

E-40 Show Canceled

Written by Westside ID546

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Bay Area rapper E-40 appeared at a downtown dance club in 2001 without incident. He did so again last year.

But this year's appearance was canceled after city officials became worried that the performance could lead to violence.

The rapper was set to appear Saturday night at VIBES, a teen dance club run by Kids Unlimited, which provides after-school care and other services to about 1,000 young people per week.

"We found out this guy was a gangster rapper and that they would be selling alcohol at VIBES," Councilman Skip Knight said. "We thought that was inappropriate for our town...We don't want somebody stirring up a gang issue, and this guy promotes that stuff."

Kids Unlimited director Tom Cole said the city did not force his organization to cancel the event; reports the Associated Press.

"We didn't want to jeopardize our relationship with the police department and the city because of this event," Cole said. "That's the only reason we pulled the show."

Cole said to continue offering free youth programs, Kids Unlimited must rent out the building for concerts, business conventions and educational conferences.

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City officials were apparently unaware that rap artist E-40 had appeared at VIBES twice before. Cole said there were no problems with violence or gangs at the rapper's previous Medford hip hop shows.

"He was really a nice guy," Cole said.

The police and city leaders were also concerned that alcohol would be sold at the show. Concert fliers announcing the E-40 show advertised a beer garden for adults in the upstairs portion of the building.

But Cole said he did not believe alcohol sales would happen at the all-ages concert because of difficulty securing a vendor.

Other events at VIBES, including a Friday night concert featuring Mexican music, provide alcohol to adult concertgoers, Cole said.