



Thank you for helping us celebrate Tulare County Students of Character

On Saturday, October 24, 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 2020 Kids of Character Week, October 19-24. 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 [more than 4,600 students nominated](#) this year.

View the [honorees and finalists in each pillar category](#) celebrated at the 2020 Provident-Salierno Family Foundation Kids of Character Drive-through Event.

Uday Khalifeh

Cutler Elementary School,
Cutler
CARING
nominated by Teresa
Langdon



Nominator states, "This year has been an odd year to connect with students. We are not seeing our students in a face-to-face format. We do not have the mini-conversations we usually get to have with students during a normal school day, while walking in line, or even during recess or reading groups. It makes it much more difficult for students to stand out; however, Uday has been able to stand out this year. Uday makes sure to say "Hi" to anyone he encounters through distance learning, even if it is through a chat message on GoGuardian. When a new student enters the class, he makes sure to welcome the new student to the class, taking that first step to make the new student feel welcome. He is also willing to help if he sees that something needs to be taken care of during his distance learning session, like helping take roll or reading chat messages. Uday shows that he cares for people every day and is a ray of sunshine on even the cloudiest day. I am glad to have gotten to know this student this year."

Angel Hernandez

Dinuba High School,
Dinuba
CITIZENSHIP
nominated by Kristi Blatner,
Erika Lopez

Nominators state, "Angel has been a model of persistence for our students at Kings River Union School. When everyone had to begin distance learning, Angel noticed children and their parents who were struggling. A former Pioneer and a senior at Dinuba High School, Angel began to assist elementary school families with their internet connection. He knew from



experience that parents who are not tech savvy would need help even knowing how to find google classroom, let alone connecting their devices to a hotspot. Angel quickly understood the enormity of the situation and began going to the Hodges Community Center each morning, where students from King River Union School would come for help. His classes at Dinuba High School did not begin until midday, so Angel has volunteered his mornings to help elementary school families. Angel has been a model citizen and an exemplary model of character for Kings River Union School and his community. ”

Maria Reyes

Grand View Elementary
School, Dinuba

CARING

nominated by Rose Vieira



Nominator states, “I have known Maria Reyes for many years now, and honestly, I could point out a time that Maria has shown all six pillars of Character Counts over the years. There are a great number of students in our county that exhibit some of the Character Counts pillars, but Maria is one of the few that stand out. Maria has always been kind and helpful to others. The most recent example took place early in the school year. A student had posted a question in the google classroom, and Maria took the time to write instructions so that the student could find what they are looking for. During this challenging time with technology, Maria still tries her best to help others. This is a simple and recent example of her kindness. She has gone out of her way to be kind to others for as long as I've known her. She is a quiet and humble student who does great things for others, not because she gets recognized and praised for it but because it is in her nature. Due to her quiet nature, most people do not even realize she is even performing these kind acts for others, and that is why I chose to recognize Maria. I wanted her to know that her amazing character shines through, even when she thinks no one is watching.”

Anthony Martinez

Jefferson Elementary
School, Dinuba

CARING

nominated by Severo Romo



Nominator states, “Anthony is simply an all-around great student. Aside from always doing great work, he accepts new challenges. In addition, he is part of our GATE program and performs well there also. However, what truly sets Anthony apart is his caring for others. For example, he helps monitor our Zoom stream so that if students get bumped off, he's able to check on them so that they can rejoin our session. In addition, he helps other students in the class with their work and gets them to join my Zoom office hours. He has also been a big help for me in previewing lessons and giving important feedback.”

Armando Flores

John F. Kennedy
Elementary School, Dinuba

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Maria Trejo



Nominator states, “Armando Flores is 10 years old and he has really stepped up on helping his mother who runs a daycare. She has many children doing distance learning on computers. Armando shows his mom and the children how to log into classes on the computers. He helps with all the trouble shooting and he manages to keep up with his work as well. I'm thankful for Armando's help. I couldn't have learned without him.”

Santiago Urbano

Lincoln Elementary School,
Dinuba

RESPONSIBILITY

Nominator states, “Santiago has been faithfully completing and returning his Google Classroom assignments on time, Even though we are starting school differently this year, with distance learning, Santiago has shown he is responsible by logging onto

nominated by Deanna
Campbell



Google Classroom each day, checking to see what his assignments are, and then completing them. He submits them on time and does not need to be reminded that he has work to complete. I appreciate the fact that Santiago is responsible and takes the initiative to see what his work is, complete it on time, and turn it in. It is an adjustment to learn in a new way, but Santiago is doing a wonderful job!"

Fatima Moreno

Roosevelt Elementary
School, Dinuba

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Anne Zentner



Nominator states, "Fatima joins the whole class and small group Zoom meetings each day. She submits her class work and assignments on the computer when they are due."

Patricia Hernandez

Sierra Vista High School,
Dinuba

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Linda Danner



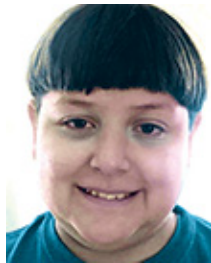
Nominator states, "I am excited to nominate Patty Hernandez for the Pillar of Responsibility. Patty is a student in my English class. Patty takes charge of her learning. When she's struggling with a task she asks for help. She will email me and ask when she can schedule time during my office hours to get help with the task she is having a hard time with. Once she logs into Meet she has a plan. She knows what she needs help with and has her questions all ready. She gives 100% and does not accept anything less than her very best. Patty is one of those students who makes a teacher, such as myself, enjoy her job. Teaching students, like Patty, who desire success, makes for a very rewarding experience for both teacher and student. I am happy to nominate Patty for this very deserving recognition."

Bryan Gonzalez

Washington Intermediate
School, Dinuba

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Mona
Hernandez



Nominator states, "Bryan has logged into every single Zoom session since we started! He does all of his assignments and participates in all of the lessons!"

Jairus Almenar

Wilson Elementary School,
Dinuba

CARING

nominated by Erin Elliott



Nominator states, "Jairus is the most polite, caring student I know. He ALWAYS has a smile on his face. He is mostly nonverbal, however you can tell his emotion through his gestures and intonation. When we sing "happy and i know it" and get to the verse about sad, and I pretend to be sad, Jairus will run up to me and give me a hug. He does this, when he sees someone who is upset, sad, frustrated, or angry, he will do whatever he can to help. This is a student who has limited cognitive and verbal skills that shows more compassion than those who don't."

Luz Avila

Ducor Union Elementary
School, Ducor

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Louis Smith

Nominator states, "I nominate Luz Avila and she is one amazing student. As I see the hard work she puts into her studies. She is always in class being a leader and helping others staying on task. I asked her to explain to the students how she gets her work done and she told them she does not allow video games and other activities like that to distract her



from her school work. She has amazing citizenship and is a leader beyond her years. The sky's the limit for her!"

Emma Solis-Ramirez

Alila School, Earlimart

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Amy Valencia



Nominator states, "Emma is a bright student who always tries her best in everything that she does! She works so hard on all her assignments. She likes to help out in the classroom and helps her friends with completing their work. When faced with a tough decision she will also think about both sides of the story and pick the best choice for the situation. Emma is a very responsible, bright, and eager student in the classroom and in her community."

Analiah Ontiveros

Earlimart Elementary

School, Earlimart

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Stacey

Reese



Nominator states, "Analiah has been a model student during this time of distance learning. She has not only attended all sessions of learning, whether it be recorded lessons provided on Class Dojo, or live instruction on Zoom, but she also completes all activities and assignments designated for Independent Work. This might sound simple, but being that Analiah is only in the First Grade, using a new device (Chromebooks), and being introduced to totally new learning platforms such as Seesaw and Literacy Footprints (Digital), I find it extraordinary that she keeps up with such grace and perseverance. She is a shining example of what it looks like to be a responsible first grade leader!"

