

# CONTRA COSTA TIMES

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## Youth summit returning to Los Medanos College

By Paul Burgarino  
Contra Costa Times

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PITTSBURG — People sometimes think they are not accomplishing what they were put on Earth to do. Sean Flikke came to such a realization four years ago.

Flikke, 35, was working as a youth baseball instructor and musician before experiencing an "awakening" that he should be doing something else.

Flikke found his calling mentoring children and became part of the Challenge Day Program, a Concord nonprofit group that holds workshops and programs aimed at helping teens deal with alcohol, drugs and other important issues.

"It's the ultimate 'keeping it real,'" said Flikke, a Berkeley resident. "It gives kids permission to be all of who they are — to be great."

Flikke will share that message before hundreds of area youths during a keynote speech at Saturday's Contra Costa Youth Summit, being hosted by county Supervisor Federal Glover at Los Medanos College.

Growing up as a foster kid in Washington state, Flikke said he faced significant self-doubt as he went from home to home. By the eighth grade, he had lived in eight homes.

"I started to internalize things, that maybe I wasn't lovable or there was something I was doing wrong," Flikke said.

That type of feeling starts for children as babies, he said, noting how kids are told they "are not fast enough, not smart enough, not coordinated enough."

"We learn to dislike exactly who we were born to be," he said.

Flikke's goal is to help youths uncover their potential before becoming bogged down by those doubts. His message ties into one of the event's themes of embracing unity and diversity, said Tonya Smith, Glover's assistant and event organizer.

Despite the array of ethnic, economic and social backgrounds in the county, the summit aims to make each child "feel they are valued without any regard to their differences," Smith said.

The summit also provides an opportunity for young folks to share their thoughts and ideas, hear about state and local issues, talk with elected officials, get information about possible career paths and job training and have fun, Glover said.

Workshops will be held throughout the day on topics such as alcohol-related youth deaths, photography, money management and leadership.

The day will feature an appearance by DJ Lady Ray from FM radio station KMEL 106.1, videotaping of local teen talk show Hwy 4 Peace, free food, airbrushed tattoos, manicures and dance classes.

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IF YOU GO What: Contra Costa Youth Summit for students  
in grades 6-12 When: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday  
Where: Los Medanos College, 2700 E. Leland Road, Pittsburg  
Cost: Free DETAILS: Call Supervisor Federal Glover's office  
at 925-427-8138, or visit the event's MySpace page at [Myspace.com/youthsummit2010](https://myspace.com/youthsummit2010) .

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