

# Tulare County Office of Education

*Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools*

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For Immediate Release

**Contact:** Pamela Kunze  
Public Information Officer  
559/733-6606

## Tulare County Office of Education announces: **National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week in Tulare County**

For the past six years, thousands of schools, organizations, businesses — even entire communities — across the nation have sponsored or participated in programs during the third week in October in order to build awareness of CHARACTER COUNTS! Tulare County has long since been recognized as a leader in these endeavors, and this year is no exception.

The Tulare County Office of Education and County Superintendent of Schools, Jim Vidak, are proud sponsors of the highly successful CHARACTER COUNTS! program here in Tulare County. A nationwide initiative of the Josephson Institute of Ethics, CHARACTER COUNTS! is based on the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.

The Six Pillars of Character transcend cultural, socioeconomic and religious differences we might have. These values, along with principled behaviors which give them life through our thoughts and deeds, provide the common ground upon which character will be measured. Quite simply, the Six Pillars of Character are for all of us

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This year CHARACTER COUNTS! week is October 20 – 26. If you look around Tulare County you'll find banners stretched across Main Street, draped from water towers -- even displayed at a local credit union. Look closely and you'll even see bumper stickers on Visalia Police Department vehicles that proclaim: "CHARACTER COUNTS!"

Although, here in Tulare County, thanks largely to County Superintendent Jim Vidak, that may just seem like business as usual.

Since its introduction in Tulare County Schools in January of 1994, CHARACTER COUNTS! has literally become a part of the moral landscape of Tulare County. Murals can be viewed on the walls of Kaweah Delta Hospital, Burton and Alta Vista Elementary Schools in Porterville, Houston Elementary School in Visalia, Goshen Elementary School, in Mooney Grove Park, Pixley Elementary School, Golden Valley Elementary School in Oroquieta, Dinuba High School, and Kaweah Continuation High School in Exeter. The Six Pillars themselves can be seen in the courtyard of Cherry Avenue Middle School in Tulare. Pillar Square in Mooney Grove Park, the country's largest single permanent monument to CHARACTER COUNTS!, has served as the venue for numerous events including over 40 weddings.

To learn more about CHARACTER COUNTS!, visit the Tulare County Office of Education website at [www.tcoe.org](http://www.tcoe.org) or the national CHARACTER COUNTS! website at [www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)

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