



## Thank you for helping us celebrate Tulare County Students of Character

On Saturday, October 26, the *Visalia Times-Delta/Tulare Advance-Register* published a two-page ad highlighting the school representatives (one from each of the 143 schools submitted) chosen during the 2019 Kids of Character Week, October 21-26. Listed below are the descriptions written by the nominators for each of the 143 students.

View the [two-page ad](#).

View a list of the [nearly 6,000 students nominated](#) this year.

View the [honorees and finalists in each pillar category](#) celebrated at the 2019 Provident-Salierno Family Foundation Kids of Character Reception.

### **Aimee Hernandez**

Cutler Elementary School,  
Cutler  
**CARING**  
nominated by Amanda  
Hiyama



Nominator states, “Aimee is an exemplary student who is a shining example to her peers of what it means to be a caring student. Aimee is more than willing to help her classmates in and outside of the classroom, whether it is helping with simple tasks such as tying shoes or sharpening a pencil or helping students read difficult text and making sure they can easily log into their Chromebooks. Aimee is always ready with a smile on her face to help anyone in need. She is a student that we can all count on when we need a helping hand. If Aimee notices that a student is having a hard day, she does not hesitate to try to help them feel better by offering them kind words or lending an ear to allow them to talk about why they are feeling sad. Aimee understands the power of offering to just be a friend to someone who may otherwise find it difficult to make connections with peers. It is a blessing to have her in my classroom and I am excited to watch her grow, not only academically, but also as a kind and caring individual.”

### **Arshpeet Pannu**

Dinuba High School,  
Dinuba  
**CARING**  
nominated by Tonya  
Pennebaker

Nominator states, “Arshpeet is caring in every way. She is always volunteering and helping others. Arshpeet helps organize various fundraising events on campus involving issues such as mental health awareness and breast cancer awareness. Last year, she helped organize our blood drive which collected over 145 pints of blood for our community.



Arshpeet volunteers at Kaweah Delta Hospital on Saturdays. She has volunteered many times with Adaptive Sports with Children's Hospital. Arshpeet is the student that is always looking for ways to help others. She is caring in everything she does. She comes in before school and stays after school to help others. When we have new students join our school, she volunteers to take them around and includes them at lunch and breaks."

### **Makaylah Soto**

Grand View Elementary  
School, Dinuba

#### **CARING**

nominated by Sarah Joy  
Naylor



Nominator states, "Makaylah, a second grade student at Grand View Elementary School, demonstrates her caring character every day in class. She is faithful to help others around her, whether it is with schoolwork, clean up time, or noticing an unhappy emotion and offering comfort and a listening ear. Makaylah also cares deeply about making sure that she and others around her have the opportunity to learn at school. More than once, I have caught Makaylah gently reminding her neighbor to listen and stay on task. It is clear that Makaylah does this out of a sense of caring about the learning opportunities of herself and others. Makaylah has generously offered her time after school to help with classroom tasks that need to be done to help prepare for the next school day. By noticing others and her environment, then choosing to act in helpful ways, Makaylah demonstrates her caring character at school every day."

### **Ricardo Alberto**

Jefferson Elementary  
School, Dinuba

#### **CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Severo Romo



Nominator states, "Ricardo has two partners who receive his support throughout the day. Aside from always doing his work, he accepts new challenges and is part of the GATE program. Ricardo gives his best with a positive attitude and can be counted on."

### **Aubrey Orozco**

John F. Kennedy  
Elementary School, Dinuba

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Tayler  
Laemmlen



Nominator states, "Aubrey is a very responsible young lady. She comes to school every day with a big, bright, beautiful smile on her face. I can always count on Aubrey to be on task in whatever I am asking her to do. There is never a moment where I doubt she is doing the right thing at the right time. She is an example to her peers, and always tries her best to go above and beyond what she is asked to do."

### **Mateo Castro**

Lincoln Elementary School,  
Dinuba

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Tara  
Bustamante



Nominator states, "Mateo is an exceptional young person. He comes to school every day ready to learn and ready to be of service to others, which is rare for his age. I can always expect to see Mateo first thing in the morning, right at 8:00 even though class does not start until 8:30. He uses the extra 30 minutes every day to work toward his reading goals. He has already read several books significantly above his reading level because of his interest and dedication! Nevertheless, his dedication and responsibility do not stop at what he does for his own learning. Mateo is constantly taking responsibility for others, as well. I can tell that he wants everyone to feel included and cared for. Once, as we headed out for an extra recess time (a very special reward), I saw Mateo walking with a student that was using crutches for a sprained ankle. I saw



Mateo lean over and ask the student, 'Can I sit with you instead?' Mateo loves to run and play and is a very active, social boy. However, at that moment he prioritized including that student. I was inspired! Mateo has exceptional character, and he intentionally exhibits it often."

**Nathan Cruz**  
Roosevelt Elementary  
School, Dinuba  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Monique  
Montalvo



Nominator states, "Nathan is a very special student at Roosevelt Elementary. Nathan has Autism. He excels in academics. He can read higher-level books, does math, I read on the Chromebooks, and loves to sing. Nathan checks in on a visual schedule when he arrives at school. His daily schedule is preloaded for him to know what the day looks like for him. Nathan attends school from 8:00-2:10 in Mrs. Derfelt's classroom. He visits RSP twice a day and has help from instructional aids in his regular classroom. Nathan has overcome many challenges throughout his life and continues to have a positive attitude about most things, except keeping his shoes on. His favorite subject is lunchtime with his friend Antonio, who also has Autism. I believe that Nathan deserves this award for responsibility because he tries hard to always do what he is supposed to be doing. If you visited Mrs. Derfelt's classroom, you could see how hard Nathan works to keep up in his classroom. His timers go off all day long to let him know when it is time to work, time for a break, time to put his shoes back on, and time to go home. He usually has a positive attitude and enjoys learning new things."

**Naija Taj**  
Sierra Vista High School,  
Dinuba  
**RESPECT**  
nominated by Linda Danner



Nominator states, "Naija is respectful to all of her fellow classmates, as well as her teachers. She speaks politely when asking for clarification of directions. She encourages her classmates to be respectful in class as well as out of class. Naija is part of a group of students who have been working with the school district's Director of Food Services to improve the quality of cafeteria food here at our school. With Naija's respectful tone during academic discussions and willingness to use her voice, progress has been made in making improvements in the quality of the food, which has resulted in a new menu for our campus. Students and staff are extremely grateful for the hard work Naija and her team have put in on this project. Naija has been a great addition to our school and we are so glad she is here. We are better because she is part of our campus."

**Isabella Maciel**  
Ducor Union Elementary  
School, Ducor  
**TRUSTWORTHINESS**  
nominated by Rachel  
Centeno



Nominator states, "Isabella exemplifies the Character Counts! award of Trustworthiness because she is very honest, always tells the truth, and is very helpful in the classroom. She is kind, well-mannered, and constantly wanting to help others that need a friend. When she was in the Transitional Kindergarten classroom, she was very scared and nervous. But over time, she has overcome that fear and it has made a tremendous academic impact for her now that she's in Kindergarten. She is always ready to learn, always has a smile on her face, and is a great student. She demonstrate the characteristics of a great student leader."

**Adan Mendoza Urive**  
Alila School, Earlimart

Nominator states, "Adan is a respectful student by treating other students with kindness. He also is very respectful to me

**RESPECT**

nominated by Kimberly  
Avila



and other adults. He pays attention in class and participates when asked to. Adan shows not only the pillar of respect, but he also demonstrates other pillars of character. He is a trustworthy, responsible, and fair student. He plays well with others and is always willing to help. He is a student that I know I can trust with any task and he will work hard to be successful."

**Yulianna Ramirez**

Earlimart Elementary  
School, Earlimart

**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Robert Resa



Nominator states, "Yulianna has been nominated for this award because of her consistent dedication and performance in school. She exemplifies responsibility because she arrives to school on time, prepared and ready to learn. She has a positive attitude and is always kind, caring, and compassionate with her classmates. She takes responsibility for her education by completing her independent work with quality. I can always count on her to help with extra jobs in the classroom. I know that with her consistent dedication to being a responsible second grade student that she will continue to excel in all areas of her schooling."

**Ariana Mendoza**

Earlimart Middle School,  
Earlimart

**CARING**

nominated by Mr. Flores



Nominator states, "Ariana is a well-mannered and polite young lady. She has demonstrated kindness in my classroom by offering up her own personal pet turtle for adoption by our class so that her classmates may enjoy a class pet."

**Brandon Pestoni**

Exeter Union High School,  
Exeter

**RESPECT**

nominated by Amanda  
Ogata



Nominator states, "Brandon is a committed, hard-working, and respectful individual in all aspects of his life. He has been a part of my water polo and swim programs for the past 3 years and I have not met a teenage boy who has more respect for himself and others during my 20-year tenure. He is quick to help his teammates, whether it is in the pool or in their personal lives. He helps new players learn the rules of the game and takes the time to show others how to better their game. He is always very welcoming to new players and treats them all respectfully. Brandon is very patient and does not yell or lose his temper. He listens to his teammates and coaches, alike, as he is considerate of the input and opinions of others. He is honest and respectful to his coaches. Brandon strives to build strong relationships on and off the field, which has created a level of trust and confidence with his team. He is quick to offer encouragement to others to persevere. He always has his priorities straight, as he does not miss a practice or game and maintains a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. Brandon always does what is right and looks out for his teammates, as well."

**Andrew Plyman**

Lincoln Elementary School,  
Exeter

**RESPECT**

nominated by Casey  
Munger

Nominator states, "Andrew is an all-around outstanding student. In addition to academic excellence, Andrew is a natural leader. He often steps up within his group and demonstrates patience and compassion while working with his classmates. I often catch Andrew going above and beyond to help students by tying their shoes or offering up one of his classroom supplies to help solve another student's dilemma."



These are rare and precious characteristics. I feel privileged to have Andrew in my classroom. He is a wonderful, hardworking individual that adds an exceptional dynamic to our classroom learning community."

### **Kaylee Myers**

Rocky Hill Elementary  
School, Exeter

### **FAIRNESS**

nominated by Katie Kirby



Nominator states, "Kaylee is one student in my class that I have noticed is always showing the character trait of Fairness. I've seen her take turns using supplies in the classroom and while playing at recess. Kaylee is also considerate of the feelings of others. Her partners trust her and are open to sharing ideas with her because they know she will listen. She encourages participation and cooperation by letting everyone have a voice to take part in the assignment. Kaylee is one who will share her way of doing an assignment if no one else is willing. If she notices something is not fair, she will let you know because she stands up for what is right. By not always pushing to be first all the time, I see the character trait of Fairness in Kaylee. Students in other classes realize that she is fair and does not play favorites or take advantage of others. This is the sign of a genuinely fair and just person."

### **Henry Wesslen**

Sierra View Junior  
Academy, Exeter

### **CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Diana Ward



Nominator states, "Henry has shown respect for the spirit of democracy. He always sets a positive school example by observing the letter and spirit of the school rules. Henry is a unique student with a great sense of social and academic duty."

