

March 8, 2010

Press Advisory

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800 high school students scheduled to attend Step Up Youth Summit at McDermont Field House Thursday

Officials expect 800 Tulare County High School students to attend the second annual Step Up Youth Summit on Thursday, March 11 at the McDermont Field House located in downtown Lindsay. The students - representing virtually every high school program in the county - were selected by a principal or counselor who felt they would benefit from the message and resources presented at the summit. The purpose of the Youth Summit is to connect, educate, equip and inspire Tulare County's youth to live violence and drug-free lifestyles, pursue educational achievement and connect to their community in a positive manner.

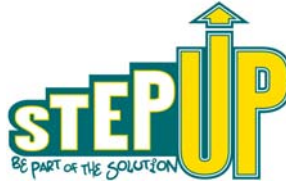
“This year’s summit promises to be a high energy, highly-motivating event with speakers, entertainers and representatives our students will appreciate,” says County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “Each component of the event is designed to help them make positive choices for their lives and to see the limitless education and career possibilities available to them.”



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This year, the Step Up Youth Summit will offer a variety of powerful featured guest presenters, breakout sessions and a resource fair.

Steve Worthley, Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, said the goal of organizers is to try to personally impact the youth who will attend the Youth Summit and to offer solutions that can help them be successful with future educational and career goals. "The purpose of the Youth Summit is to deal with a significant issue in our county - gang-related youth violence," Chairman Worthley said. "In a sense, what we hope to accomplish Thursday is to reach out on an individual basis to youth and encourage them to create a successful future for themselves."

Gabe Salazar will serve as the master of ceremonies and keynote speaker. He is a nationally-known youth speaker. His message challenges teenagers and encourages them to make positive choices in their lives. Through the use of powerful skits, dynamic insights and real-life illustrations, Gabe's message inspires and motivates his audience to action.

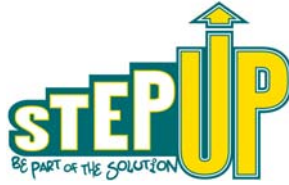
Dr. Bill Michaelis and Ezra Holland, co-owners of www.Children-Together.com, will provide one of the breakout sessions attended by all students. Bill is a Professor Emeritus at San Francisco State University. Ezra is a faculty member at San Francisco State University. Together they have presented more than 2,000 fun-filled, thought-provoking workshops,



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events, and keynotes around the world and are experts on play activity and its application to creativity, learning, development, self-esteem, leadership and healthy living for all age groups.

Performers from Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles will provide a second breakout session attended by all students. Homeboy Industries is a non-profit organization that assists at-risk and formerly gang-involved youth to become positive and contributing members of society through job placement, training and education. Former rivals work side-by-side, finding true community and friendship in place of the limited community of gang life. Homeboy Industries is now the nation's largest gang intervention program, serving 12,000 clients per year and 8,000 gang members from 700 different gangs.

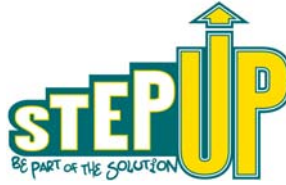
Students will also attend the Step Up Youth Summit Resource Fair, which is designed to provide them with a diverse mix of career, vocational, and higher education resources. More than 40 Central Valley organizations will provide information on career exploration, vocational training services and local community colleges and universities. From the health field to agriculture to automotive and hospitality industries, students attending the Step Up Youth Summit will walk away with a variety of options to help build their future.



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Following the summit, a team of educators will visit select schools and ask their students to complete a survey about the event. The team will also help these select schools lead discussion groups that will be videotaped for review by the planning committee.

The event is a collaborative project developed by the Tulare County Gang Prevention Task Force - a coalition made up of the general public, media, local businesses, faith-based organizations, schools, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, local government and law enforcement agencies.

The 2010 Step Up Youth Summit will be held March 11 from 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at the McDermont Field House in Lindsay. For more information contact Jed Chernabaeff at (559) 636-5000.

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