social outreach using Hiphop as a therapeutic tool in remote arctic and First Nations communities. He is Canada’s first OG in Hiphop (Original Generation) to receive such an award.



Stephen, who has been dancing since the early 80’s, is co-founder of the Canadian Floor Masters, and has opened for performers such as James Brown, IceT, GrandMaster Flash, George Clinton, Public Enemy, LaLaLa Human Steps and the Kirov Ballet. He has taught and consulted for Cirque du Soleil on numerous occasions. Stephen was made an Ashoka Fellow in 2012 and named by Zoomer Magazine as one of Canada's “Top 45 over 45”.

Combining his Masters in Social Work with years of involvement in the Canadian Hiphop community, Stephen has developed a highly engaging outreach program that creatively blends modern Hiphop with traditional and cultural components of indigenous and other diverse groups. Recently, he has been working across Canada with youth in correctional facilities. He is the founder of both Blueprintforlife ([www.blueprintforlife.ca](http://www.blueprintforlife.ca)) and the non-profit Blueprint Pathways. His art-based approach, which combines best-practice mental health techniques with dance, spoken word, meditation and cognitive therapies, has received national and international acclaim. Blueprint Pathways has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from Justice Canada’s Youth Gangs and Guns initiative to work with gang-affiliated youth in maximum security facilities across Canada, helping incarcerated youth to build mental healing techniques, create resiliency and move away from gang-related activity.

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