### **Carlos Cabrera**

Deep Creek Academy,  
Farmersville

### **CARING**

nominated by Laura Byrd



Nominator states, "Carlos is a student who is always willing to help staff, students, or anyone in need. He is extremely respectful. He always thinks of others before himself. His manners are remarkable. He is always saying 'please', 'thank you', 'yes sir', 'yes ma'am'. He is a student that anyone can count on."

### **Angel Gallardo**

Farmersville High School,  
Farmersville

### **CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Timothy  
Johnson



Nominator states, "Angel is truly an outstanding candidate for this nomination. Not only is he consistently respectful to me as a teacher in the classroom, but he is also respectful to every student around him. His citizenship is impeccable. Angel is also dedicated to his guitar, school studies, and practices his music autonomously and faithfully. I have never seen anything except positive work ethics from Angel and I wish I had 20 more students just like him. If allowed, I would nominate him for all six of the pillars."

### **Sofia Rodriguez**

Freedom Elementary  
School, Farmersville

### **TRUSTWORTHINESS**

nominated by Sebastian  
Santillan

Nominator states, "Sofia is one of the most trustworthy students in my class. If given a task by an adult, you can expect Sofia to complete the task systematically. This student is honest, always tells the truth, and keeps her promises. Every time I have something important I need to finish, I can count on this student to help me. Her friends know they can trust her



**Mia Vazquez**

George L. Snowden  
Elementary School,  
Farmersville

**CARING**

nominated by Juanita  
Hernandez

when they tell her something that is a secret. When Sofia makes a mistake or something goes wrong, I know I can count on her to tell me the truth. If I send her to retrieve something confidential from another adult, I know she will keep it confidential. Sofia has earned the reputation of being trustworthy and is great example of how to be trustworthy."



Nominator states, "Mia is a sweet little girl that thinks of others before herself. One day, she gave me a colored picture. I receive these occasionally from many of my former students. This one was a little special because it came at a time when I needed it. Over the 3-day holiday weekend, I felt overwhelmed and stressed. The next day, she came in late and handed me a note with what I thought was a tardy slip. Instead, it was a beautiful note with the word "HOPE" written on it. After things settled down, I read it and it made me smile. She had written me a note that said, "May God bless you and give you hope." That turned my day around. Later that day, I noticed she had a haircut so I asked her if she cut her hair. She said yes and then told me she cut it and donated it. Wow! What an amazing child she is."

**Dalila Nuñez-Alvarez**

JE Hester Elementary  
School, Farmersville

**CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Kristy Setser



Nominator states, "Dalila is an excellent example of what a good citizen must possess. This young lady is always thinking of others and how she can help them become awesome individuals. She takes the initiative to share her knowledge with other students on how to be more productive in the classroom, as well as focusing on herself and how she can grow as a caring and responsible citizen. Her mother teaches on our campus, but you would not know it since Dalila respects her mother's position and knows she is at school to focus on her own individual learning. I am extremely proud of Dalila."

**Mayra Ortega-Rodriguez**

Ivanhoe Elementary  
School, Ivanhoe

**CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Jeff Housman



Nominator states, "Mayra is the type of student who makes a teacher's job easier. She is always doing the right thing. She works hard, remains focused, and completes all of her tasks to the best of her abilities. She is always offering to help in any way she can. Within our classroom, she serves as a peer monitor, student-translator, and group leader. She is responsible for making sure her group members update their daily planner, remain on-task, and quickly change materials during our transition times. Outside of our classroom, she remains very active on our campus. She is a student council member, and sometimes makes the morning announcements over the school intercom. She participates, and often leads, many school-wide activities including our jog-a-thon, power store, lunchtime activities, and much more. Outside of school, she is a junior staff member at the Boys and Girls club each day after school. Mayra is a very responsible young lady who is a great asset to our classroom, school, and community."

**Jocelyn Ledezma**

Kings River Union School,  
Kingsburg

**CARING**

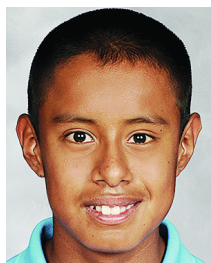
nominated by Kristi Blatner

Nominator states, "Jocelyn is a uniquely gifted student who has, through family circumstances, been forced to keep up her achievement while helping her family cope with a dire situation. Three years ago, Jocelyn's younger sister was diagnosed with



leukemia. Jocelyn was in the third grade, yet was a great help to her parents who were coping with this awful diagnosis. Jocelyn became her sister's biggest cheerleader, her mother's greatest helper at home, and a Kings River scholar. She managed to be at school each day, even when worry about her sister gripped the family. When she arrived home after school, she would complete her homework and then help her sister keep up with hers. She was her sister's only playmate when the chemotherapy demanded quarantine. She helped her sister transition back to school after being gone almost two years and to this day, continues to check on her progress and her well-being. Jocelyn is nominated for caring because she has, at a young age, learned the value of putting others before herself."

**Hanival Osorio**  
Jefferson Elementary  
School, Lindsay  
**FAIRNESS**  
nominated by Viviane  
Rosales



Nominator states, "Hanival is a fair person. He does not judge and he is great friend. Hanival is a great soccer player and he cares for his friends. He supports you whenever you need help and he is a great person to talk with."

**Natalia Pratti**  
Lindsay High School,  
Lindsay  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
nominated by Roger  
Gonzales



Nominator states, "I have been impressed with Natalia's zeal in regards to student government. She is currently the sophomore class vice president at Lindsay High School. After a lackluster freshman class council last year, Natalia has spearheaded the recruitment and organization of the sophomore class. She has been the catalyst for regular leadership meetings, actively recruited classmates to get involved during club rush, and submitted valid arguments on how to increase class involvement. Natalia's continued efforts in student government and the promotion of it bode well for the class of 2022 at Lindsay High School. She is what we want all young, student leaders to be."

**Natalie Miranda**  
Roosevelt Elementary  
School, Lindsay  
**CARING**  
nominated by Claudia Lara



Nominator states, "Since the first day of school, Natalie has been a positive role model. She quickly befriended learners who were new to our school. Her positivity has encouraged others to open their hearts and be understanding of differences."

**Isabella Acevedo**  
El Monte Middle School,  
Orosi  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Carol Kidd



Nominator states, "Isabella makes sure she completes all her work and if she needs extra time, she comes in on her lunch to complete it. She does not blame others for things that go wrong; instead, she admits when she makes a mistake and works to rectify it. She is prepared for class, not only with her materials, but also with a growth mindset."

**Miah Lopez**  
Golden Valley Elementary  
School, Orosi  
**CARING**



Nominator states, "Miah displays her genuine and loving heart on her sleeve. It amazes me how she goes above and beyond to make sure that all of her classmates are taken care of. One of the many examples that I want to point out is her love for

nominated by Jaymar  
Bitanga



another student of mine who needs extra support. Miah shows up extra early to school to make sure that her classmate gets to class on time and takes care of the simple tasks that she may need help with, such as putting on her hijab, getting her breakfast, and sharpening her pencil. Miah usually puts off her lunch and lunch recess so that she can take her to the nurse's restroom. At the end of the day, Miah walks her to the bus stop and stays there until the bus arrives to make sure she is seated safely and away from any type of bullying. Being helpful, kind, and generous is just scratching the surface. Miah's heart is made of gold, where words cannot explain."

### **Mireya Meza**

Palm Elementary School,  
Orosi

### **CARING**

nominated by Carol Montag



Nominator states, "Mireya has been a great friend by supporting a fellow student who has missed many days of school because of medical issues. Mireya has been there by her friend's side. She has been helping by translating and helping her catch up with classwork. She is her friend inside and outside the classroom. Mireya is always watching out for her since she is unable to move quickly. Mireya show us what caring is all about by being a friend in any way she can."

### **Rodrigo Trejo**

Pixley Elementary School,  
Pixley

### **CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by James Lee



Nominator states, "Rodrigo has been an exemplary student so far this year. He is attentive in class, and always strives to be the perfect student. The short time he was in the Cadets last year, he showed he had a natural ability to command. This year I am lucky enough to get him in my classroom. On a daily basis, Rodrigo displays his character in ALL pillars of Character Counts, not because he wants rewards or desires recognition, but just because he is naturally that kind of student. He's always first to finish, then assists others or goes onto new projects. He never interrupts me nor any other student. He tells the truth and addresses adults with respect. He practices good sportsmanship and cares about the people around him."

### **Emily Thompson**

Pixley Middle School, Pixley

### **CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Deborah  
McCaskill



Nominator states, "Emily is part of the leadership foundation on our campus and has consistently demonstrated a genuine love for Pixley Middle School. She helps build a culture of acceptance for all students and seeks out those who do not easily engage in activities to help them develop a sense of belonging. Her energy level is quite high and she certainly has a deep service mindset. Emily serves as the Student Council President and has truly developed her leadership skills. She is a strong communicator and has a natural ability to harness the energy and support of others on campus. Emily speaks of a better community, not by watching others create it, but by developing ideas of how she and her peers can be better citizens. This demonstrates exceptional accountability and responsibility. When off campus at events, she takes her role as an ambassador of the district very seriously and demonstrates all of the qualities we work so hard as an educational team to help our students develop. However, it is her respect for herself, her education, community, school, and family that definitely sets her apart from others. Through her actions as a student leader, scholar, and citizen of our school and community, Emily demonstrates just how much she values the opportunities that she has been given."



**Maura Alvarez**

Pleasant View Elementary  
School, Poplar

**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Tashima  
Irving



Nominator states, "In first grade, many students are just learning how to be responsible. 'Doing what you are supposed to do' can be quite hard for a 7-year-old at times. However, Maura has no problem displaying responsible character every day. As Maura completes tasks, she will politely assist others so they can do the same. She has become my number one go-to person. She takes care of the headphones and makes sure the Chromebooks and iPads are laid out and ready for the day. While there are others who help, Maura is the leader of them all. Maura is good at teaching others how to take care of school property and follow the rules. I can always count on Maura to be on task. She raises her hand to speak and always follows directions. Maura is the perfect Student Assistant. Although, she is assertively responsible, at times she is quite shy. When I returned from being out on school business, her name was written down as one of the most helpful and on-task students. I am truly proud of this young lady. Not only is she responsible at school, but she is also responsible at home. As the older sibling, she helps take care of her younger brother and sister. Her mother truly appreciates all she does. I look forward to seeing Maura grow into a wonderful young lady of Great Character, which will impact those she comes in contact with. Her Character really counts and matters to all of us."

**Betzenia Moreno**

Alta Vista School,  
Porterville

**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Vanessa  
Reilly



Nominator states, "Betzenia is a student who has learned to give of her time. Like most teenagers, doing something altruistic is not innate. However, as she has moved from 7th to 8th grade, a great change has come over her. She is not 'too cool' to walk her little brother to school. She is very protective of him, making sure he walks on the inside of her away from traffic. She volunteered for three weeks during summer school to help small groups in kindergarten and first grade, and assisted teachers in getting their rooms ready for cleaning. When school began, she helped teachers get rooms ready for the new school year. She stepped outside of her shy box and ran for a Student Council position. Leading the way, she worked on a project with other students to display messages about our PBIS motto. Though her public service hours are done for the year, she continues to volunteer her time to help teachers and students complete tasks and goals."

