

**Motivator blends dance with speaking**

*Erica Molina  
El Paso Times*

Patrick Perez's gift for entrancing his audience with his words has helped him live out his dreams.

The 25-year-old recently returned from a trip to Austin, where he competed in the semi-finals of an international Toastmasters competition. He also heads Lead, Encourage and Dance, a non-profit motivation company that combines speaking with break dancing.

"You get this high when you dance or are speaking in front of people. It gives you life and lets you know there's more out there than just a 9-to-5 job," Perez said. "There's excitement and vitality, and you know you're doing something positive for the kids."

Perez, a communication major at the University of Texas at El Paso, joined Toastmasters less than a year ago, but he quickly began finding success at speaking competitions.

"Most people get up there and give a typical motivational speech," he said. "What set me apart was I used everything I could."

He even stood on top of a chair at one point to help illustrate his speech about heroes.

"He's fantastic and he's dynamic," said Mark Pierce, a member of Toastmasters and owner of the Motivation Source. "He's very tuned toward younger people."

Although Perez did not win at the competition in Austin, he hopes to do well next year.

In the meantime, he will focus on heading back to the classroom alongside other UTEP students Aug. 22, and he will continue delivering presentations with Lead, Encourage and Dance.

"The kids love it and the teachers love it," Perez said. "It's all about living your dance in the rhythm of life. We encourage students to get out there and dare to dance."

He said this "dance" can take the form of making positive choices, saying no to drugs or acting on other life issues. However, he and his counterparts give the message a literal meaning as they hit the floor and begin to break dance.

"I first started break dancing when I was 18 years old -- about the time most break dancers stop," said Perez, a member of the Sun City Floor Rockers. "Somehow I got a scholarship to the Texas Bible Institute, and I began to see the gift I've been given for dancing and speaking."

Pierce said Perez is a powerful speaker who successfully combines speaking with break dancing.

"His speeches and his whole presentation are very uplifting, very inspiring," Pierce said. "It's not like anything you've seen before. I've never seen it. I've seen lots of speakers and entertainers, and he blends the two together."

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**Patrick Perez** spoke during a break dance competition Saturday at Young Park in Las Cruces

**More details**

For more information visit <http://www.toastmasters.org> or <http://www.livethedance.org>

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