Victor Acolt

Earlimart Middle School,

Earlimart

CARING

nominated by Wendy Sear



Nominator states, "Victor shows he is a caring student daily. At home he cares for his cats and chickens. He feeds them and collects eggs. At school, he cares for his classmates and staff. He helps other students who are struggling with virtual learning by giving them friendly directions. Victor is an excellent example of a caring student and I am proud to be his teacher."

Stephanie Jimenez

Exeter Union High School,

Exeter

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by David Giltner



Nominator states, "Stephanie exemplifies all the Pillars of Character. Stephanie can be counted on to always tell the truth. She is honest, even when honesty might not have the best consequences for her. She can always be trusted to do the right thing, even when nobody is watching. Stephanie treats others the way she wants to be treated and sets an example for others to follow. She says please, and thank you, and is always courteous with staff as well as peers. She sees the good in everyone and does not allow differences to sway her opinion others. She raises her hand, and waits to be called upon, when appropriate. She arrives on time and completes her assignments on a timely manner. In a time when it would be easy to "slack off," with distance learning, Stephanie not only completes what is assigned, but asks for additional work. Stephanie is also good at remembering to return forms completed by parents, and doctor notes when she returns from an absence. She takes turns, and allows others to have an opportunity to respond, even if she knows answers to trivia

questions, or has an opportunity to “beat” others. Stephanie is the picture of good sportsmanship: gracious in defeat, and respectful in victory. She is empathetic to those in need and responds to those seeking attention. Stephanie is an all-around good kid; an amazing young lady. Stephanie’s contributions to her classroom are immeasurable. She is constantly productive, always engaged, and forever an asset. Stephanie works with others to create a better classroom, a better community, and a better world.”

Peytin Elliot

Lincoln Elementary School,
Exeter

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Casey
Munger



Nominator states, “Peytin is being recognized for always being responsible, but this kid truly shines in all areas of character. Peytin goes above and beyond every day in the classroom to be prepared and a role model student. She is the first student to retire her clip not once, but TWICE! (That is impressive to do in such a short period of time!) Her seriousness for learning is what teachers dream of! Peytin is a stellar kid not only in academics but character as well. Peytin has a huge, loving personality that her peers and I adore. Keep up the positive work Peytin! I am so proud of you! It is going to be a GREAT school year!”

Layla Garza

Rocky Hill Elementary
School, Exeter

CARING

nominated by Whitney
Pollock



Nominator states, “Layla is a wonderful young girl who is kindhearted and always the first to give a compliment when exiting the bus. She loves to laugh, play and spend time with her family, especially her two little twin cousins, Ella and Bailey. They are her favorite playmates. Most of Layla’s success and happiness derives from her wonderful family: her grandmother and grandfather and two aunts who have dedicated their lives to making sure Layla is the best version of herself, and it shows. In a recent conversation I had with Layla’s grandmother Martha, she expressed to me how proud she is of Layla as the doctors told her when Layla was an infant that she might not be able to talk or learn. In a recent assessment, Layla read a book aloud and answered five of five comprehension questions correctly! Layla is a true example of what hard work and love can do for a child with special needs. There is no better word to describe Layla other than CARING. She has a heart of gold and without a doubt makes this world a better place. I am so proud of Layla and all she has accomplished over the past two years in my class. Through Layla, we are reminded each day of what it means to surround yourself with positivity and love. I nominate Layla Garza for the Character Counts Award under the pillar of “Caring”.

Henry Wesslen

Sierra View Junior
Academy, Exeter

CARING

nominated by Diana Ward



Nominator states, “Henry Wesslen could have been nominated for any of the Six Pillars of Character. Henry is a very special student. Even in the midst of the pandemic and school closure, Henry made sure those in quarantine do not feel alone. He often turns to YouTube to bring positive messages through funny skits. These skits often involve his family and friends. Henry’s kindness is his infectious attitude. He is the rare student who is able to develop a multi- dimensional perspective through inspirational acts of caring. If a child needs supplies, he asks his parents to purchase them. In the past, Henry has been instrumental in raising money for field trips and made sure other students who were unable to pay were

not left behind. Henry often includes his grandma's homemade fruit crispy snacks that are delivered to the elderly who are ill and alone and in great need of a smile. Oftentimes Henry has played the guitar during Zoom meetings bringing a much needy dose of happiness. ”

Spencer O'Rafferty

Wilson Middle School,
Exeter

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Damian
Marquez



Nominator states, “Spencer goes above and beyond what is required during these trying times. He does not use any excuses and has taken complete responsibility for his learning. Spencer does all of his work and is the first one to jump on Zoom during office hours for any type of clarification on assignments. He is the perfect example of a student being his or her own advocate. He will come out on the other side of this pandemic and distance learning a better person. He is the pillar of responsibility and deserves to be recognized for his hard work.”

Kaylie Villarrial

Farmersville High School,
Farmersville

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Audrey
Westbrook



Nominator states, “Kaylie is an exceptional sophomore student in our agriculture program. Her SAE project is a placement working for the Farmersville High School Agriculture Department. In addition she just finished raising a market lamb for the Tulare County Fair. She quickly rose to be one of the livestock farm managers in our program. She feeds and cares for the departments breeding sheep and goat flocks daily. She constantly is helping myself and others with their projects. Kaylie is a student every teacher enjoys in class and wishes to have more of. Kaylie is a chapter officer this year where she works with five other officers to keep our FFA program going. Kaylie is active in her church. Kaylie was recently diagnosed with a volleyball sized tumor on her kidney. Despite her diagnosis she continues to work to help serve others. She is an exemplar example of a servant leader.”

Ramon Munoz

Freedom Elementary
School, Farmersville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Audrey
Westbrook



Nominator states, “I first met Ramon when he started coming with his older sister twice daily to help feed the high school livestock and her market lamb project. After seeing Ramon nearly on a daily basis working with livestock solely voluntarily, the idea popped in my head to offer Ramon his own market lamb project. Ramon obviously accepted the great responsibility of the lamb project enthusiastically. Since that day he's worked harder than any 11 year old I know. For the past three months he has come to exercise, feed, and water his lamb twice daily and clean his lamb's pen. He's been using expensive school equipment, and housing his lamb on the school farm responsibly and in a respectful manner. Ramon not only takes care of his project, but also continues to help other students and myself by feeding animals on the farm. I absolutely cannot wait for Ramon to be in high school and involved in our FFA program. He is such a great young man, with a contagious smile I hope he never loses!”

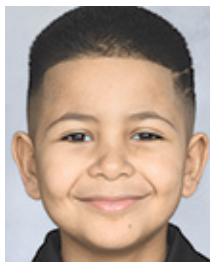
Xavier Cazares

George L. Snowden
Elementary School,
Farmersville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Diana Puga

Nominator states, “Xavier has shown tremendous responsibility during our distance learning time. Whenever a new task is assigned, he says, 'Teacher, can you give me some time to write it down in my journal so I don't forget.' Sure enough, he does not forget to do his tasks and holds himself accountable for our work due outside of our Zoom hours together. When he



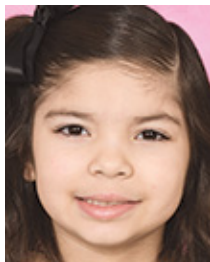
is unsure, he is sure to log back into Zoom to clarify his questions. He is a great student to work with this school year."

Katherine Franco

JE Hester Elementary
School, Farmersville

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Brandi Finch



Nominator states, "Katherine deserves the citizenship because she has all the pillars combined into one tiny body. She is responsible and always turns in her work. She participates in class, and is trustworthy. She is respectful towards me and the other students. She works very hard and spends a lot of time on the online programs. She is also caring because she shares the google meet with her younger sibling."