**Anaih Andrade**

Bartlett Middle School,  
Porterville

**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Michelle  
Gallagher



Nominator states, "Anaih exemplifies all of the pillars of character, but I will say that she is one of the most responsible eighth graders I have met. Every day she has her supplies, and if she says she is going to bring a special pencil or paint from home for the class to use, she does it. She takes the time to complete work by deadlines and will help other students when she is done with her own. I know that if I ask her to help put equipment away, she will never ask why, she just helps. She is not one to come up with excuses when something goes wrong; she will take responsibility to fix it. She is so responsible that she often will fix or clean up the messes others have left. Anaih is very careful with the supplies or equipment that does not belong to her. She is always early to each class; I do not think she has ever been late. She is a great team member and does not put down other students. At

home, Anaih is responsible enough to take care of her 6-year-old brother when her family needs to run a quick errand."

**Jamie Beeman**  
Bellevue Elementary  
School, Porterville  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Amanda  
Ridenour



Nominator states, "Jamie is always on task, no matter how rowdy the class can get. She always finishes her assignments on time. Jamie will volunteer to help others when she finishes early. When I need to be out of the classroom for training, I know I can count on Jamie to help the sub. Jamie is on our Student Leadership Team and she sets a great example for our younger students to follow. She speaks only kind words and she cares about her peers. Jamie fits into all of the categories of Character Counts, but she fits Responsibility the most."

**Mauro Maciel**  
Burton Elementary School,  
Porterville  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Ashley  
McMillan



Nominator states, "Mauro is a model student. He always makes sure he is on task and understanding to the highest levels. Mauro is not afraid to ask questions when he needs clarification and he truly strives to help his group members in any way possible. He is a team player. He is always setting an example of what it means to be a Bullpup by being kind, respectful, responsible, and safe. Mauro brings a different view to our class conversations and is always thinking outside the box. He is always finding a way to apply what we are learning to a real life scenario and he explains his thinking in a way his peers can understand. His greatest joy is being a big brother. I love hearing stories about his little sister, the things he teaches her and how he tries his hardest to win points and tickets in class so he can get things she likes out of our classroom treasure box. He really is a selfless boy, even at such a young age. Mauro is also very committed and passionate about the things he is interested in. He joined band this year and started writing his own book! Mauro exemplifies ALL of the Character Counts! traits. I know he will do amazing things in the future."

**Eleazar Morales**  
Burton Middle School,  
Porterville  
**TRUSTWORTHINESS**  
nominated by Albert Solis



Nominator states, "Eleazar was voted by his fellow classmates to be locker manager. His job is to open and close the lockers during P.E. because, as the P.E. teacher, I cannot while I am in class. Eleazar has taken this job to the next level by showing up to my class 30 seconds after the bell rings and out of breath. He asks if there are any reminders for the class in case they need to get an iPad or a notebook for the day. Eleazar is always in a good mood and gets along with everyone in class. He is also supportive of other students in a leadership role. Every morning he asks how the other P.E. teacher and I are doing, and asks Mrs. Brichta if there is anything she needs."

**Amairani Minguela**  
Butterfield Charter School,  
Porterville  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Ashley Ray



Nominator states, "Amy moved here from a different city and, instead of worrying about not fitting in, she dove in head first with schoolwork. She had credits to complete for her junior year and did not hesitate to get her work done. She comes in multiple times a week, even though she is an independent study student and is only required to come in once a week. She always completes her work on time and asks for extra work to complete. In addition to attending Butterfield Charter School, Amy is taking two courses at Porterville College. Amy also has a job where she works 20 or more hours per week. I am extremely proud of Amy and her hard work and dedication."

**Chloe Ross**Granite Hills High School,  
Porterville**CITIZENSHIP**nominated by Tiffany Talbot  
Ross, Rich Lambie

Nominator states, "Chloe is an outstanding academic student and athlete that leads on and off the field, but she is an even better citizen. Chloe was able to witness her older sister create a project for kids at River Ridge Cancer Camp when she was in grade school. Her older sister worked as a counselor during summers throughout high school and was inspired to fundraise and made knot blankets for each of the 65 cancer patients that attended. The project was called Heart Warmers and it inspired Chloe when she worked at a Porterville Women's Shelter Valentine's Day Party as a freshman. Chloe was told that evening that most of the women and children had left their homes with next to nothing to escape domestic violence. It was at that point she decided that she wanted to make blankets for the shelter for Christmas. Chloe fundraised and used her own money from tutoring to make 24 blankets, and delivered them on Christmas Eve. When we returned to school, Chloe said, 'I want to start a club of my own and teach others how to make these blankets because we could really make a difference.' Chloe asked three of her friends if they were interested in being part of an officer team and within a few months the Heart Warmers Club was born. The club meets one day per week during lunch with 35-40 kids regularly attending and sitting around tables making blankets."

**Alexa Ramos**

Hope School, Porterville

**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Flor Martinez



Nominator states, "Alexa has faced many obstacles and challenges. She has proven to be the epitome of determination and responsibility. From the moment she walked into my class, she spewed hope and sheer determination. Her desire to learn and do well has sparked that little light within her. She has accepted the challenges and has been working endlessly. In a short time, she has overcome her fears and is proving to be an exceptional learner. She has developed great work habits and has taken an active role in her learning. She has taken ownership of her actions and is demonstrating integrity and honesty."

**Julian Alcaraz**John J. Doyle Elementary  
School, Porterville**RESPONSIBILITY**nominated by Angelica  
Mendez

Nominator states, "Julian demonstrates responsibility in everything he does, in and out of the classroom. He is always on task, cooperative, and is open and willing to take on new challenges. My respect and admiration for him grew when he was chosen to explain his strategy to a math problem in front of administration and lead teachers from our district. Despite feeling nervous and being taken out of his comfort zone, he demonstrated responsibility by doing what he was instructed to do. He courageously walked up to the white board and explained his strategy to everybody. He did amazing. Life is about making choices and we are in charge of our choices. A responsible person chooses to fulfill their duties and pursues excellence because they know these qualities open up opportunities in life. Julian may not realize yet the impact this pillar has on his future, but he practices sufficient self-control to be respected and admired by his peers and school staff."

**Jayden Lemus**Los Robles Elementary  
School, Porterville

Nominator states, "Jayden is an incredible student who constantly demonstrates caring in the classroom. At such a young age, it is truly astonishing to witness the level of care that he exhibits in and out of the classroom. I can always count



**CARING**

nominated by Edith Torres



on Jayden to be kind and generous to others. Jayden checks up on students who appear to be having a bad day or are feeling lonely. He initiates conversations with them and makes sure everybody has somebody to play with."

**Jenna Keller**Monache High School,  
Porterville**CITIZENSHIP**nominated by Carmel  
Spaulding

Nominator states, "Jenna is a deserving candidate for the Character Counts Award in the pillar of citizenship. Jenna currently serves as vice president of the Monache FFA Chapter. She has a tremendous work ethic, and her word is her bond. Additionally, she is very proactive in overseeing many areas of our chapter, and often goes above and beyond to make sure that all activities and meetings are going smoothly. Jenna is always doing her share to help her agriculture family and the school community. She exhibits the same dedication in ASB and as a member of the Monache tennis team. She is a very conscientious, dedicated individual who makes sure that she always does her part in helping out her fellow officers, advisors, and peers."

**Nathaniel Rodriguez**Monte Vista Elementary  
School, Porterville**TRUSTWORTHINESS**nominated by Gordon  
Plaisted

Nominator states, "Nathaniel always shows trustworthiness in my classroom. If I ask Nate to do something or give him directions, he is always ready to follow through. If I ask him if he is off task, he always responds with an honest answer of 'Yes, Mr. Plaisted, but I will get back on track'. I trust Nate with tasks inside and outside the classroom. If there are times I need something from the office, I know that I can send Nate and he will accomplish his task quickly and efficiently. He is a young man with trustworthiness and integrity."

**Kaitlyn Killebrew**Oak Grove Elementary  
School, Porterville**CARING**

nominated by Alyssa Seifert



Nominator states, "Kaitlyn goes above and beyond to care for others. We have a student in our class who has autism and it is amazing to watch Kaitlyn be a helpful friend to him. She is always making sure he is taken care of, leading him in the right direction, clarifying that he understands, involving him in conversations, and helps him feel included all the time. It is amazing watching her care for him and make sure he feels comfortable. I watch her and wish to myself at times that I could be more like her. It is incredible to watch her so naturally value another student and make sure his days are positive!"

**Maria Perez**Olive Street Elementary  
School, Porterville**CARING**nominated by Amber  
Morales

Nominator states, "Maria is a very caring person to others. She walks her little sister to class every day and is always willing to help in the classroom."

**Alexander Romero**Pioneer Middle School,  
Porterville**RESPONSIBILITY**nominated by Analia  
McGlasson

Nominator states, "It was a difficult decision to choose a pillar for Alexander. Not only does he do his work in a timely manner, but he also is well liked by his peers. He has nearly all 'A's in his classes and is a very conscientious student. Alex will definitely be an asset to our society. I look forward to seeing



**Stephanie Moron**  
Porterville High School,  
Porterville  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Jonathon  
Dodson

what life holds for him. You can tell by his grades that he takes school seriously. I am proud of his accomplishments."



Nominator states, "Stephanie is a hard-working, responsible student who places great importance in her education. This is reflected in her grades and commitment to the Porterville Academy of Business and Finance (PAB). When talking with my fellow PAB teachers about nominating a student for Character Counts, Stephanie's name was brought up by all of her teachers. Although Stephanie exemplifies all the pillars of the Character Counts!, we determined that Stephanie most exemplifies responsibility. Since her first day as a member of PAB, Stephanie has gone above and beyond what she is supposed to do. She comes to class every day prepared and ready to participate. Her teachers can count on her to take initiative in the classroom and be a leader on cross-curricular projects. Stephanie arrives to school 50 minutes early each day as a volunteer to operate the student store before school. She continues to show herself to be a person of high character and deserves to be recognized for being an excellent student."

**Selena Velasquez**  
Roche Avenue Elementary  
School, Porterville  
**RESPECT**  
nominated by Cassie Rapp



Nominator states, "Selena is consistently on task, engaged, and respectful during class, as well as outside of class. She shows the utmost respect to her teacher's and peers. Selena is not afraid to stand up to bullies and remind them to treat others with respect. She is brave to inform her teacher when she witnesses bullying. She is there to protect her fellow classmates and other students on campus."

