

# Youth Commission to help Citrus High in monitoring effort

Youth come together to fight gang involvement

By ANITA STACKHOUSE-HITE  
THE RECORDER

In the belief that there is more than one way to accomplish anything, the Porterville Youth Commission has offered its assistance to Citrus High School students in a fun-filled mentoring effort.

On Saturday, March 6, PYC and Citrus will work together with sixth to eighth grade students in an event called "Rock of Ages."

Citrus High School Principal Kathleen Pearson said part of the \$10,000 Step-Up Grant monies received from Tulare County through the Porterville Education Foundation are being used to help make the event a reality.

"This is a big part of the grant," Pearson said. "Kids here don't have anything to do on Saturdays, so the plan is we'll do something city-wide for the kids every

## HOW TO ATTEND

**What:** Rock of Ages event

**Where:** Porterville Youth Center, 256 E. Orange

**Who:** All sixth through eighth grade students

**When:** From noon to 4 p.m., Saturday, March 6

**Admission:** Free  
**Contact:** Heritage Center, 791-1697

month. We want kids to know there are alternatives, there are some cool things you can do beside getting involved in gangs. This [event] is pure recreation."

Eighth graders will be in attendance, so high school students can set up booths and show off their programs "because those kids will be in high school next year," she said.

The event is organized by sponsors, including Porterville Education Foundation, Porterville Unified School District, Citrus High School, Boys

and Girls Club of Porterville and Porterville Parks and Leisure Services.

Citrus students will be paid a small hourly wage from the Step-Up Grant. Those students will help oversee and run the event with help from PYC.

The event will include a dance competition, ping pong tournament, an obstacle course, an art contest and a doughnut eating contest, among other events.

Mat Keele, director of the local Boys and Girls Club concurred with Pearson's view, indicating there will be something for everyone to enjoy.

"There will be a Wii tournament with prizes — that's playing the guitar, the drums and microphone actually sing while they play, it's the whole band," Keele said. "There will be prizes, and we will help coordinate and assist with different games. On our end, we want to get our program out to the middle school kids. There is a lot here that is for the kids who can't afford \$40 to \$50 to spend on fun. This is something for them to do that's free. And we're striving for it to be an ongoing thing."

Keele said 20 percent of the Boys and Girls Club membership is scholarship. The fee is \$10 a year, but not everyone can afford that. "Not  
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## GANG: Alternatives

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having the annual fee is not a barrier, we still serve you," he said.

The sponsors and the PYC merge their efforts in this event to ensure all youth in sixth to eighth grade have an opportunity to have a fun day at no cost.

"We are all in this together," Pearson said. "There truly are alternatives to gang activity, and this event, Rock of Ages, is just one way to show young people what those alternatives can be. At the same time, it gives our kids [Citrus High] the opportunity to mentor. Everybody wins."