

## **Contest winner sees rap career in his future**

By *Rachel Zarrell, Special to the Reporter*

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Javon "Yung Fresh" Martin, a member of the Blue Hill Boys & Girls Club in Dorchester, was named the Northeast region winner in the music tech category of the Club Tech Digital Arts Festival. He will advance to the national competition to vie for the title in his age group, 13-15. He will also be opening the Colgate University Springfest in April.

For up-and-coming Dorchester teen Javon "Yung Fresh" Martin, winning the music category at the Boys & Girls Club's Digital Arts Festival is just a rung on his ladder to the top.

Martin, 15, used the studio at the Blue Hill Boys & Girls Club's Music Clubhouse to combine a rap written by a few of the program's 10- to 12-year-olds mixed with jazz sound bytes the club required be mixed in each song. The song— "Studio Heat Remix"— took first place in the northeast regionals last week.

"I got the samples and I made the beat, and then I told the kids the idea," he said. "And they were like, 'Cool, we want to do it.'"

Martin conceptualized a “fun, up-tempo” song about what goes on at the Clubhouse, naming the song after the studio where they recorded, and coached the younger rappers on enunciating and keeping with the beat.

The Digital Arts Festival urges young people to express themselves through technology with categories in music, photography, design, movie animation and film. Although there is no prize for winning the Northeast region competition, Martin will head to nationals to compete in the 13- to 15-year-old bracket.

Besides mixing the winning entry, the aspiring rap artist has also hosted a show on Hot 97, sells music on iTunes and will perform for his second time at Colgate University this April, opening for the Grammy-nominated rapper, B.o.B., at their annual Springfest.

“He’s a rap artist, I’m a rap artist. It’s going to be kind of cool to be there with him as a rap artist and see what it’s like,” Martin said.

Rick Aggeler, Music Clubhouse Director at the Blue Hill Club, has worked with “Yung Fresh” since he joined the club in 2007, and describes him as a “rare and unique kid” who “knows how to work a room.”

“I believe he can be at the Grammy’s. That’s something we kind of talked about,” Aggeler said. “Not that that’s the final goal at all. I don’t believe there’s anything he can’t do.”

When he’s working on a new song, Martin said he writes about relatable, “real-life situations” like relationships and high school, and said he spends nearly every day in the studio.

“He’s just a really motivated, happy kid,” Aggeler said.

In terms of his future, Martin intends to take more of a giant leap than a next step, saying he envisions himself breaking into the music industry within the next two or three years.

"The only thing is I can't stop now," he said. "I'm just going to keep putting stuff out there and see where it takes me."