**Melany Esquerre**  
Santa Fe Elementary  
School, Porterville  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
nominated by Crystal  
Gonzalez



Nominator states, "Melany is such a great student. She is a helper, a volunteer, and a doer. She encourages her classmates to make good choices in and out of the classroom. She also helps her peers by giving them instruction on how to focus during lessons. For example, she noticed her partner was not focusing nor sitting appropriately during carpet instruction. Instead of telling on him like many five-year-olds do, she tapped him on the knee, asked him to cross his legs crisscross-applesauce, and encouraged him to face forward. She did this with a whispering voice so she herself was not being disruptive."

**Avery Smith**  
Summit Charter Academy  
Home School, Porterville  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Jocelyn  
Lemus



Nominator states, "Avery demonstrates all six pillars of character in and outside of class. It is definitely hard to choose just one pillar! Responsibility was chosen because Avery has demonstrated this since the first week of this school year. She is responsible in the sense of always doing her work on time and has already started work for the next unit! Education is very important to her. She is willing to ask for help when in need or when she is unsure and her work ethic is always at 100%. Avery is an exceptional young lady and is always a team player and captain when working in groups. She is

always on task and is always showing care, fairness, and respect toward her classmates and myself. I know that I can sit Avery anywhere in the classroom with any student and she will push them to do and give their best along with herself. I can always count on Avery to be responsible enough to get things done and help her classmates out when needed."

### **Preston Baez**

Summit Charter Academy  
Mathew Campus,  
Porterville  
**RESPECT**  
nominated by Elizabeth  
Padilla



Nominator states, "Preston is a great role model to all his peers. He models all the Character Counts! pillars. He is always showing others the importance of treating everyone the way you want to be treated. He helps his Spanish teacher in translating, and shows his classmates what respect is and how it should look. Preston has such a great attitude toward school and is always willing to help those in need."

### **Rey Acevedo**

Summit Charter  
Intermediate Academy,  
Porterville  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Jenifer  
Sanders



Nominator states, "Rey is a student who exemplifies great character and is an example of what a SCIA Bear should be. He is always willing to help his teachers, peers, and his family. Having a conversation with Rey is always a positive experience. He has only kind things to say and is respectful to everyone. When visiting classrooms, Rey can always be found actively engaged in the content that is being taught while supporting and helping his peers. He maintains a 4.0 grade point average and was recently nominated by his teachers as a Peer Mediator at his school. He not only demonstrates responsibility at school, but at home as well. He spends some of his evenings working alongside his dad painting homes to help his family. His goal for his future is to be a member of the SWAT team in order to help keep others safe."

### **Evelyn Alvarez**

Vandalia Elementary  
School, Porterville  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Mary Arias



Nominator states, "Evelyn arrives at school each day with a smile, eager to start learning. Each morning, she is always the first one in her seat showing "SMART." Evelyn puts forth a tremendous amount of effort in everything she does throughout the day, which is evident in the quality of her work. She is an active listener and she enjoys participating in small and large group discussions. She loves helping her classmates learn!"

### **Gerardo Magaña**

West Putnam Elementary  
School, Porterville  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Joanne Ropel



Nominator states, "In my 30+ years of teaching, I have encountered few students with the content of character exhibited by Gerardo. He could have easily qualified for an award in several pillars of character. I chose to recognize Gerardo for the character trait of responsibility because he always does what is expected. Gerardo completes all of his classwork and homework on time and with careful attention to detail. He takes charge of his own learning and pushes himself to do his best. He serves as an excellent role model in and out of the classroom with his exemplary behavior. I can count on Gerardo to make good choices and lead by example. Gerardo is a remarkable boy."

### **Layla Nagi**

Westfield Elementary  
School, Porterville  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Janet  
Ecobiza-Baker

Nominator states, "Layla does her homework every night, participates readily in the classroom, and is genuinely enthusiastic about learning. When schoolwork is challenging, she is never afraid to ask for help and, once she understands the concept, she helps her peers. Layla is hardworking. She





said that she has learned this because her father and uncle own a mini-mart and they work every day. Layla wants to go to college one day and help her parents so they can get a vacation once in a while. Congratulations, Layla! We are proud of you and cannot wait to see what you will accomplish in your lifetime!"

### **Zelenna Vath**

William R. Buckley  
Elementary School,  
Porterville

### **CARING**

nominated by Melinda  
Stone



Nominator states, "Zelenna is a very caring student. She thinks of others more than she thinks of herself. She helps her classmates when they are struggling, as well as offers to help me. Zelenna is also a very kind friend to all. She uses kind words and her sweet smile demonstrates the kindness that is in her heart. Zelenna is a generous person and she demonstrates this by giving of her time to encourage others and make them feel good."

### **Aquiles Eligio**

Richgrove School,  
Richgrove

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Adena  
Joseph



Nominator states, "Aquiles is a responsible hard-worker! I have observed him staying on task, doing his best, and encouraging his peers to behave in class. He volunteers to read, he takes instruction well, and he produces writing that is thoughtful. He is the kind of student that is quietly doing what he needs to do without ever complaining or causing disruptions. His demeanor is always positive and upbeat. I enjoy seeing what Aquiles comes up with, as he is quite artistic as well. He is the kind of student who can do whatever he sets his mind on to achieve. I know that he has a bright future ahead of him because not only is he responsible (and caring, trustworthy, respectful, and creative), but also very kind and intelligent."

### **Kamber Hobson**

Springville Union School,  
Springville

### **CARING**

nominated by Pat Sanders,  
Larissa Wells



Nominator states, "Kamber is always spreading kindness to everyone around her. She is helpful by following the rules in the classroom and cares for others by allowing them to do their own thinking. Kamber exemplifies every Character Counts! pillar. She genuinely cares about the well-being of every single person, our school, animals, and the world. Her heart is kind to all and she is an example to all of how to act, how to treat others and how to work hard. She is intuitive to how kids in our class are feeling and is always looking for ways to cheer others up with her kind words and a smile. She works hard in school and it shows! She is a humble student who is willing to help others in need. She is inclusive and welcomes others to hang out with her, and would work with any person no matter who they were. She has a heart of gold and her kindness and light have been spread throughout the school and wherever she goes!"

### **Mario Pena**

Harmony Magnet Academy,  
Strathmore

### **TRUSTWORTHINESS**

nominated by Jeanette  
Nevarez, Diana Garza



Nominator states, "Mario can be relied on to get the job done. He is the type of student that is always happy to jump in and help. I love that go-getter attitude he has. Mario helps me out by setting up a table during lunch and recruiting students for internships. He always takes a flyer home and comes up with a catchy slogan that will grasp his peers' attention. If I could nominate Mario for all six Pillars of Character, I would do so without hesitation. Everyone that encounters Mario always has

something great to say about his character. He is just an amazing young man and I am very proud of him."

**Victoria Galvan  
Cerrillos**

Strathmore Elementary  
School, Strathmore

**CARING**

nominated by Erendira  
Vega



Nominator states, "Victoria is one of the most caring students I have met in all my years of teaching. She always goes out of her way to make everyone smile. She brings snacks to the class with such great joy and is always willing to help her classmates. Her generosity is over the moon and she always helps without expecting to receive anything in exchange. She worries when someone is hurt or feels sad and makes sure she is there to help in any way possible. I am so proud of Victoria's caring heart and I am glad I get to experience what a sincere and true heart really is!"

**Georgina Garcia**

Strathmore High School,  
Strathmore

**CARING**

nominated by Dana  
Resendez



Nominator states, "Georgina 'Gina' has been diligent in her studies and decided to join two AP courses as a junior. At the beginning of the semester, I mentioned to the class that there were two sophomores taking an AP class for the first time at our school in years. Gina said we should give them something and came up with the idea of supporting those two underclassmen as they take on the challenges of an AP class. She and another student helped by writing out cards and coming up with an idea for a gift (index cards and an index cardholder and Starbucks gift card)."

**Jason Kaniatobe**

Strathmore Middle School,  
Strathmore

**TRUSTWORTHINESS**

nominated by Tasha  
Boehme



Nominator states, "Jason had a rough year last year for making poor choices that affected himself as well as others. He made a promise at the beginning of this year that he was not going to get into trouble; he wanted to graduate middle school. He promised that he would walk away from fights and show respect to his teachers and peers. Jason held true to his promise and walked away from a fight after being pushed by a student on the opposing team at a football game. He shared his story with me as soon as he got back from the game and he was proud of himself for his choice! He is making positive choices in all areas this year and deserves positive recognition after so much negative attention last year!"

**Nike Ambriz**

Sunnyside Union School,  
Strathmore

**CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Eileen  
Demerath



Nominator states, "Nike is in my 2/3 combo class as a second grader, but can easily be confused as a third grader by the way she conducts herself. She is part of a family that supports school and she is actively involved in all school activities. She also demonstrates a work ethic and learning results that show that she is taking ownership of her learning. In spite of being very young, she is actively making all efforts to incorporate the new learning into what she already knows. She is a reliable resource on school events and helpful in her communication of those events."

**Haylee Valencia**

Monson-Sultana School,  
Sultana

**CARING**

nominated by David Rico



Nominator states, "Haylee has shown that she is a good person throughout the school year. During the course of the year, we had a student who missed a series of class days. After the student returned to school, Haylee showed an extreme moment of caring by befriending this student in need and asking them to sit next to her. I believe she saw that elephant in the room and felt the need to act in a loving way. It

was one of the most amazing things I have seen as an educator."

**Jimena Martinez**

Saucelito School, Terra  
Bella

**RESPECT**

nominated by Starlena  
Holland



Nominator states, "Jimena is a 5th grade student who has been at our small country school since kindergarten. Jimena has always been a very sweet student who treats everyone around her with respect and kindness. She works hard in class and is a good student who always does the right thing. She always has a smile on her face and a kind word for everyone and she truly deserves to be recognized for being such a kind, responsible young lady."

**Cambria Clark**

Three Rivers Union School,  
Three Rivers

**CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Jami Beck



Nominator states, "Cambria participated in National Public Lands Day at Lake Kaweah. She removed graffiti and picked up trash at the lake. Cambria also got her parents and a friend to volunteer, too. This is Cambria's first year in student council. I know she is going to do a great job."

**Maria Sanchez**

Tipton School, Tipton

**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Michelle  
Nuckols



Nominator states, "Maria demonstrates all Pillars of Character Counts in and out of the classroom. However, I would have to say that Responsibility describes her the best. She is responsible with her homework and grades, and takes her academic success to the next level. Maria is our Varsity Volleyball Captain. She makes sure her fellow classmates are doing what they are supposed to be doing, encourages them, and never gives up. Her character is infectious!"

**Cruz Hernandez Villa**

Traver School, Traver

**CARING**

nominated by Linda  
Navarro



Nominator states, "Cruz has been at our school for about two years now and has just always been such a sweet and caring person. She always has a smile on her face and says 'Good morning' or 'Have a good day'. She just has an awesome personality and makes people smile with her caring attitude."

**Javier Velazquez**

Accelerated Charter High  
School, Tulare

**RESPECT**

nominated by Michelle  
Reindl



Nominator states, "Javier is respectful in that he always addresses me as 'Mrs. Reindl' and always has a smile on his face. In class, he is a model example of what a student should be doing and how a student should be behaving. He is a role model for his peers and I appreciate the hard work he puts in every day. In fact, I mentioned that to his mom on Back to School night and he responded with 'That's how my mom raised me.' I witnessed Javier's respectfulness for his mother. It was very impressive. Javier is an impressive young man."