Melissa Vera Aguirre

Ivanhoe Elementary
School, Ivanhoe

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Maria Botello



Nominator states, "Melissa has been a great role model for other students. She has demonstrated RESPONSIBILITY in her learning by asking questions, completing asynchronous assigned work every day. She takes pride in her work and volunteers to share her work and teach others (including the teacher) how to successfully upload and submit work. She does not give up and requests help or guidance from her teacher during her independent work time. Melissa takes her school seriously and is conscious of her responsibility in her education. For example, I received an email from her just last week requesting permission to use her Chromebook to play Cool Math (and of course, I said "Yes"). She not only requested permission but she supported her request by indicating that she has completed all of her assignments since distance learning began and that she wanted to play an educational game. I was shocked but excited to be reminded that there are many students who respect their learning and demonstrate integrity. I proudly nominate Melissa Vera Aguirre for a Kids of Character Award."

Isaac Cisneros

Kings River Union School,
Kingsburg

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Kristi Blatner



Nominator states, "Isaac was having trouble connecting with the school on his first day of distance learning. No one at his home was able to help, so he called the school secretary. She took not one, but three phone calls from Isaac until he was able to figure out how to use a hotspot and connect his device. Isaac is an example of Responsibility because he cared about his education enough to stick with it! Isaac did not give up, stuck with it, called back and made himself successful in his online classroom."

Cristel Rodriguez

Jefferson Elementary
School, Lindsay

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Marissa
Knutson



Nominator states, "The learner we would like to nominate is Cristel Rodriguez (4th grade) for Responsibility. Cristel's father unexpectedly passed away two weeks into the school year. In the midst of her mourning, Cristel continues to show up to her Zooms three times a day and has stayed on top of her schoolwork. This little learner has demonstrated HUGE resiliency and responsibility! She is staying strong and showing up every day to give her very best. She has left us all in awe."

Julian Navarro

Nominator states, "Julian Navarro exemplifies what it means to

Reagan Elementary School,
Lindsay
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Erik Walker



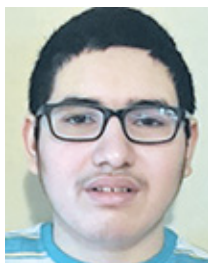
be responsible as he was an awesome learner before we went to distant learning. He was always on-task and ready to learn. However, once we went to distant learning, he really embraced it and never missed a single Zoom meeting or our tutoring sessions in the afternoon. He came to at least four meetings with me every day. I was amazed by how much zooming he would do with me. He also never missed a single assignment in history and science. We also have weekly goals that must be met in math and reading, and Julian was the only one who finished them every week. Julian kept me on my toes because of his dedication to his academics. Julian is also an avid sportsman especially when it comes to football. He is also very dedicated to his football team as well. He never missed a practice! We need more people like Julian in our world. He truly does make it a better place to live."

Frankie Ceballos
Roosevelt Elementary
School, Lindsay
CITIZENSHIP
nominated by Dawnalee
Gonzalez



Nominator states, "Frankie is quick to offer his technology expertise when other students as well as the teacher needs a little extra help."

Eric Alcazar
AcCEL - North County
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Debbie
Michaelian



Nominator states, "Eric Alcazar has taken responsibility for his virtual distance learning. He has a wonderful attitude during his Zoom sessions and has completed all of his work."

Angela Manzo
El Monte Middle School,
Orsi
CARING
nominated by Melanie
Gonzalez



Nominator states, "I nominate this Angela Manzo for the Pillar of Caring. She has all the qualities of a caring person. She always makes sure everyone is having a great day. Even when she is not having a good day she cares to make sure everyone is. Each day this student makes sure I'm doing okay through distance learning. She sends sweet messages asking how my day is going and to not let anyone ruin my day. She also goes above and beyond and sends class notes of what happened during the live sessions. These notes will be used to help other students in my classes when they don't attend the live sessions. The notes will also be beneficial for those students on IEPs. She deserves to be the next kid of character 2020."

Aubree Zamora
Golden Valley Elementary
School, Orsi
RESPECT
nominated by Lucy
Gonzalez



Nominator states, "Aubree is a great student. She is one of the first students to join our Zoom meetings. Aubree is always prepared to learn. She is respectful and follows our Zoom rules. It is a pleasure having Aubree in my class."

Alize Maldonado
Orsi High School, Orsi

Nominator states, "I would like to nominate this Alize for the Pillar of Responsibility. During these challenging times, she has shown tremendous responsibility at school and, at home taking

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Jennifer West



care of her siblings while her guardian is at work. She has been utilizing all the skills taught in order to be successful. She is keeping her grades up by managing her time, being organized (i.e. agenda, sticky notes, phone reminders, etc.), and asking the necessary questions in order to clarify when she doesn't understand. All very important tools in order to be successful. She has maintained a positive attitude, and we are extremely proud of her personal and academic growth."

Emma CerdaPalm Elementary School,
Orosi**CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Tamara Berry



Nominator states, "Emma Cerda, follows all of the Six Pillars of Character, but one that stands out is Citizenship. She stays calm and has helped her teacher when the internet was failing. She has helped our student teacher with help navigating through the new educational app. She did this by contacting her who also teaches at our school, and when she found out things were not going so well, she jumped into action to help us solve the problem. Emma saved the day and the student teacher was able to launch her lesson successfully. I am very proud of Emma for handling the crazy situation so well."

Walley AlamsiPixley Elementary School,
Pixley**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Ana Lucio



Nominator states, "I'm sure Walley has always been an exemplary student, but even over Zoom, he has adapted quickly to the world of distance learning. As distance learning has presented various challenges to all, this student has made it look so easy. He has memorized and adheres to our Zoom Class Expectations. I can always count on Walley to log in a few minutes early to ensure he's never late. On Google Classroom, he not only turns in assignments on time, but they are usually turned in early. He's always ready with an answer by either raising his hand, putting it in the chat box or speaking into the microphone. Because Walley takes responsibility for his learning, he is always prepared and he is able to grasp ideas and concepts quickly. Having students like Walley helps out other students become better as well. He is a great role model and benefit to other students who may struggle with how to behave. It has been a pleasure to have Walley Alamsi in my class and I look forward to watching him grow for the rest of this year."

Stephany Zapien

Pixley Middle School, Pixley

RESPECTnominated by Deborah
McCaskill

Nominator states, "Stephany Zapien is a very polite and respectful young lady. It has been a pleasure getting to know her this year and learn more about her personal story. The one thing that stands out to me is her fortitude and resilience. Stephany has dealt with great adversity in her life but even in her current struggles, she is present and always trying to be her personal best. She may fall short but she returns to try again the next day. I see Stephany as a work in progress who has a vision for herself and needs guidance and acceptance to see it happen. Regardless of where she may be at the moment, she is always respectful and aware of those around her. It is very apparent in her journey that Stephany respects her educational opportunities and appreciates the team of educators who stand with her. She is an amazing young lady and such an important part of our school family."

Natalie Gomez

Pleasant View Elementary

Nominator states, "We all know we are experiencing unprecedented times with COVID-19 and several other events

School, Poplar
RESPONSIBILITY
 nominated by Tashima
 Irving



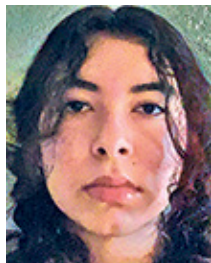
that have caused our students to feel stranded socially, emotionally and academically. However, there is one student who continually exhibits responsible character. This student springs joy and sunshine through these unfortunate situations. Natalie Gomez is a sweet, caring and considerate young lady. She is very punctual and always prepared with her assignments when our class Zoom meeting starts. She sits quietly at her work station in her kitchen, waiting to receive directions from myself or my co-teaching partner. Natalie is an active participant in all subject areas and always greets us with a smile. She displays great dignity in her work and always completes her assignments. When she needs assistance with her work she doesn't hesitate to login and receive help during mentoring hours. Dancing and singing along to brain breaks, drawing pictures, solving math expressions, and spelling high frequency words are some areas Natalie excels in. We know we can count on her to uphold and follow all of the online school rules. Natalie raises her hand and waits patiently to be called on, and she respects others when they are speaking. I asked her mother about her character at home, and she stated that Natalie is very good to her sister. She willingly enjoys helping her mother wash dishes, do laundry, tidy up her room and pick up her toys. It is such a joy having her as one of my students. Natalie is one reason this year is still a great success for the world of education."

