

180 Tour returns to Holyoke

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Next Wednesday, Jan. 12, the 180 Tour will begin at Holyoke High School. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for the 7 p.m. concert by VOTA (formerly Casting Pearls) and featured guest speaker Mike Smith.

The 180 Tour, with Casting Pearls, was last in Holyoke in 2006. While the theme is still to encourage students to do a 180 turn from just existing to living a purposeful life, this year's tour will offer new music and speakers.

The tour will be traveling throughout the nation for several months, presenting assemblies at high schools and evening events. The aim is to inspire those in attendance with a universal message that although the future resides in tomorrow, who they are today is what matters most. Within that character today, grows an inspiration to go after their hopes and dreams with hard work and perseverance.

Lyrics by VOTA and the motivational speaking by Mike Smith focus on the fact that little decisions made today will have ripple effects on the school, community and world.

Tickets are on presale now, and are available by calling Rick Cleaver at 970-520-3315 or Jerry Brandt at 970-854-3398 or 970-854-3378.

For more information on the 180 Tour, visit www.180tour.com.

VOTA

VOTA is a modern rock trio made up of Bryan Olesen, Case Maranville and Scott Rutz. From

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Nebraska, the band started to build up their local fanbase in the early 2000s, among teen youth groups, college students and club goers.

“Rock,” their 2002 independent EP, marked the beginning of tireless touring and a massive growth in popularity. A more recent self-titled CD is comprised of 10 songs that range, as Olesen puts it, “from some really rockin’ songs to those with more of an acoustic flair.”

VOTA’s bottom line goal, they say, is to connect with its audience at the deepest spiritual level. Their song lyrics have been inspired by personal experience and touch on the joys, challenges and growth one can experience.

Mike Smith

Speaking in Holyoke for the 180 Tour, Smith will be returning to a rural area he is already familiar with. Smith graduated from Chase County High School in Imperial, Neb. in 2001.

Since graduating, Smith has worked for schools, churches, camps, international relief organizations and nonprofits. He has dedicated countless hours to serving others, especially youth.

In Lincoln, Neb., he founded Bay198, a nonprofit indoor skatepark. Bay198 seeks to mentor and empower local youth and create a space where skaters of all ages can develop their own skills and cultivate an atmosphere for growth, love and community.

Smith has a passion to challenge students to look at their current choices in life and evaluate if those choices will lead them to a positive or negative outcome. He knows firsthand how bad choices can lead to a poor and destructive life. He uses stories of his and his friends’ lives

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growing up to contrast choices made and the consequences later in life.