**Jesus Tinoco  
Cisneros**

Alice G. Mulcahy Middle  
School, Tulare

**FAIRNESS**

nominated by Cynthia  
Breedlove



Nominator states, "Jesus always treats people equally. He gives everyone what they deserve, holding everyone (including himself) to the same rules and respecting everyone. He believes that everyone deserves to be treated fairly."

**Brooklyn Rodrigues**

Nominator states, "Brooklyn is exemplary at her skills to build



Alpine Vista School, Tulare  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
 nominated by Kimberlina  
 Herrera



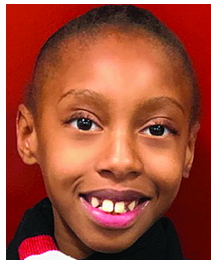
community at our school and in our classrooms. She has held authoritative positions with student council, has had many classroom leadership roles, and handled them all with grace and dignity. In my class, she works hard to give opportunities for students to get to know each other. Using a simple question each day during attendance opens friendly discussions among classmates and gets them involved in the activities. Brooklyn is very aware of the student body at our school and she helps maintain our core values with a positive, professional, and humble attitude every day."

**Aviana Saenz**  
 Buena Vista School, Tulare  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
 nominated by Jordan Perry



Nominator states, "Aviana is always striving to do that little extra to improve her academics and extra-curricular activities. She is currently leading the entire school in word count from her AR books. Whenever she has free time or finishes her work early, she is reading, playing chess, working on math skills, or building some other academic area. This is her first year participating in sports and we are currently playing volleyball. She struggled to serve the ball over the net initially but kept at it during her recess time. She has now nearly perfected the process and is one of our best servers. An argument can be made for every pillar with this student, but responsibility stands out the most."

**Jayda Vaughn**  
 Cherry Avenue Middle  
 School, Tulare  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
 nominated by Angella  
 Chamalbide



Nominator states, "Jayda always has a kind word and smile on her face when she comes into my class. She really exemplifies the motto at Cherry Avenue, 'Leave it Better'. She is always willing to help anyone who needs it. She is someone who sees what needs to be done and does it, not for the accolades but because it is part of who she is. I appreciate having this young woman in my class. She is a super star!"

**Sergio Santiago**  
 Countryside High School,  
 Tulare  
**RESPECT**  
 nominated by Cherilyn  
 Austin



Nominator states, "Sergio is respectful and extremely kind to everyone he meets. I honestly could mark every one of these pillars, he always responds truthfully and fairly, and shows responsibility with all of his assignments. He has an understanding of how to treat other students who might be different than him. This shows his character of caring and a gentle quality of citizenship. He is a leader in the making."

**Kathleen Ferreira**  
 Cypress Elementary  
 School, Tulare  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
 nominated by Mrs. Christine  
 Camara



Nominator states, "Have an important job that needs tackling? Or maybe some pictures taken or posters made for an upcoming school assembly? Well then, Kathleen is ready to serve! I am amazed every day with this young girl's drive to help with anything for her school. She is focused, dedicated, and can be gone from class serving with her Student Council group and STILL make it back to do well on whatever project she had left behind! She loves being involved in her school community, and never turns down an opportunity to serve."

**Samuel Walker**  
 Frank Kohn Elementary  
 School, Tulare  
**FAIRNESS**  
 nominated by Mrs. Munk

Nominator states, "Samuel is such an amazing student who exemplifies Fairness in everything he does. He is always someone who plays by the rules and helps others to do the same. He makes the best partner. Everyone enjoys playing with Sam. He is such an amazing friend."



**Brody Brogan**  
Freedom Christian  
Academy, Tulare  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Jonathan  
Brogan

Nominator states, "Brody is a very responsible student. He can be trusted to do his work and always uses his best handwriting. He is a great helper and is always willing to help others when needed."



**Joshua Blanco**  
Garden Elementary School,  
Tulare  
**CARING**  
nominated by Peter Keck

Nominator states, "Joshua gave away his own bike to a child in need. The Tulare City Fire Department's Fire Chief, Sergio Ruelas, recognized Joshua for his act of kindness. The best part about this story is Joshua's hidden humility. No one at school knew about the story until the Tulare Fire Department posted the story on Twitter. Joshua is a true young man of character, one who considers the needs of others above his own."



**Emily Castellanos**  
Heritage Elementary  
School, Tulare  
**FAIRNESS**  
nominated by Janice  
Pearson

Nominator states, "Emily can always be counted on to make the right choices. She is kind and can be trusted to be considerate and fair, as well as share with others both in and outside of the classroom setting without complaining. She has empathy for others and has a kind heart. I appreciate all of her effort and dedication."



**Steven Stricklin**  
Liberty Elementary School,  
Tulare  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Stesha  
Newkirk

Nominator states, "Steven is a student who likes to help. At the end of each class period, I see him picking up trash, pushing in chairs, and plugging in computers. These actions show me that Steven is responsible and caring. He takes care of school property and he helps make transitions run smoothly. This behavior also carries over to the playground. Steven often helps me keep track of playground equipment by returning balls to the ball cart, even if he was not the one using them. Steven is a great example for his peers."



**Makena Martinez**  
Lincoln Elementary School,  
Tulare  
**FAIRNESS**  
nominated by Jolee Maffia

Nominator states, "Makena shows traits of each pillar of character and could easily be nominated for each one. She has been chosen for trustworthiness because that is quite difficult for most kindergartners to practice, yet she has mastered it. Makena is the student that can be trusted with classroom assistance, whether it is papers that need to be collected, forms taken to the office, or anything else that may arise. When Makena is assigned a task, you know it will be handled. Recently we had an assembly; six students from each class were assigned tasks to be completed during a relay race. Names were drawn out of a hat to participate and as luck would have it, Makena's name was not drawn. The assembly was first thing in the morning and one of the chosen students





was absent. With literally minutes to memorize, Makena volunteered to take the student's place. She memorized the required answers and performed perfectly in front of the entire school! Makena's fellow students often ask for her assistance knowing she can be trusted to explain things if they are unsure what to do, or to give aid if they need help completing a task."

### **Emily Martin**

Live Oak Middle School,  
Tulare

### **CARING**

nominated by Melissa  
Gonzalez



Nominator states, "Emily was one of two stage managers for Live Oak's school musical *Xanadu*. She was responsible for managing students during rehearsal, tracking cast attendance, and helping run the backstage. She was willing to stand in when cast members were absent, and she was always encouraging the cast to do their best. She always did any task given to her with grace and respect. Her responsible and caring management helped make *Xanadu* a great success!"

### **Gabriel Gonzalez**

Los Tules Middle School,  
Tulare

### **CARING**

nominated by Rhonda  
Sousa



Nominator states, "Gabriel has an innate ability to recognize when others may need help and offer assistance. He makes sure that his peers have everything they need in order to be prepared to learn. We got a new student in class when I was out one day and he took it upon himself to set the student up with his binder and all of his materials. He makes sure that his group understands each assignment and offers help when needed. He consistently asks me if he can help others who are struggling when he has completed his own assignments. He is very patient and a great 'coach'. I appreciate his contribution to our classroom and I know that the other students do, as well."

### **Phoenix Campos**

Maple Elementary School,  
Tulare

### **CARING**

nominated by Rochelle  
Muller



Nominator states, "Phoenix noticed that some students did not have a snack to eat during our read aloud/snack time. She decided to bring a healthy snack for herself and all of her classmates. This is just one way that Phoenix has showed caring in the classroom. She is also mindful of her classmates' feelings and always does her best to be kind and thoughtful. She is a great example of character in our classroom."

### **Yesenia Rodriguez**

Mission Oak High School,  
Tulare

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Dave  
Caetano



Nominator states, "Yesenia is tremendously committed to supporting her family's income and trying to be as involved in school activities as possible. This past summer she had to juggle her schedule with volleyball and basketball practices and games along with working with her family in the fields harvesting fruit. She is an amazing young lady who combines class, work ethic, and a commitment to her family that is unsurpassed. She is the kind of person that many times will go unnoticed because she will not bring any attention to herself. It is an honor to have her in our program and support her whenever possible, as she is an inspiration to all the girls in my program."

### **Evianna Alexander**

Mission Valley Elementary  
School, Tulare

### **CARING**

nominated by Stefanie  
Alldredge



Nominator states, "Although Evianna is only in TK and approaching her 5th birthday, she emulates traits of empathy and caring that some older students never achieve. Our class has been establishing rules and procedures these past few weeks. We have been learning that rules are not meant to be mean, but to keep us safe and secure both in and out of the classroom. Evianna is observant of others following the rules and is quick to compliment her peers when she sees them



following a rule. It is like having a mini teacher in the room! Evianna's attitude is always a positive one. She enters the classroom with a cheerful smile and a zest for learning that cannot help but be infectious to those in her proximity. When she grows up, she would like to care for others in her community by being a doctor."

**Jose Sandoval**

Oak Valley Union School,  
Tulare

**CARING**

nominated by Crystal Alves



Nominator states, "Toward the beginning of the school year, one of my four-year-old students was accidentally locked out of our classroom. Though she was knocking on the door to get back in, the regular noise of a TK classroom prevented us from hearing her knock. Jose, a fourth grader, happened to be walking down the hallway when he noticed the young student furiously knocking at the door with no one in sight. He immediately started banging on my door and I was able to hear someone was at the door. As I opened the door, he filled me in on what had just happened. I commended him for being helpful, kind, and going out of his way to do the right thing. He responded to me by saying 'Mrs. Alves, I could not leave her out here by herself.' Jose's teacher agrees that he is a true student of character."

**Leonel Barcena**

Palo Verde Union School,  
Tulare

**RESPECT**

nominated by Audrey Long



Nominator states, "Leonel is very respectful. He treats other the way he wants to be treated. He cares about people. He is a wonderful example for his peers to follow. He is respectful in class, on the playground, and in the cafeteria. He is kind to his peers and teachers."

**Jayden Solis Murillo**

Pleasant Elementary  
School, Tulare

**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Marvin Brock



Nominator states, "Jayden is a third-grade student who has to work a little harder than most while at school. At the beginning of second grade, Jayden was a non-reader who had not learned all of his letter sounds. Throughout the school year, Jayden worked extremely hard in his classroom and in the Resource room (RSP) on his reading. His teachers were amazed at his progress. You could see his confidence snowball and by the middle of the school year, he would often tell me, 'Mr. Brock, I can read.' He began to volunteer to read in class and was excited to take home library books. At the end of June, Jayden was reading at the beginning of his second grade level. In my 26 years of teaching, this is one of the most remarkable improvements I have ever seen."