Henry Alfaro
 Alta Vista School,
 Porterville
RESPECT
 nominated by Cydni Guich



Nominator states, "Henry is an excellent example of respect. Not only does he get all his work done, it is done early and perfectly! I watch as he cares patiently for the little ones in his household while at the same time doing his classwork. He shows us how he helps out at home and does things to make life easier for those around him. He makes school much easier for me! He is always ready with a correct answer no matter what is happening around him. I can see how he respects his family, friends and himself. I am so proud to have him in my class this year!"

Lucero Tapia Diaz
 Bartlett Middle School,
 Porterville
TRUSTWORTHINESS
 nominated by Shelby
 Lozano



Nominator states, "Lucero is a very kind, helpful, and caring student. During class Lucero stays engaged and asks questions. She does her best to make sure her classmates are staying connected and checks in with her teacher periodically. Lucero has demonstrated leadership skills in her Physical Education class and taken full responsibility in all of her assignments. Lucero shares with her school community her bright smile and personality to make sure her classmates and teachers are having a good day. Lucero displays all forms of character, but Trustworthiness is where she truly shines. Keep living the Bobcat Way Lucero!"

John Jay Miller
 Belleview Elementary
 School, Porterville
RESPECT
 nominated by Sara Pendola



Nominator states, "John Jay has been an amazing scholar. He has worked extremely hard to show up on time daily for each class session. He participates with a positive attitude and is extremely polite. He is willing to try his best and doesn't give up. I am so impressed with John Jay's effort and look forward to working with him through the school year."

Farrah Castillo

Burton Elementary School,
Porterville
CARING
nominated by Ashley
McMillan



Nominator states, "I would like to nominate Farrah Castillo for the trait of Caring. When I first met Farrah in the school parking lot during our iPad pickup I could tell that she was a very special girl. Her smile was contagious! She was SO happy to be starting school again, even in the virtual setting. She is such a kind, caring and gracious student. She is always happy, smiling and her positive attitude radiates to all her peers. Farrah is a great student, a great friend and a very caring person. I am so lucky to be Farrah's teacher this year!"

Dulce Sanchez Castro

Butterfield Charter School,
Porterville
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Mia Skinner



Nominator states, "Let me tell you a little about Miss Dulce Sanchez. We started our Zoom meetings about a month ago. Dulce is so involved in this pillar of responsibility that most of our zoom meetings take place while she is working, - field work. Our first meeting was Dulce cutting grapes off the vines. I wasn't able to watch much of this while we recorded our meeting, but we maintained a conversation: She listened, asked questions, responded appropriately and continued to do her job, while she was doing school. She did not shirk either one. She takes both positions very seriously. She is less than 40 credits from graduating High School. She will be 18 in January. And she has a young son that she is responsible to every day. If that isn't enough, she also helps her mother with doctor appointments and bills and her siblings with their work. I am so impressed with Miss Dulce Sanchez and extremely proud to have her on my roster. I know that she will 'Be Somebody!'"

Chloe Ross

Granite Hills High School,
Porterville
CARING
nominated by Jane Kisling



Nominator states, "When I saw this application I immediately thought of Chloe Ross. During this distance learning time of craziness, Chloe has been there every step of the way to help me as I venture into this uncharted territory of online learning. She has come to my rescue each and every time I contact her with my stressed out emails. She is always patient with me and understands that I need that step by step instruction. I can say that after the past six weeks she has taught this old dog new tricks and I am becoming more comfortable everyday with distance learning. Chloe is so very helpful and kind to others in her distance learning classes and has become a calming effect for so many of us. Thank you Chloe for making a difference in my stress level."

Andrew Robles

Hope School, Porterville
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Jennifer
Hedrick



Nominator states, "Andrew is the youngest of three kids. I've had the honor to have him last year in TK and now again in kindergarten. He is one of the hardest working students I've ever seen. He is raised with a lot of livestock and he takes pride in being responsible for those animals. That responsibility transcends into the classroom. He's eager to help his peers, assist me and take on any tasks I may have. He is a very mature young man."

Alizay Gonzalez

John J. Doyle Elementary
School, Porterville
FAIRNESS
nominated by Roseanna
Alcaraz

Nominator states, "Alizay Gonzalez is a prime example of the Pillar of Fairness. She is mindful of classmates' contributions during breakout sessions and she usually takes the lead as far as asking them to speak up. She makes sure to mute herself when others are talking so that her background doesn't interfere with those who are speaking. Although at times she



does not agree with others, she is respectful and does not put others down. She is honest when she did not understand the question being asked and she will ask for clarification. What I love best is her open mindedness towards her peers and to the class in general."

Veronica Avila

Los Robles Elementary
School, Porterville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Kristi Covian



Nominator states, "Veronica takes her learning seriously and is very responsible with her actions! She ensures she has completed all assignments and works hard in all that she does. Not only is she responsible in the virtual classroom, she also shows these traits in her everyday life. She is a person that will take care of business and do it in an appropriate and efficient way!"

Jenna Keller

Monache High School,
Porterville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Carmel
Spaulding



Nominator states, "I am honored to nominate Jenna Keller for the Pillar of Responsibility in the Kids of Character Award, because she exemplifies the pillar in her speech, actions and deeds. I have had the privilege to work with Jenna during her entire high school career as her agriculture advisor. But quite honestly, she could mentor me and other adults as well when it comes to responsibility, trustworthiness, respect, fairness, caring and citizenship. She daily models those characteristic traits in her academics studies, extracurricular activities and most especially in our FFA organization. As our chapter president, Jenna strives to find activities and ideas that will benefit the club and its members. That is no small task during the difficult times of Covid and the restrictions and limitations that have been placed upon our chapter during this time. Yet Jenna does it with a caring, positive attitude, and remaining conscientious of her teammates and chapter officers. But the most important aspect of the pillar of responsibility comes to her Supervised Agriculture Experience where she worked as a summer intern at the Monache High School farm. Jenna took on the responsibility of being in charge of both the Animal and Citrus orchard units. In my entire teaching career, I can quite emphatically say that I have yet to see a student who so conscientiously, carefully and responsibly did all the jobs asked of her through one of the hottest summers on record. I am honored to say that Jenna met all of our expectations, and quite frankly knocked it out of the park in terms of responsibility while caring for the Monache school farm. Even with the Covid restrictions placed upon her. I feel very privileged, as an agriculture instructor, to have had Jenna in my classes, and work with her as an FFA advisor. I am honored to nominate her for Character Counts."

Mario Lanche

Monte Vista Elementary
School, Porterville

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Erica
Peterson



Nominator states, "Mario is a perfect candidate for a citizenship award. He is a very active participant in our class as well as with his family. He and his family are very committed to his education and they make sure that he is an active participant and completes his assignments on a regular basis. Mario is a great motivator and helps some of our new students to better acclimate them to the class schedule."

David Peeks

Oak Grove Elementary
School, Porterville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Michelle
Coelho



Nominator states, "David Peeks is a student that has many challenges and has demonstrated perseverance since day one. He comes to class on days he doesn't feel well because he fears missing a lesson. David is kind to his classmates and shows respect to others. He is responsible with his time and uses it to catch up on assignments if he falls behind. David shows a willingness to try difficult tasks and works through his challenges."

Monserrat Andrade

Olive Street Elementary
School, Porterville

TRUSTWORTHINESS

nominated by Ashlee
Spears



Nominator states, "Monserrat is very trustworthy. She always does her very best in everything she does. She tells the truth and is honest. Thank you, Monse! Keep up the great work!"

Abdulla Abdulkarem

Pioneer Middle School,
Porterville

RESPECT

nominated by Bertha Cortez



Nominator states, "Abdulla is the most respectful student I have met in my teaching career. He is one to always acknowledge others, he starts our day with a good morning to his classmates and students. He does not leave the class without saying have a great day and I look forward to seeing all of you tomorrow. He is caring and understands the importance of respect to himself and others."

