



Hip-hop group Island Beatz were a hit at the recent Bridges event in Blacktown.

Street-wise rap

BELIEVE it or not, hip-hop is not about gangsters, guns, bling and women in bikinis.

It's about struggle.

That was the message from the western Sydney hip-hop groups who hit Blacktown earlier this month for Bridges, an event aimed at bringing the community together to learn about drug and alcohol addiction.

Island Beatz and Urban Prophetz were among the bands which took the stage at Dawson Mall, with a message about the hardships faced by local kids and the destructive impact of drugs and alcohol.

"The performances and workshops were for everyone, but we were really happy to see a lot of older people there," co-ordinator Tirrania Suhood said.

"Hip-hop is still a pretty new thing for a lot of people and it's easy to get the wrong

impression because of the way some of the American rappers portray themselves."

"Basically, hip-hop is a form of expression that originated on the streets. It's about struggle – something which people from every race and culture have been through."

Bridges also featured a performance and drum workshop from singer Linda Marr and a martial arts demonstration from the self-defence centre.

"Bridges is about people learning from each other," Tirrania said.

"We had 75-year-olds learning about hip-hop and 16-year-olds learning how to play the drums."

To learn more about Bridges or contact Blacktown Alcohol and Other Drugs Family Services phone 9622 7511 or visit www.bridges.com.au.

--Paul Bibby