

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

October 13, 2006

Media Alert

Contact: Robert Herman
Public Information Officer
559/733-6606
cell: 559/901-3445

Tulare County Office of Education Announces: CHARACTER COUNTS! Week Begins October 15 Record-Breaking Number of Tulare County Students Nominated as "Kids of Character."

The Tulare County Office of Education proudly joins schools across America in celebrating CHARACTER COUNTS! Week October 15-21, 2006. CHARACTER COUNTS! Week is held each year during the third week of October in support of the program, which teaches students ethical decision-making skills based on six core values (or pillars) – Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.

To prepare for CHARACTER COUNTS! Week in Tulare County, the Tulare County Office of Education invites schools and community members to nominate "Kids of Character" – students they observe exhibiting one of the program's six core values. The nomination process is opened in early September and supported by the *Visalia Times-Delta*, which prints nomination forms. All nominations are collected and reviewed by a committee of educators and community members. At the close of the nomination process on October 6, the Tulare County Office of Education received 7,571 "Kids of Character" – over 1200 more than nominated last year.

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Page 2

Nominated students are recognized in a number of ways. Through committee recommendations, one student – representing each pillar – is selected for a feature story in the *Visalia Times-Delta* each day of CHARACTER COUNTS! Week. An additional 100 students are selected to appear in a two-page, color ad representing youth from throughout Tulare County. In addition, all students nominated receive a Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! certificate and t-shirt, and a CHARACTER COUNTS! pencil.

“The record-breaking number of "Kids of Character" this year is a spectacular demonstration of the community's continued support of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “The support we receive from schools, parents, employers and civic organizations is the reason the Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! program is a national model.”

Members of the media may request a list of the “Kids of Character” nominees from the communities they serve by calling CHARACTER COUNTS! Coordinator Kelley Petty at (559) 740-4304. For more information, please contact Robert Herman at (559) 733-6606.

TCOE

Rel. 49/06