Michelle Cortez

Pleasant View West
School, Porterville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Gustavo
Ramirez



Nominator states, "What can I say about Michelle Cortez! She has been a joy to have in class and makes everyone in her group better. She has set the example for her classmates on what it takes to be responsible. She is always on time and is the first one to finish all of her assignments. Instead of waiting for the teacher to assign her more work Michelle takes it upon herself to work ahead and ask questions when needed. Michelle is currently working on 8th grade math and serves as a math tutor for her classmates. It an honor to nominate Michelle for the Pillar of Responsibility"

Cerina Portillo

Porterville High School,
Porterville

CARING

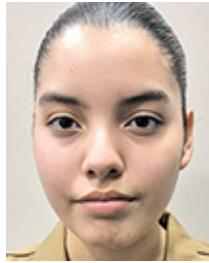
nominated by Nicole Shiers



Nominator states, "Cerina Portillo is an AVID student at Porterville High and regularly demonstrates a natural caring nature for those in her presence. This young lady cares so much about her classmates and even me, her teacher. Last week, I plugged in my new headphones during our Zoom meeting and to my dismay I lost mic contact with the students, she had me share my screen and tried to talk me through solving the problem, I was thankful for her support. Recently, a student was struggling to create a pdf document because she was working on an iPad, Cerina and others tried to coach Amanda through her app, but she was not having luck. Cerina jumped up, and said she had a slow old computer she could use, Cerina tells her during class she is going to run it to her house and leave it in the mailbox out front of Amanda's house to be Covid safe. Cerina logged on to Zoom on her phone and we watched her jog over to Amanda's and drop off the computer as we wrapped up class. This young lady goes above and beyond during this unusual time and we all feel a little extra cared about when Cerina is in the room."

Aidsa VelazquezPorterville Military
Academy, Porterville**CARING**

nominated by David Archer



Nominator states, "Aidsa Landeros Velasquez is an 8th grader and is in her first-year at Porterville Military Academy. Her decision to transfer from her previous middle school was certainly courageous. She had excellent grades, was familiar with the school and had many friends. She wanted a different kind of challenge. PMA is first and foremost an applied leadership academy that uses the military structure to provide maximum opportunities to gain realistic leadership experience. This is what initially interested her. Although there is an adult sergeant that teaches the curriculum, lessons are designed for those who already are demonstrating good leadership traits to be noticed. The sergeants are still learning to navigate in the distant learning environment and still be able to identify those that are ready for more. Then we have Aidsa Velasquez who didn't wait. She immediately took it upon herself to help cadets that may have not understood directions by rewording instructions so they could understand better, or breaking down components of a lesson so cadets that are struggling could catch up. Her cadet instructor Joseph Villa said, "Before I even had a chance to swing back to those cadets that needed extra attention Aidsa was already at work. I knew immediately that this one needs an accelerated track. It won't surprise me if we're looking at her for Battalion Commander her senior year. She could quite possibly run this place." He went on to express that he couldn't help but smile when he saw her start monitoring the chats and was directing cadets that were not focusing to get back on task. "She was remarkable. She didn't scold them as if she was their older sister. She encouraged them in a way that made them want to participate." He added, "I usually see this ability to influence other teens in third year cadets that are 9th and 10th graders. Aidsa is in the 8th grade, a first year cadet and hasn't even put a uniform on yet. That's impressive." Aidsa Landeros Velasquez has only been at PMA less than two months, but we are confident that she is worthy of a Character Counts award for Caring."

Sadiee SaengkeoRoche Avenue Elementary
School, Porterville**CITIZENSHIP**

nominated by Sandra Leon



Nominator states, "Sadiee is a great example of being a great citizen. She likes to share her knowledge with her peers and always thinks about what she can do to help others. She is creative and she gives back to the community. Sadiee is always ready to help someone in need."

Noah OrtegaSanta Fe Elementary
School, Porterville**FAIRNESS**nominated by Christina
Perez

Nominator states, "I am pleased to nominate Noah Ortega for the Pillar of FAIRNESS. Noah has done an excellent job at contributing during class breakout sessions. He is great at jumping right in and taking lead when he needs to. I have watched him on numerous occasions lead other students during breakout sessions. Noah makes sure that he gives everyone in his group an opportunity to share their opinion. We all appreciate Noah and how open-minded he is towards his classmates."

Adalynn DuranSt. Anne's School,
Porterville

Nominator states, "Adalynn is always kind and respectful to all of her classmates. She is always wanting to help out in any

CARING

nominated by Allison Pharis



way she can, and that behavior does not go unnoticed!"

Valeria Hernandez

Summit Charter Academy
Mathew Campus,
Porterville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Veronica
Chavez



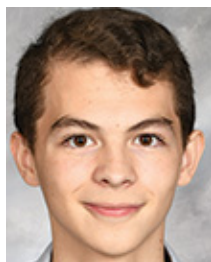
Nominator states, "Valeria has demonstrated a great amount of responsibility in the short time we've been together this school year. Whenever she is sent into a breakout room to complete an assignment, she becomes so focused that she doesn't hear the notification to return to the main room and stays in the breakout room until she's completed the assignment. Even though she may miss part of the lesson that she missed due to her focus and attention to the other assignment, she never fails to remind me that she needs a review of the lesson before logging off of Zoom for the day. I am extremely proud of this young lady for her great level of responsibility."

Ethan Black

Summit Charter Collegiate
Academy, Porterville

CARING

nominated by Katherine
Franco



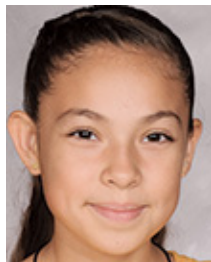
Nominator states, "Ethan is an extremely caring and kind student. One day during class, students who were not being very respectful to me. He was also in this class. Since we are in Zoom, he sent me a message individually and said how he understood what I was trying to say and apologized for the rudeness of his peers. He did not have to do that, he is in no way associated with those students but felt so strongly that something nice needed to be said, that he did it anyways. He even went beyond that, because in my next period (I have him for two classes), he took an extra step to make the class light and fun. Students like him are why I am able to continue to teach. He is truly the exemplification of this pillar and deserves to be recognized for it."

Alyssa Pena

Summit Charter
Intermediate Academy,
Porterville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Samuel
Novinger



Nominator states, "Alyssa has always found ways to go above and beyond. Attending events and making every possible way to research further and explore further the understanding of the assignment given to her. She motivates her peers as well as her teachers to give more and teach more. I feel she is an inspiration to everyone on what a strong work ethic looks like. Her ability to care for her environment and those around her is shown in her interests of sustainability. She displays that she is knowledgeable and cares to explain information that she knows applies to the project/task to get the class to think more into the meaningfulness of learning. She truly wants things to get better and focuses on improvement in everything she does. She takes ownership when something is not turned in on time and works hard to make it up and doesn't make excuses and accepts the consequences. I am always impressed with how responsible she is to be in charge of herself and manage her time and make good choices."

Vanessa Alcantar

Vandalia Elementary
School, Porterville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Mary Arias

Nominator states, "Miss Vanessa demonstrates responsibility daily by caring for all her school supplies and completing her classwork carefully and thoughtfully. In addition, Miss Vanessa has incredible self-discipline and always gets her work done in



a timely manner. Thank you Miss Vanessa for always doing such an amazing job."

**Kendra Jaime
Sanchez**

West Putnam Elementary
School, Porterville

CARING

nominated by Janae
Rodriguez



Nominator states, "Kendra is a very kind and caring student. Even through Zoom I am able to tell that she demonstrates this pillar of character. Kendra often knows the answer during lessons. However, she makes sure to let her classmates answer instead of just simply shouting the answer out herself. She also helps others in class and in small groups to find the correct page we are on or to find the answer they are looking for. Distance learning is quite challenging, but Kendra is doing very well. She even will come back to Zoom during her independent work time because she is searching for clarification on an assignment. It is very nice to always be greeted by Kendra's warm smile."