**Hector Villagran**

Roosevelt Elementary  
School, Tulare

**FAIRNESS**

nominated by Lisah Anaya



Nominator states, "Hector displays the qualities of fairness with his peers in various ways: he takes turns, shares, and plays by the rules. Hector is friendly and welcoming to all of his peers. He advocates for his peers to ensure that everyone gets a turn and everyone plays by the rules. Hector takes the initiative and responsibility to ensure that all of his peers are treated fairly and respectfully by one another. Hector is always willing to help his friends when they need help. He is a great example and displays multiple characteristics of the pillar of Fairness!"

**Melissa Bueno**

Sierra Vista Charter High  
School, Tulare

Nominator states, "Melissa has always been an exemplary student, but she was facing some issues that were often daunting and exhausting. There were appointments and

**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Katie Wilding



frustrations with life that always seemed to come her way. Through some highs and lows, she ultimately made the decision to take life by the horns and embrace what she was in control of and how she could influence and advocate for her own success and independence. Once she put her mind to it, she became responsible for her own happiness and completely blossomed at our school, having a positive impact on our entire staff and student body. Melissa excelled academically and even began working on senior level classes last year as a junior. She jumped at the opportunity to become a part of student government and was nominated as student body vice-president during her junior year, then took on the responsibilities as student body president her senior year. Melissa is an active member of our school and our community by taking on the task of serving as scorekeeper for our volleyball team and participating in our district's Rivalry Run. Beyond that, Melissa was also moved to act on behalf of our community and started a club for students with disabilities. Her strength and determination are an inspiration to many."

**Andrew Rynsbarger**

St. Aloysius School, Tulare

**CARING**nominated by Noreen  
Cabrerera

Nominator states, "Andrew is an incredibly nurturing guy who exemplifies the pillar of CARING. Andrew cares deeply how others feel and does not want anyone to be sad or upset. He will comfort them with a hand on the shoulder, a smile, or a big hug. He also loves to help others and make them happy. He brightens the world with his caring ways."

**Westyn Ribeiro**Sundale Union School,  
Tulare**CITIZENSHIP**nominated by Brittany Jade  
Grieb

Nominator states, "Westyn demonstrates trustworthiness, even when he may face a consequence. He has shown the upmost respect toward his peers by constantly giving compliments of others' work, allowing students to go before him during an activity, and using kind words to lift up a students' spirits if they are sad. He has proven to be responsible with his time and his classwork. He lets me know when he does not understand something while I am teaching, and he lets me know when he needs more time on classwork. He demonstrates fairness by allowing friends to have turns with fun equipment during P.E. He is a leader and teaches his peers to take turns. His level of caring is phenomenal. He sympathizes when one of his peers is upset. His words are so very kind. When another student needed to apologize to him, his response was, 'You're forgiven.' His level of citizenship is amazing. Before school ends, he takes it upon himself to check the classroom floor for trash and makes sure our classroom is cleaned up. It is an honor to have him be a great example to others."

**Julianna Deniz**Tulare Tech Prep High  
School, Tulare**RESPONSIBILITY**nominated by Rachel  
Sausedo

Nominator states, "Julianna exhibits Responsibility by earning straight A's the last grading period and always trying her best to keep her grades up. She has overcome many obstacles in her life, but she does not let that interfere with her determination to do well in school. She is respectful to her teachers and is always willing to help when needed."

**Morgan Hatton**

Nominator states, "Morgan shows leadership in everything she

Tulare Union High School,  
Tulare  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
nominated by Chandalin  
Champlin



does on campus and in our community. She volunteers and works many hours with ASB and other club groups. Whenever I need help with TU Care Closet, events, or projects, she is the first person there organizing students to make things happen. One day, she was walking a student to the training due to an injury. She was concerned and caring about how this student was doing. She took it upon herself to get her there safe. The TU Care Closet is one of her projects that started last year. She believes in helping students who are in need. She is a true leader in our community."

**Erika Muller**  
Tulare Western High  
School, Tulare  
**TRUSTWORTHINESS**  
nominated by Taylor Kruger



Nominator states, "Erika has not only been an excellent student with great artistic merit, but also my go-to person when I need anything accomplished. Erika strives for greatness and is always honest and trustworthy. The students around her trust her with information and rely on her when they need help. As an officer in Anime Club and the lead team member of Odyssey of the Mind at Tulare Western, I trust Erika with paperwork, communication, and promotion of the clubs. She is my brain and is always reminding me of important dates and paperwork needing to be finished. She is always on task and well organized. She gives 200% while still caring for and being considerate to everyone around her. Erika is a star student."

**Jaxson Curtsinger**  
Waukena Elementary  
School, Tulare  
**RESPECT**  
nominated by Melinda  
Horton



Nominator states, "Jaxson is one of the most respectful students I have ever had. Every morning, I can count on him to tell me good morning and to help anyone in need. He treats every person he meets with the utmost respect and never has a negative thing to say about anyone. Jaxson demonstrates all six of the Character Counts pillars each day at school, whether it be in the classroom or on the playground."

**Michia Ross**  
Wilson Elementary School,  
Tulare  
**FAIRNESS**  
nominated by Lourdes  
Castillo



Nominator states, "Michia is an amazing student in my class. She is always looking to play by the rules and for everyone to be treated fairly. One time inside the classroom, some of her group members were treating another student unfairly and she stood up for that student, telling her group that fairness is one of the Character Counts pillars."

**Liam Sinclair**  
Annie R. Mitchell  
Elementary School, Visalia  
**FAIRNESS**  
nominated by Megan  
Madsen



Nominator states, "Liam is a student that strives to be fair in all that he does. He is not worried about being first, yet gladly will let others go before him. He treats everyone the same and encourages others to be positive role models as well. When working in collaborative groups, Liam is always actively listening to partners and group members, allowing them to take as much time as needed before responding. On the playground, he respects all rules and allows everyone an opportunity to participate."

**Martin Amezcua**  
Blue Oak Academy, Visalia  
**FAIRNESS**  
nominated by Gloria  
Cazarez

Nominator states, "Martin has demonstrated over the last two years what it truly means to be fair and 'play by the rules' in our community. He has attentively learned and internalized what our school and classroom rules are and follows them to a 'T'. While following the rules can be an easy feat for many students, he has gone above and beyond that by recognizing





**Jonathan Beavers**  
Compass School, Visalia  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by David Ledger

the motive behind this social construct. As a second-grade scholar, Martin knows the rules and, more importantly, he sees why rules are so vital on our campus. He understands why it is important for students to walk in a classroom instead of running, and can easily articulate to a peer why they must keep their learning spaces organized. Martin has consistently modeled for others how to respect people, property, process, and presentation at Blue Oak Academy. Additionally, as a soccer player, he has brought many valuable skills that I am sure he is learned on the field, into our playground. He takes turns with his peers and can model for students how to be a good sport when they win or lose in cooperative games. As his teacher, I am continuously impressed with Martin's commitment to fairness in and out of the classroom."



Nominator states, "In trying to determine which pillar to select, it is difficult to pick just one. I have known this student for about two years and the growth and the changes I have observed in him over this time are nothing short of phenomenal. If you need someone to handle something, John is the go-to person. He never deviates from following classroom rules, is always polite, respectful, dependable and cooperative. John enjoys interesting topics on World History, and regularly contributes information to the class, beyond what is covered in the textbooks, to make our lessons that much more interesting. He is thoughtful, polite, and caring, and regularly reaches out to his classmates and contributes to make our room a kind and caring community. He is the epitome of the phrase 'leading by example.' Besides all of the things I have mentioned above, John also works a part-time job in the afternoon. He has a goal to become a security officer and with the level of integrity and reliability that he conducts himself with, I have no doubts that he will excel in that field."

**Skylar White**  
Conyer Elementary School,  
Visalia  
**CARING**  
nominated by Alexandria  
Longoria



Nominator states, "Skylar is always looking for opportunities to help others both in the classroom and outside. She is so kind and caring. Skylar shows empathy when others are sad, hurt, or sick. She never fails to cheer up a friend or redirect a peer who is headed down the wrong path. She is compassionate and truly is aware of what others need. Skylar ensures that her work is finished yet she still finds ways to help others. Skylar takes initiative to help me clean up the classroom, and makes my job so much easier. Her mind is set on helping others and seeing that her peers are as happy as she is. Skylar is helpful, kind, and generous. She is an exemplary model of expected behaviors."

**Noemi Morales**  
Crescent Valley Public  
Charter School II, Visalia  
**TRUSTWORTHINESS**  
nominated by Christine  
Anderson



Nominator states, "Noemi exemplifies trustworthiness in all she does."

**Joshua Santacruz**  
Crestwood Elementary

Nominator states, "Joshua strives to be the best version of

School, Visalia  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
 nominated by Erin House



himself every day. From the time he walks in the door until the time he leaves, he is on task, working hard, and helping others. His assignments are always completed on time and he goes above and beyond the expectations. He is a reliable young man and has big things waiting for him in his future!"

**Emmari Montor**  
 Divisadero Middle School,  
 Visalia  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
 nominated by Stevan  
 Chamalbide



Nominator states, "Emmari is a student athlete who exemplifies outstanding character both on and off the field. She represents her school with honor."

**Mary Rosa**  
 El Diamante High School,  
 Visalia  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
 nominated by Zachary  
 Brown



Nominator states, "Mary is an outstanding leader that exemplifies all of the character traits we strive to instill in our youth. She currently is our El Diamante FFA Chapter President. Our chapter has over 500 (9-12 grade) students and is growing with students that want to learn about agricultural careers. She has worked hard to coordinate FFA events for our chapter that include monthly meetings, community service activities, leadership training, career development events, and fun activities to make all students welcome. Mary is also the Tulare/Kings Sectional FFA President and coordinates FFA activities for all High School Ag students in these counties. She has an amazing GPA and manages her time between her family's dairy farm, academics, FFA, her Faith and sports (she plays Girls Golf in HS). Her calm, positive and cheerful demeanor always inspires me. I have never once witnessed her complain or make a negative comment. She finds creative solutions to challenging problems. She was on our State Champion FFA Marketing Team her freshman year."

**Georgia Lockett**  
 Elbow Creek Elementary  
 School, Visalia  
**CARING**  
 nominated by Nancy Stout



Nominator states, "Georgia is a very caring student to all of her classmates. She is always willing to help anyone in need. She works with a special needs child in the classroom and shows patience and care for his well-being and his academic growth. She does this without being asked. She is a model for the pillar of caring."

**Samantha Cervantes**  
 Four Creeks Elementary  
 School, Visalia  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
 nominated by Sheila Winton



Nominator states, "Samantha is one of those students that I would use the word extraordinary to describe her work habits at school. She is very driven to complete her work and goes above and beyond what is asked of her. She comes to class with a positive attitude and is a great role model to her peers. I appreciate her willingness to help in the classroom when it is needed and her ability to collaborate with peers on assignments. She is creating successful habits that will lead to a promising future."

