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ROCK THE VOTE ACTIVIST ORGANIZING YOUTH VOTER CAMPAIGN.

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LANCASTER - The MTV-inspired Rock the Vote and Youth Vote 2000 programs that have taken the country by storm since their inception more than a dozen years ago will be brought to the Antelope Valley this election year by a 29-year-old self-proclaimed ``youth activist."

Kristien Amer of Quartz Hill has organized the valley's first Rock the Vote program from 2 to 8 p.m. Sept. 9 featuring eight live bands, several guest

speakers from all over the state, voter registration forms for all parties, and various forms of information on issues and candidates.

“The whole thing is about getting youth to vote and educating them,” Amer said. “I just want people to know that they have the power to make changes and if they don’t like something they can group together and change it.”

Amer has organized major events like Rock the Vote for about eight years and has put on several concerts in both Honolulu and Los Angeles but says she has never seen an area more in need of such an event as the Antelope Valley.

Since beginning the task in July of contacting and scheduling speakers and contacting the bands, Amer says she has received mixed responses including those who embrace the program and others who won’t even allow her to hang a poster in their store windows.

“I’ve gone into stores and asked to hang the posters in their windows next to Antelope Valley Fair posters and they say their policy doesn’t allow them to hang posters,” Amer said. “It seems ridiculous to me that people consider the fair more important than getting youth registered to vote and getting educated on these issues.”

Amer has also been allowed to set up a table to accept voter registration forms at Antelope Valley College, but says college officials will not allow her to hand out fliers on the Rock the Vote event because they believe the proceeds are for a profit-based event. Amer says the proceeds are used to fund the bands and any speaker or other event expenses.

Amer cites the 1990 census indicating that the valley has more than 30,000 18- to 30-year-olds, the age group the concert tries to target, as the reason the concert is such an important issue for the area.

Becoming involved in the program because of her mother’s work as an anti-

child-abuse activist working with the Boys & Girls Club of America and the Children's Center of the Antelope Valley, Amer said she began to wonder what happens to the "at-risk youth" once they leave group and foster homes - the same youth that traditionally make up the lowest turnout during the voting season.

"It frightened me to think of what happened to these people once they left the home," Amer said. "It just became more and more important to me to try to get this out. To show that whatever party you are or whatever you believe, you can make a change."

The concert will feature eight local bands including Zero Box, The Bomb Squad, Custom Deluxe, A Pocket Sized Room, Red Letter, Courtesy Flush, and Dead Rats & the Pin Ups. Public service announcements will be shown in between bands.

Guest speakers and representatives will be flown in from around the state and feature organizations including International Concerned Friends & Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Peter Byck, a filmmaker and rights activist; Democratic Club of the High Desert; A.V. Republican League; Green Party; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention; Lancaster Community Homeless Shelter; Greenpeace USA; Amnesty International; Educational Fund to End Handgun Violence; The Family Violence Prevention Fund; Planned Parenthood; The Center for Education Reform; Do Something; National Organization for Women; GLAAD and more. Each group will offer information on their organization and upcoming issues that will affect their group.

The event will be held at Schooners in Lancaster, 43807 15th Street West. Admission is \$4 a person.

To participate in the event as a representative of an organization or a sponsor, call (661) 789-8784 which contains recorded information.

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