Hugo Espinoza

Westfield Elementary
School, Porterville

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Cynthia
Rivera



Nominator states, "Hugo is a very responsible virtual learner. I can always count on him to be engaged in learning. He shows up every day ready to learn and completes his work on time."

Klay Wheeless

William R. Buckley
Elementary School,
Porterville

CARING

nominated by Samantha
Cook



Nominator states, "It is my honor and pleasure to nominate Klay Wheeless for the Pillar of Caring. Our school, community, and county have returned to school virtually, and under difficult circumstances. In the very short time that I have had Klay as a student, he has been a true exemplar of caring and patience. Klay is always prepared to learn and greets each Zoom session with a smile. He is a tough worker, and never complains if another student in our class experiences difficulties or frustration with their technology or the curriculum. He is an active listener. His class and I can always look to him to be a positive role model. He abides by our Social Contract, and holds himself to the very high standards that we have set for our class this year. His actions and words demonstrate thoughtfulness and a kind heart. He listens attentively and thoughtfully to his classmates when they are sharing or collaborating. Klay perseveres with a positive, "can do" attitude, and exercises the utmost patience when I am navigating our class through difficulties. I am so proud of Klay for being such an exceptional young man that demonstrates ALL of the character traits. I want him to know through this nomination, just how exceptional I feel he is. Klay...you are exceptional! I appreciate all that you do to make our class the best it can be, and for being the best scholar and person you can be! Congratulations on being nominated MY "Kid of Character"!"

Samuel Uresti

Nominator states, "Samuel is working hard at completing his

Woodville Union School,
Porterville
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Janet Uresti



distance learning school work. Whenever I ask him if he needs a break he will say "No, I've got to finish this," and he makes sure his work is complete and he even keeps track of his Zoom sessions. He has grown up a lot this year and loves to help around the house (especially when it comes to chores and helping in the yard). Even though this has been a difficult time, Samuel makes the best of every day and is learning to focus more and more on his school work. He's an amazing child!"

Joelynn Valencia
Richgrove School,
Richgrove
CARING
nominated by Adena
Joseph



Nominator states, "Joelynn is an excellent student. She is always on time and participating during the Zoom class. She responds thoughtfully to questions asked in class and shows she is paying attention. During school closure, she made extra effort to do additional work such as creating an ABC book for the novel we were reading. She also made extra effort to get work to do independently. When she sees other students talking, she nicely tells them "Shhh" so they will pay attention. I encourage Joelynn to always stay kind and caring."

Bella Corzine
Springville Union School,
Springville
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Larissa Wells



Nominator states, "Bella is very responsible every day during our class Zoom meetings. She raises her hand to answer a question, gets her work done and is engaged in the learning process. She has kept a positive attitude and participates with eagerness! She has not missed any assignments or activities and does each one with excitement and always puts her best effort forward!"

Ryan Rusch
Harmony Magnet Academy,
Strathmore
CITIZENSHIP
nominated by Paula Roche



Nominator states, "Ryan Rusch is a senior in our Academy of Engineering and is someone who supports his friends, family, and community. In his senior capstone Engineering Design and Development class, students are challenged to solve a real-world problem; they identify an issue and then research, design, and test a solution ultimately presenting their solution to a panel of engineers. While we are early in the school year, one issue Ryan is considering is Anxiety Management for Students - A solution to the growing anxiety problem experienced by high school students in the face of the COVID-19 Pandemic; he has already gathered some research data. He is considering some other issues and each supports friends and community. Ryan is also musically talented, playing the flute, piano and synthesizer in band and symphony. He has been an integral part of the pit orchestra - made up of students and community members that performs supporting our school's annual spring musical. Ryan also performs in Porterville's City of Hope/Buck Shaffer Spectacular which supports various charities."

Sergio Erives
Strathmore Elementary
School, Strathmore
RESPECT
nominated by Shelly West



Nominator states, "Sergio shows respect every day when he logs on to Zoom. He has a positive attitude and smiles throughout the day. When speaking to Sergio he listens and answers respectfully. Sergio is new to our district, however you would never know because he has joined our class seamlessly with a smile all while working hard to make sure his work is complete. He works hard and asks for clarification when needed. He shows respect to his classmates by always making sure he is muted on zoom when needed, isn't being a

distraction to others and is always following our zoom expectations. Way to go Sergio for being a great example of Respect!"

Gwenith Murray

Strathmore High School,
Strathmore

CARING

nominated by Jill Palermo



Nominator states, "Even though I have never met this student face to face I know her heart is full of kindness. I am nominating Gwenith Murray for the caring award because not only does she care about learning Biology and about her success in the class, but she is also caring to me and her classmates. During the first month of class I had one particular student write a "not so kind" message in the chat and Gwenith came to my rescue! I absolutely cannot wait to meet this student face to face to thank her personally for being such a caring citizen."

Emilia Magana

Strathmore Middle School,
Strathmore

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by George
Baker, Carrie Ortiz-Bales



Nominators state, "Emilia Magana always has her work completed on time and strives to do more than what is assigned. She is always willing to help others who struggle with their band assignments. Emilia is a hardworking student who strives to always be positive and give back. She has volunteered to help with morning announcements and tutor classmates on her own time outside of the school day (all virtually) while maintaining straight A's. She has made this switch to virtual education look like she has been doing it her entire life. Emilia continues to make sure that her classmates and the school community are getting the most out of this situation. She is an amazing student who brightens my day with her positive attitude and willingness to try anything."

Josselyn Saldivar

Sunnyside Union School,
Strathmore

RESPECT

nominated by Eileen
Demerath



Nominator states, "Josselyn demonstrates many of the Character Counts! Pillars. She is trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and demonstrates excellent citizenship. I selected Respect because of the way she treats other people. I have always observed her to be respectful of staff, respectful of myself, and respectful of her peers. When communicating with her peers, she uses kind words that show respect. I feel fortunate to have her in my class again this year."

Eliseo Magana

Monson-Sultana School,
Sultana

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Carmen
Arellano



Nominator states, "Despite having daily internet connection problems during distance learning Eliseo shows up to our Zoom class with a big smile and always ready to learn. Eliseo is just in first grade and he has shown and continues to show that he is a responsible student during these unprecedented times. Almost daily his internet connection is not so strong and his learning gets interrupted by bad internet. He attempts to log back in and as soon as he returns to Zoom, he raises his hand and says, "I'm back sorry I got disconnected again." On a daily basis he makes sure to let me know that he did not make it to the zoom meeting due to bad internet connection! He is a very responsible student!"

Julissa St. Martin

Three Rivers Union School,
Three Rivers

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Diane Garcia

Nominator states, "Julissa has been a leader in our Student Council for several years. She wants to continue to make a difference in her class and her school even though we are not physically on campus together. When we announced we were having our Student Council elections, Julissa decided to



Adamaris Cruz
Tipton School, Tipton
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Jessica
Hurtado

declare her candidacy for Vice President of our student body. I only had two eighth graders that stepped up to the plate to show their leadership, civic responsibility, and to be an example on our TK-8 campus. I'm very proud of her for wanting to continue to be a leader in our school despite our circumstances and lack of interest from her peers. She wants to make our school a better place."



Angel Romero
Accelerated Charter High
School, Tulare
CARING
nominated by Grace
Patterson

Nominator states, "Adamaris is a wonderful child who always finishes all her work. When she was unable to sign in to our Google Meet, she still made sure she logged into Google Classroom, found all her assignments, and completed them without even being able to ask for any guidance. She is great at communicating with me when she needs help or if she is going to have to miss a class due to a doctor's appointment. I know there are many other children who are just as responsible but I'd like to nominate Adamaris because she just seems to go above and beyond in being responsible for not only her school career but also in helping care for the siblings in her large family. She is deserving of this award and I would love to see her acknowledged for all her hard work."