**Lily Harrington**  
 Global Learning Charter  
 School, Visalia

Nominator states, "Lily is an honest student who can be trusted to tell the truth even when she makes a minor mistake. Her demeanor exudes honesty. One time, there was a guest

**TRUSTWORTHINESS**

nominated by Dominique  
Biello



teacher, and she was asked to tell her side of what really happened during a part of the day when she was not getting work completed. Instead of making excuses or blaming others and brushing it off, she owned her mistake and communicated how she could make things right. When there happened to be another guest teacher for three days in a row, she was recognized as being a star student all three days! During restorative circles, she is frequently an honest participant about what behaviors would help the team positively behave in and out of class. Recently there was a problem getting from the cafeteria to lunch recess, and instead of communicating that she was not the problem, she honestly communicated solutions to the problem. Overall, Lily is a student who anyone can trust to make positive choices to enhance her learning and social skills in and out of class throughout the school day."

**Amaya Fernandez**

Golden Oak Elementary  
School, Visalia

**TRUSTWORTHINESS**

nominated by Jill Card



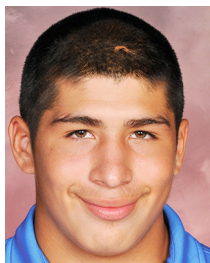
Nominator states, "Amaya is an outstanding student that regularly exhibits all of the pillars of character. Amaya is being nominated for trustworthiness because she can be trusted to be responsible, on task, caring, respectful, and a good citizen, always helping others before thinking of herself. She takes time to help new students in and out of the classroom. Amaya takes pride in her classwork and is always doing more than is expected of her. She puts forth endless effort to be the best she can be and does so by putting others before herself. She looks for ways to make our school the best it can be."

**Michael Falcon**

Golden West High School,  
Visalia

**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Jose Fregoso



Nominator states, "Michael is a student athlete and a member of the First Responder Academy career tech pathway. During lunch, Michael observed a student choking and sprang into action, using first aid techniques learned in the First Responder Academy and his health class, which included the Heimlich maneuver to dislodge the student's airway blockage. Michael went above beyond to support a fellow Golden West Trailblazer and represents all that is good in the youth of America. The Golden West High School staff and students are proud to have such an excellent young person as a member of the student body."

**Maria Vasquez Romo**

Goshen Elementary School,  
Visalia

**CARING**

nominated by Sarah Van  
Dermayden



Nominator states, "Maria is a student who looks for ways to be helpful and takes initiative to make things in the classroom run smoother. She noticed I was holding the door open, and she asked if I would like her to start being the door holder. She is sure to be at class a few minutes early so she can be there to hold the door for me as I welcome students into the room. She is helpful throughout the day whether she is cleaning the classroom or running errands for her teacher. She always has nice words to say about everyone, and she can be counted on to be friendly to all the students in the classroom, even the student who can be hard to be friendly to. She helps because she loves to help, not because she gets a reward for it. She is truly a perfect example of the character trait of caring."

**Ashley Platas**

Green Acres Middle School,  
Visalia

**CARING**

Nominator states, "Ashley cares about not only her own success, but the success and happiness of others as well. She demonstrates her caring by helping her classmates academically and acknowledging the success of others. Ashley



nominated by Gregory  
Jurica



is always willing to help classmates. She is patient and sacrifices a great deal of her own time to help other students reach their learning goals. Students she helps feel cared for and heard. It does not matter what the student is struggling with, she always finds a way to reach the student in a friendly and helpful manner. She provides students with strategies to solve problems and challenges them to persevere. All students want to sit at the same table as Ashley, because it has been proven that the students who sit next to her show great improvement during their time at that table. Ashley always acknowledges important aspects of others' lives. She listens and pays close attention to others and recalls major events. Ashley is generous with her time in showing her admiration for others. I have witnessed her give thoughtful gifts to her friends and staff. Her gifts are made herself and highlight the likes, interests, and heritage of others. She is generous in this way, because it is evident that she takes great time in creating these gifts."

### **Ayzaiah Lara**

Highland Elementary  
School, Visalia

#### **RESPECT**

nominated by Lyndsay  
Gentert



Nominator states, "Ayzaiah is new to our school this year, but he has made a huge impact on our campus already. He strives to include everyone in the classroom and on the playground. Ayzaiah seeks out kids who are feeling sad, cheers them up, and encourages his peers to do the same. Ayzaiah welcomed two of our new students with open arms and gave his PAWS tickets to them that he earned so they could already feel like they were a part of our school. When he noticed a few students were short PAWS tickets, he gave his to them for Fun Friday without even a second thought. Ayzaiah loves to help his classmates and his teacher with any and every little task in the classroom. He is the first to encourage the kids to be on task and respectful to his teacher, as well. He is a true example of what respect looks and feels like at school!"

### **Jacqueline Colouha**

Houston Elementary  
School, Visalia

#### **RESPECT**

nominated by Casey  
Richert, Amanda Chaves



Nominator states, "Jacqueline is an amazing scholar. She always has a smile on her face, and even when the joke I told was corny, she always laughed. She even wrote me a note for teacher appreciation day and it was one of the most genuine letters from someone I have ever received. She exemplifies every Character Counts trait, but the most important one to us in our class was respect. She is kind, caring, considerate, helpful, outgoing, and always willing to go the extra mile. Her desk was kept in pristine condition the entire year, and she worked to help those around her be the same way. She could always be counted on to sit next to someone who was rather difficult to be with, and she would always work with them and support them in every learning and behavior goal. It is very seldom that you come across a student who just shines through, and Jacqueline does."

### **Jason Chao**

Hurley Elementary School,  
Visalia

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Aubrey Cox

Nominator states, "Jason shows responsibility in class by keeping himself and others on task. He is a model student that is always looking to do the right thing. He also has a great memory and even keeps Ms. Cox on track sometimes."



**Phillip Paprzycki**  
La Joya Middle School,  
Visalia  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Rosalie  
Rodriguez



**Asly Martinez  
Ramirez**  
La Sierra Military Academy,  
Visalia  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Gabrel  
Castro



**Jacob Padilla**  
Linwood Elementary  
School, Visalia  
**CARING**  
nominated by Misty  
Nevarez, Lori Jones



**Shelby Eulate**  
Manuel F. Hernandez  
Elementary School, Visalia  
**CARING**

Nominator states, "Phillip is an outstanding student that works hard and is involved with yearbook. He is always at his best and is an excellent example for other students. He works well with others and tries to help his peers. On one particular occasion, Phillip was asked to move to another group without any warning or explanation. The move was necessary to provide another student with more support. Phillip did not react; in fact, he followed directions without hesitation and did not complain. He continued to do his work in his new group and made an effort to talk to everyone. I was very impressed with his fortitude. He is a remarkable student and a great role model to other students."

Nominator states, "Cadet Asly is an outstanding person of character who tremendously contributes to our positive school climate and culture. In and outside of the classroom, she can always be counted on to do what she is supposed to do – and with a big bright beautiful smile. She is currently taking a COS dual enrollment course with a high level of work and, instead of complaining, she goes above and beyond to be diligent and successful by planning ahead, engaging in meaningful conversations, and seeking support when needed. By doing so, she sets a good example for others – especially her peers. One of my absolute favorite things about Asly is the choice she makes every day to have a positive attitude. Her enthusiasm to learn and the pride she takes in her education far exceeds the level of her same-aged peers. Asly is a true joy to be around who shows accountability, perseverance, and makes a conscious effort to be the best she can be."

Nominator states, "I am a teacher in an AcCEL classroom on the campus of Linwood Elementary School. Jacob, who is in a wheelchair, comes into my classroom to use our restroom with his aide. This year, I got a new kindergarten student who is also in a wheelchair. My student has profound medical needs. Jacob has befriended this new student and has become a role model. My student is non-verbal, but when he sees Jacob come into my classroom, he is so extremely happy. Every day without exception, Jacob will have a conversation with my student. Jacob is a student who exemplifies caring in everything that he does. Although Jacob is in a wheelchair himself, he takes time out of his day to befriend a little boy who looks up to him. Jacob is exactly what Tulare County Office of Education Character Counts is all about."

Nominator states, "Shelby has an amazing heart and is willing to help other students, no questions asked. This year we have a student with special needs in our class and Shelby has taken

nominated by Rocio  
Hernandez



it upon herself to help this student when I am unable to work with him. I am very proud of her and the kindness she demonstrates to all students."

### **Ellie Mae Goleman**

Mineral King Elementary  
School, Visalia

#### **CARING**

nominated by Kimberly Lee



Nominator states, "Ellie Mae exhibits so many good characteristics, but I am most proud of her for caring for others. One example of this happened during Independent Reading time when one of our special needs students was sad and crying. He missed his mom and Ellie Mae offered to read to him. She sat on the floor next to this student and read a book to him. As a teacher, my heart was so happy to see this kind act and I love how she set an example for the rest of our class. Ellie Mae continues to show her classmates she cares about them by offering to work or play with them. She is always thinking of positive ways to influence those around her."

### **Maddox Zissler**

Mountain View Elementary  
School, Visalia

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Martin  
Medeiros



Nominator states, "Maddox always tries to do his best. He can be depended on to always follow through and complete his classroom jobs. Maddox is trustworthy and could be selected for any of the character words. Maddox is very deserving of this recognition."

### **Cecilia Aguilera**

Mt. Whitney High School,  
Visalia

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Todd Herfurth



Nominator states, "Cecilia is an excellent student with an outstanding record of educational achievement. She is also a very hard-working immigrant from Mexico, who is achieving an excellent college-weighted grade point average of 4.13, despite the obstacles in her life. Cecilia has taken very rigorous courses during high school, including AP classes in both English and Spanish languages. She is also a member of the California Scholarship Federation, MECHA Club, and currently serves as the president of Mt. Whitney's Key Club. I can always count on Cecilia to perform her role as an AVID tutor excellently, and she is always punctual. She tutors for our after school program, helping other students with their schoolwork as well as completing her own. Cecilia is one of the hardest working students I have ever known, and I can always absolutely count on her to do the right thing. Cecilia came to the United States as a very young girl with her parents. Her parents are farmworkers in the Central Valley, so Cecilia works with them in the fields on weekends and during the summer to help support her family. Despite a lack of educational background within her family, Cecilia has become an excellent student and has created a high school record that ranks her academically 7th in a class of over 340 students. She is a young leader who demonstrates excellence every day."

### **Kaden Nilsson**

Oak Grove Elementary  
School, Visalia

#### **CARING**

Nominator states, "Kaden is a very caring young boy! He is always looking for ways to help others inside and outside of the classroom. When someone falls down, Kaden is there to help them up. If someone needs a pencil, he is the first person to



nominated by Malaine  
Ribeiro



lend one to a friend. He is always kind. He lights up a room with his warm smile and has genuine love and care for those around him. Kaden is an amazing young boy who is always looking out for others!"

