



ARISE Fresno with Special Guests Gary Wilkerson and Nicky Cruz Presented by Teen Challenge of Southern California

On Sunday October 13, Teen Challenge of Southern California presents ARISE Fresno, an uplifting event featuring special guests Gary Wilkerson and Nicky Cruz. The event is from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Paul Paul Theatre. Admission is free to Fairgoers who attend.

Gary Wilkerson is the President of World Challenge, an international mission organization that was founded by his father, David Wilkerson. He is also the Founding Pastor of The Springs Church, which he launched in 2009 with a handful of people. He has traveled nationally and internationally at conferences and conducted mission ventures such as church planting, starting orphanages, clinics, feeding programs among the poorest of the poor and the most unreached people of the earth. Gary and his wife Kelly have four children and live in Colorado Springs, CO.

Nicky Cruz was raised in Puerto Rico in his early life where he had a rough upbringing, being abused by his parents who were heavily involved in witchcraft and spiritualism. This led to him being a victim of repeated physical abuse and rejection. At the age of 15, Nicky was exiled to live with an older brother in New York City where he ended up getting caught up in gang violence. Fearless and seemingly immune to physical pain, Cruz rose through the ranks of the notorious Mau Mau gang in Fort Greene, Brooklyn to become their warlord. Lost in the cycle of alcohol and brutal violence, his life took a tragic turn for the worse when his best friend and fellow gang member, Manny, was jumped and stabbed repeatedly and died in the arms of Nicky.

No authority figure could reach the young warlord, until he met a preacher named David Wilkerson. Wilkerson disarmed Nicky by showing him something he'd never known before: relentless love. His interest in the young thug was persistent. Nicky beat him up, spat on him, and even threatened his life, yet the love of God prevailed in David. One night God broke through to Nicky and his life was forever changed. After years of salvation, Nicky Cruz continues to connect with today's people of all ages, backgrounds and denominations. For nearly 60 years, he has been traveling around the world preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is estimated that he has spoken in person to tens of millions of people. His life story has been told in the bestselling book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, and in the movie of the same title. Nicky Cruz is the President of Nicky Cruz Outreach, and Executive Producer of TRUCE, an aggressive international evangelism ministry dedicated to reaching urban communities. The father of four daughters and ten grandchildren, Nicky lives in Colorado Springs with his wife, Gloria.

More recently, Cruz was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the Latin American Theological Seminary, as well as Doctor of Philosophy in Christian Therapy from Dayspring Christian University. He is also the author of 18 books, including the all-time Christian classic, *Run Baby Run*, published in 1968 and translated into more than 40 different languages worldwide. *A Thousand Pieces*, a full-length Hollywood feature film based on his life, is in pre-production.

Established in 1963, **Teen Challenge of Southern California**, this non-profit organization is one of the largest and most effective substance abuse recovery and prevention programs of its kind. Teen Challenge of Southern California has nine regional facilities with seven strategically placed residential



facilities throughout Southern California. They have served over hundreds of thousands of men, women and children through its resident and outreach programs. This non-profit relies entirely on the generous donations, funding and volunteer efforts of individuals and organizations throughout Southern California in order to offer services at no cost to the individual.

The Big Fresno Fair is excited to host such an incredibly uplifting event and look forward to sharing this unique experience and message.

ARISE Fresno – Sunday October 13 @ 12p-3p – Ticket Price: Free