Angel Pineda
Alice G. Mulcahy Middle
School, Tulare
RESPECT
nominated by Tracey
Jenkins

Nominator states, "Angel Romero is especially interactive during distance learning even though he is faced with internet connectivity issues. He doesn't let that hold him back, he sometimes has to log in to the Zoom class 4-5 times within one session but doesn't let that stop him from being one of the most engaged students who is the first to let the teacher know "Excuse me, Miss, you are on mute," and gives a lot of other helpful feedback. I can always count on Angel to respond, check in on his fellow students, and interact in class despite his own technological challenges."



Claira Marvin
Alpine Vista School, Tulare
CARING
nominated by Kathleen
Jarvis

Nominator states, "Angel is one of the most respectful young men to have graced the halls of Alice G. Mulcahy Middle School. He has a perpetual smile on his face when interacting with his peers and/or adults. Angel truly has respect for his school as well, he has routinely shared ideas with site administration on how to improve upon school climate and culture to make Mulcahy, as he says, "even better!" During distance learning, Angel continues to show that same respect to all of his educators and classmates. He definitely exhibits Stallion P.R.I.D.E. (Perseverance-Respect- Integrity-Determination-Empowerment). We are going to miss this young man when he goes to high school next year."



Nominator states, "Miss Claira Marvin is a one-of-a-kind first grader that will never be caught without a contagious smile on her face or a compliment to hand out to her teacher or classmates. She arrives full of spirit ready for an afternoon of learning and isn't about to let circumstances get in the way of her learning. Love and caring radiates out of her and her classmates and teacher appreciates her kindness. Claira is always finding positive attributes about people and shares encouraging words to her teacher daily. Claira doesn't let a day go by without telling me she cares, loves me and is happy I am

her teacher. She is a young child who is influencing her teacher's outlook on virtual learning. Once you meet Claira Marvin and see her love and sincere smile she will melt your heart in a very special way. It is a pleasure to nominate Miss Claira Marvin for the caring pillar of character."

Addison Meza

Buena Vista School, Tulare

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Jordan Perry



Nominator states, "Addison has always struggled in math. Her parents expressed that she gets anxiety whenever she doesn't understand a problem. In our opening weeks of school her mom would call to tell me that Addison would have to walk away from her computer crying because learning on Zoom was overwhelming. It took some talking, but we gradually helped to build her confidence. Addison started to take advantage of intervention time every day. Whenever our instructional assistant was available in class, she would request to work with her. For the first few weeks she would come in every day during asynchronous time and I would guide her through every question on her work. The last two weeks she has shifted to trying them on her own then checking on her answers. This week we had a Kahoot on multiplying fractions and she made the podium in our class finishing third place out of 27. That virtual podium might as well have been an Olympic Medal with her sheer joy. It has taken a lot of courage and responsibility on her part to come in every day when she doesn't have to. I'm confident by the end of this year she will find enjoyment in the subject that has brought her so much frustration over the years."

Jocelyne Vazquez

Cherry Avenue Middle School, Tulare

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Sherie Altermatt



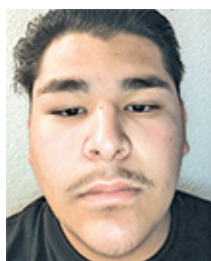
Nominator states, "I am the RTI teacher at Cherry Avenue Middle School. Because of COVID-19 Tulare City Schools set up a schedule where the RTI teachers teach the 6th graders their EL lessons. If the student is assigned to the AM cohort, they must attend the EL lesson PM time and vice versa. Jocelyne Vazquez has attended every session once she knew what she was to do and how to get to the zoom session. The one day she recently missed was because she just lost track of time. Within 20 minutes of her missing the session, I received an email apologizing for her absence. She explained the reason for missing and apologized profusely for losing track of time. I have had many other students miss and not one of them has emailed me to let me know why. This may not seem like a big deal to some, but Jocelyne is a 6th grade student who is being taken care of by her mother's best friend because her mother is in the hospital for a very serious surgery. She is not at home with her own parents and she is facing a difficult situation, but she still logs on to her EL sessions daily and participates. I am proud of Jocelyne for taking responsibility for her own learning!"

Daniel Bravo

Countryside High School, Tulare

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Cherilyn Austin



Nominator states, "Daniel is an amazing Kid of Character. He is always logged in to his classes on time and ready to work. He makes efforts to reach out to other students who are struggling with all aspects of distance learning."

**Alexa Abundis
Mercado**

Cypress Elementary
School, Tulare

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Annaliese
Braun



Nominator states, "Alexa is a shining star! She is a bright light in our class. She is kind, gentle, and very responsible. She works hard and isn't afraid to ask questions when she needs help. She always tries her best, even when it's hard. She is a good friend and a wonderful student. I can always count on Alexa to be her amazingly best self!"

Brianna Evangelista

Frank Kohn Elementary
School, Tulare

CARING

nominated by Terena
Riggins



Nominator states, "I'm excited to announce Brianna Evangelista as a nominee and recipient for the Character Counts award! She is truly a model student. In this time of COVID and distance learning, Brianna exhibits a wonderfully positive personality! She loves school and takes the responsibility seriously even though she is at home learning. Brianna is always patient and kind and we enjoy building our teacher to student relationship through sharing and games. Each time I check in on her, she shows just how caring she is not only of her great work but also her family as well. She is appreciative of this time with her mom and is respectful. I can count on her to do all the school work assigned and more! Brianna, I am so proud of you! Congratulations!"

Andrew Mendez

Garden Elementary School,
Tulare

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Maria Cerda



Nominator states, "Distance learning has been quite the challenge, to say the least. Never before have we had to move to a drastically different educational system. We have all had to quickly adapt to this new system and face daily trials that can be overwhelming. It is especially challenging for my students, who are in the TCOE AcCEL program, because they may face additional obstacles than their typically developing peers. Andrew Mendez is one such student, which is why I'm nominating him for the Kids of Character Pillar of responsibility. Andrew is a sweet fifth grade boy who has always enjoyed coming to school. That has definitely not changed through distance learning. He is up and ready for our daily Zoom meetings every day. When I log in, he will often be in the waiting room, waiting for school to begin. His contagious smile is waiting to greet us as we begin. Andrew does not let his physical challenges stop him from participating. Here in the classroom, staff can offer him assistance when needed. At home, he is determined to do the work on his own, oftentimes refusing to ask for assistance from family members. He will nod his head or say, "I will do it." At times, I see the frustration on his face, but with a little encouragement, his face beams with pride and excitement at his accomplishments. His determination is admirable and I am so proud when he finishes a new task on his own. It may take Andrew extra time to finish a task, but he is never discouraged. He sometimes stays after class until he is done so he can show his teachers his work. Andrew is so deserving of the award for responsibility because he has shown that no matter what challenges you may face on a daily basis, you can persevere and be stronger for it."

Valeria Rosales

Heritage Elementary
School, Tulare

RESPONSIBILITY

Nominator states, "Valeria is an impressive second grader, and she has demonstrated responsibility from our first meeting together. Valeria is working with me in independent study, and she has shown herself to be more independent than is

nominated by Jillian
Hanson



expected for a second grader. Our meetings are just Valeria, her mom, and myself. Valeria is always ready to share what she has worked on and learned during the week prior to our meeting. What is more impressive about Valeria's responsibility is that she is always ready to tell me what she wants to talk about. She tells me page numbers or assignments and exactly what she found interesting or challenging about the assignment. She then shares how her mom, who is her learning coach, helped her through her challenges. Together they make a great team, and I am so proud of them. Valeria's mom says that she is thriving in learning new concepts, challenging herself to find different ways to solve problems, and is determined to understand math word problems and improve her reading comprehension skills. She is eager to learn, completing her classwork daily and making sure she is always up to date with her assignments. I am so proud of Valeria and the excellent start she's had to such a different year. I can't wait to see what she accomplishes this year!"