### **Molly Gamboa**

Pinkham Elementary  
School, Visalia

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Frank Ghiglia



Nominator states, "Violet, who goes by Molly, has shown exceptional character in the area of Responsibility. Although small in stature, she carries with her an astounding amount of integrity! Since the beginning of the school year, Molly has shown she can be trusted to do the right thing at all times, even when no one is looking. Her moral compass seems to guide her along the correct path, establishing her as a leader among her peers. If anyone has any doubts about what the right thing to do is, one simply has to look to Molly who most assuredly is setting the example. It is in the growth in responsibility of those around her that one can see how powerful Molly's impact has been on them. Molly's dedication to doing what is right often means she is completing assignments ahead of schedule. When she senses struggle and is presented with a difficult task, Molly does not hesitate to ask for guidance from a neighboring student or her teacher. When she clarifies the task, or works through the challenge she is facing, Molly always leaves the conversation positively with the warmest smile. In turn, Molly takes what she has learned and offers assistance to others so that they may benefit from what she has learned. Students desire to be Molly's friend not because she is popular or has the best lunch snacks; Molly's incredible character is just that infectious, you cannot help but want to be just as responsible as her! The atmosphere Molly creates from demonstrating the pillar of responsibility has made a positive impact on her classroom, her teacher, and her school."

### **Brianna Loera**

Redwood High School,  
Visalia

### **CARING**

nominated by Travis  
Roebuck



Nominator states, "Brianna is a responsible leader whose kindness has gained the respect of her peers, teachers, and coaches both inside the classroom and on the athletic field. Brianna has excelled in our Redwood AVID program. She leads the class through their tutorials and has taken some of our newer students under her wing to teach them the AVID way. Brianna is the first one to motivate her classmates through hard work and positive comments. Her kindness encourages others to perform better throughout all facets of the AVID classroom. She is currently a CSF member with a 4.0 GPA. Her success in the classroom is reflected by her accomplishments in athletics. Brianna excels in basketball and cross-country. Her academic and core values inspire her peers and are a shining example of what it means to be a T.R.U.E. Ranger."

### **Ayla Morgan**

Ridgeview Middle School,  
Visalia

### **FAIRNESS**

Nominator states, "One of the best parts of being Ayla's teacher is watching her work with others. She is always seen playing by the rules and making sure that assignments are

nominated by Jessica  
Malmsten



completed accurately. She is a great team leader because she listens to understand her teammates' various points of view."

### **Selena Vela**

Royal Oaks Elementary  
School, Visalia

#### **CARING**

nominated by Lisa  
Majarian, Jessica  
Holdbrooks, Samantha  
Quevedo



Nominator states, "Selena is a 5th grade Learning Center student at Royal Oaks who has taken on the responsibility of walking our youngest learners, the kindergartners, from breakfast in the cafeteria to the playground. These younger students are clearly not yet ready to be independent on their own. Selena has taken great pride in being a leader for them. They respect her and follow along with her in a line as she heads them to their playground. Selena comes to school each morning, eats her breakfast, and then waits before school recess time to walk our very long line of kindergarten students to their playground. This display of helping others has given Selena a new outlook. She smiles and is happy at her responsibility. She has prospered at helping others and shines with pride when she tells me about her 'job'. This has been a win-win situation. A very selfless display of caring by a young person who feels important due to a small task that was asked of her."

### **Jorge Gonzalez**

Sequoia High School,  
Visalia

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Kayla  
Thompson



Nominator states, "Jorge is one of the most trustworthy and generous students we have come to know and love. His attitude and work ethic gathers a tribe, meaning he sets an example for what can be done with resources for students. Jorge goes above and beyond in Sequoia High's XL After School Program. Along with doing his best in school and making valuable connections with his teachers, he is not afraid to put his best foot forward and take on additional responsibilities in XL. He helps us with event coordination and projects while simultaneously keeping regular attendance in our enrichments after school such as Jiu Jitsu, Youth Council, and College and Careers. Jorge is usually the first one we ask when we need an extra pair of hands and he never has a single complaint. He also never hesitates to challenge his friends or staff to a good game of pool. Jorge is a prime example of what it means to be Sequoia Strong, and we cannot think of any student more deserving of this recognition."

### **Chase Boozer**

Shannon Ranch  
Elementary School, Visalia

#### **RESPECT**

nominated by Elaine Harris



Nominator states, "Chase is a very respectful student. He cooperates with all of his classmates. He waits politely to speak with his teachers. He gets along with everyone and everyone enjoys being around him. This shows that he is respectful to others and himself."

### **Joselyn Marquez**

Stone Corral School, Visalia

#### **RESPECT**

Nominator states, "Joselyn is an excellent student! She is a student who is very pleasant to be around and is a person whose behavior and work habits serve as good examples to everyone. Joselyn will be successful in whatever challenges

nominated by Christopher  
Kemper



she meets because of her willingness to work hard, her responsibility, and her strong character. Joselyn always has a smile and a friendly greeting. She gets along well with her peers, and shows true sincerity with her classmates. She is a hardworking student. Joselyn will go out of her way to help someone, or to show friendship and kindness when someone is having a hard day. She always gives her best effort and works very hard to be successful."

**Jasleen Sanchez**  
Valley Life Charter School,  
Visalia  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Trina  
Fonseca, Brandi Travis



Nominator states, "Jasleen is amazing 5th grade leader and one of the most responsible 5th graders I've come in contact with. Not only does she put her assignments first priority, but she just seems to be doing what she is supposed to be doing at all times. Jasleen has shown responsibility by also keeping a positive Growth Mindset. This has allowed her to go over and beyond in all subjects from math, history research, making connections with our novels, and her amazing narrative writings. It has been an absolute honor teaching such a responsible leader who is also a powerful role model for her fellow classmates."

**Jersee Nesmith**  
Valley Oak Middle School,  
Visalia  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
nominated by Stevan  
Chamalbide



Nominator states, "Jersee is a student athlete who exemplifies outstanding character both on and off the field. She represents her school with honor."

**Emily Padron**  
Veva Blunt Elementary  
School, Visalia  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
nominated by Ellen  
Dahlenburg



Nominator states, "Emily is an amazing girl! She comes to me to do group work and is ALWAYS on task and ready to do/complete whatever is asked of her. She is a leader for the group and the other students look at her for help or information if they need it. She will read, write, or answer questions with a positive demeanor and will do what is asked of her without hesitation, and if she does not understand, she will ask. It is with pleasure that I nominate Emily for CHARACTER COUNTS! because she should be one who will become a leader in her years of school ahead!"

**Jessica Standlee**  
Visalia Technical Early  
College High School,  
Visalia  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
nominated by Karen  
Roebuck



Nominator states, "Jessica has been our office aide for two years. One of the reasons she is allowed to be an office aide is that we know she will assist the office staff with any task we ask. Jessica is always calm and collected. She is also an industrious scholar, taking COS classes and keeping her grades up. Jessica assists her younger sibling to school every day. It is a joy to have Jessica at VTEC."

**Rayden Garcia**  
Washington Elementary  
School, Visalia  
**CARING**  
nominated by Pete Nunez



Nominator states, "Rayden is a kind and gentle spirit. He is very responsible and never forgets what is expected of him. When I ask him to help another student or do something to help me around the classroom, he never considers the student or the task that needs to be helped or job done a problem. He has been well raised and his good upbringing is apparent every day. He never asks what is in it for me or what do I get; he does things out of the goodness of his heart. When I see a



student like Rayden in my class, it gives me hope for the future. Rayden inspires me to be a better teacher and instill his values in the rest of my students."

### **Cecily Hawkins**

Willow Glen Elementary  
School, Visalia

#### **CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Ray  
Cartagena, Gregory Jurica



Nominator states, "Cecily exemplifies all the Character Counts pillars. In a short time, she has grasped true leadership and is currently our Leadership President. She is a great example to her peers, and is well respected by staff and students at Willow Glen. She brings an energy and enthusiasm that is contagious. Our leadership students are fully on board with her leadership, and are excited to be a part of her team. Cecily is a tremendous leader. She does so much for our school. She is a great role model to all students on campus. She strives to make the climate and culture of Willow Glen better and is willing to put in many extra hours of work to make that happen. She helped create several events for students that promote a great culture. She is kind, respectful, and hard working in all aspects of life."

### **Matea Doria**

Castle Rock Elementary  
School, Woodlake

#### **CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Monica  
Figueroa



Nominator states, "Matea is a great citizen. She is our PBIS class leader and helps her classmates deal with bullies. She also enjoys helping anyone that needs help. Last year in 4th grade, she helped me and another teacher a lot. She would stay and help tutor students in math, or she would help us organize our classroom. One Friday afternoon, Matea spent over an hour helping a teacher put up a bulletin board. Matea took pride in her work and left a beautiful board for the class. Matea has also spoken up for others when they were too shy or scared to say something. You can find Matea and a bunch of other wonderful students playing four square respectfully."

### **William Robinson**

Francis J. White Learning  
Center, Woodlake

#### **TRUSTWORTHINESS**

nominated by Becky Aguilar



Nominator states, "William is very trustworthy. I trust that he will make the right choices even when no one is watching. He is always on task in the classroom, working at his table or on the floor ready to learn. When Will is at my reading table, he is trusted for knowing what to do, and how to show me he is ready to read. On the playground, he can be trusted to play fairly and include other children. I trust that he will return his homework. I trust that he will always do the right thing!"

### **Alexis Lopez**

Woodlake High School,  
Woodlake

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Bernadette  
Ornelas



Nominator states, "Alexis is the type of leader everyone needs in their classroom or on the court. You may not know it yet, but you can learn a lot from her. She is a leader on our team, not only by being vocal, but also by her actions. Alexis always does the right thing, even if it may upset her teammates, but she accepts that responsibility as the team captain. She makes the best out of any situation she is dealt with and comes out on top. She is the ultimate team player and looks out for everyone on her team and treats them with respect. I know I can count on her to lead practice if need be. She inspires her teammates to believe in themselves by lifting them up when they are down."

### **Juan Chavez**

Woodlake Valley Middle  
School, Woodlake

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Connor Beck

Nominator states, "Juan started the year off rough in terms of effort, but has completely changed suit. If there were a most improved student award, I would give it to this kid. He tends to



shut down when met with an obstacle, but that has not stopped him from scoring well on exams and turning in assignments."

**Bonnie Medrano**  
Woodville Union School,  
Woodville  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
nominated by Yesenia  
Martinez



Nominator states, "Bonnie is willing to go far and beyond to make others happy. She has blossomed from a shy student to a leader. Bonnie would show up every tutoring day with a smile, willing to learn. She has never questioned any task assigned to her nor has she complained about any of the things she does in class. Two years ago in journalism class, she was very shy to interview others, use the recorders, or take pictures. Now, she is the one who teaches the fourth graders how to use the tools. The fourth graders look up to her with admiration and see her as a role model. Even though she is extremely shy, she volunteered to sing at a school event when nobody else was willing to take on the challenge. The courage she showed was amazing. Bonnie is now involved in the dance club and sings during events. She might be shy, but when she is needed, Bonnie puts her feelings to the side and ensures others are happy! I am so proud to see her grow into a beautiful well-rounded individual. Any person who comes across her will feel happy!"

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For more information about the CHARACTER COUNTS! program in Tulare County, visit [tcoe.org/CharacterCounts](https://tcoe.org/CharacterCounts), or contact Kelley Petty at [kelleyp@tcoe.org](mailto:kelleyp@tcoe.org) or (559) 740-4303.

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