Amiah Doyle

Liberty Elementary School,
Tulare

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Robert
Aldaco



Nominator states, "Amiah is a person with a heart of gold. She respects everything and everybody, and always has a smile on her face. She completes all work on time and with high quality. She is running for Vice President of Liberty's Student Council and also helps her parents at home with her siblings. She's always ready to help anyone when needed. She is always on time, and is always there to remind me, her teacher, if I have forgotten an announcement, or some other information that I should announce to the rest of her classmates. Amiah deserves the Kid of Character Award for Citizenship."

Virginia Brito

Lincoln Elementary School,
Tulare

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Ms. Lopez



Nominator states, "Virginia has been chosen for the Pillar of Responsibility. She is the definition of a model student and leads by example. A true digital citizen in these times, Virginia is always on task and ready to learn. Regardless of the difficult circumstances, she threw herself into the virtual learning world and gives more and more to our class each day. Virginia brings her materials to class every day, logs into class on time, and is always willing to participate and share her thinking with the class. Virginia knows how to manage her time and inspires others to be just as organized and efficient. She remembers all assignments, homework, and even goes back to double check her work before turning it in. She takes the time to look over her feedback and not only review it, but take action and edit it to re-submit. You rock, Virginia and I am so proud of you!"

Lillyanna Frausto

Live Oak Middle School,
Tulare

FAIRNESS

nominated by Eric Anthony



Nominator states, "Lilly is one of the most mindful students I have ever taught. As an AVID student, Lilly always demonstrated mindfulness when it came to making contributions in class. During tutorial sessions in AVID Lilly always would contribute her thoughts and ideas to help out her fellow classmates. She was always mindful of others and their need to contribute. I would always choose Lilly to be one of our classroom AVID tutors on the days we would hold AVID tutorials, because I knew I could always count on her to make sure the breakout sessions ran smoothly!"

Leslie Marquez

Nominator states, "Leslie would impress a teacher any year,

Los Tules Middle School,
Tulare
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Rhonda
Sousa



but her dedication and commitment during distance learning is particularly commendable. Not only does she complete every assignment given, she has been able to do so while visiting relatives outside of the area. Even from another time zone, she made every Zoom meeting and met every deadline. She takes her "job" as a student very seriously and always gives her best effort. She has very high expectations of herself and will seek out ways to improve the quality of her work (even though she already does an outstanding job). She is always prepared for learning and will not leave her computer without permission. I could nominate Leslie in every category. She has already proven herself to be a model student. She has truly blown me away!"

**Berenice Gonzalez
Frias**
Maple Elementary School,
Tulare
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Kathleen Furr



Nominator states, "As educators, we understand the realities of virtual teaching. However, virtual learning through the eyes of a first grader is almost incomprehensible for an adult. This idea is my motivation for nominating Berenice Gonzalez to be recognized for the Pillar of Responsibility. She enters each Zoom session not as a child distracted by her home environment, but as a young scholar who is engaged and ready to learn despite our present situation. Berenice is prepared to learn. Berenice is motivated to learn. Berenice is a first grader who loves school and no pandemic is going to rob her of the opportunity she has been given to advance her education. Well done, Berenice, it is a pleasure to be on this digital journey with you!"

**Crystal Franco-
Bourez**
Mission Oak High School,
Tulare
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Noreen
Cabrera, Laurie Jones,
Darlien Edmond, Heather
Luttrell



Nominators state, "Crystal has worked in the Mission Oak High School Library for the last 3 years, since the summer of her freshman year. Each summer I look forward to having Crystal assist as she is so incredibly responsible. I don't have to think twice about giving her a task. She will complete it, question it, if she doesn't understand or feels there may be a better way and completes the task without me having to look over her shoulder. Her maturity is beyond her age and she is just an incredible young lady. With all that said, since COVID-19 hit us in mid-March, we were not able to hire paid student workers over the summer. Crystal asked if she could volunteer because she didn't want to leave the library without help. Even with all her AP and summer school work she still wanted to make time to help. Crystal is willing to step up and do what is necessary to be successful in a difficult AP course knowing that putting in the hard work today will pay off in college. She is truly an amazing young lady with a loving heart who makes Mission Oak proud. We are all blessed to have her as part of our Mission Oak Hawk family."

Feliciano Hernandez
Mission Valley Elementary
School, Tulare
FAIRNESS
nominated by Korrie
Herrera



Nominator states, "Feliciano is a pleasure to speak to on Zoom because he stays on task, works hard, and plays by the rules. His Zoom time is after his sister's, and he waits patiently and gets his work done while his sister completes her time. He never interrupts, but instead offers help when asked. I appreciate how fair and respectful he is during our independent study time."

Kamyla Espinoza
Oak Valley Union School,
Tulare
FAIRNESS
nominated by Janelle
Simoes



Nominator states, "Kamyla Espinoza is deserving of recognition for the Character Counts Pillar of Fairness award. Kamyla enjoys getting on the computer and meeting virtually with me and her classmates. Sometimes she comes on when I am not quite done with a group but she is always fair and logs off her computer until I am ready to see her group. She is being fair to her classmates that are already on with me and allows us the time we need to finish up. Thank you Kamyla for displaying the Pillar of Fairness and being considerate of your classmates, we are all so proud of you!"

Xavier Galindo
Palo Verde Union School,
Tulare
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Lucy
Dominguez



Nominator states, "Xavier exemplifies what a responsible student is and is worthy of this award. A few days into our new school year, he wasn't feeling well during one of our Zoom sessions and he had to be rushed to the hospital. Thankfully, he was able to be released and sent home, but instead of missing several days of school, he returned within a few days because he wanted to learn. Xavier was able to persevere through a very difficult time and through it all, we learned we had a super hero in our class. I am proud of him."

Ricardo Quezada
Pleasant Elementary
School, Tulare
CARING
nominated by Chandler
Pitts



Nominator states, "Ricardo is a positive and upbeat student. He knows how to make learning fun and he encourages this love of learning with his peers. Ricardo is a wonderful example of the type of character I wish for each and every one of my students. Ricardo demonstrates caring through his regular patience with technology and other challenges that can arise from learning. In our class there is a tally point behavior system where each student can earn tallies based on their participation, focus, and attitude in class. Once students receive twenty tallies, they can earn a reward. Ricardo received twenty tallies and he chose the prize of a homework pass. He asked, "Mrs. Pitts, can I give my pass to someone?" I asked who he wanted to give the pass to and he chose one of the more shy students who needs a little more support. That story is a prime example of Ricardo's character. He is thoughtful, others centered, and generous. He finds deep meaning in learning and shares this with all who surround him. Ricardo has a great heart and allows everyone near him to feel cared for. Ricardo is more than deserving of the Pillar of Caring award."

Alexa Navarrete
Roosevelt Elementary
School, Tulare
FAIRNESS
nominated by Judy Delgado



Nominator states, "Alexa is a great model for the Pillar of Fairness. She follows the rules and is willing to take turns speaking during our virtual gatherings. Alexa reminds others of the rules and guidelines for our virtual tasks and tries to include others in class conversations. When she notices a student struggling she tries to encourage them and guide them to being successful. Great job Alexa on being a caring and fair student!"

Israel Davis
Sierra Vista Charter High
School, Tulare
RESPECT
nominated by Mitchell Vidak

Nominator states, "Israel is doing an excellent job in his new format of distance learning. He works hard and keeps up in his courses. He is on time for Zoom meetings and asks great questions. He is very respectful in his emails and conversations. He always uses "pleases and thank you" when communicating with me. He is a gentleman and a scholar. I am



impressed with his maturity. Israel makes my job rewarding seeing his successful progress."

Travis Verkaik

Sundale Union School,
Tulare

RESPECT

nominated by Kimberlie
Tyler



Nominator states, "Travis is one of the most respectful young men I have had the privilege of working with. Throughout his entire sixth grade year, he exemplified every character pillar. In all honesty, Travis could be nominated for any of them. However, respect is one of the stand out pillars. It didn't matter if he was dealing with peers in the classroom or his buddies on the soccer field, he showed tolerance, kindness, and was always willing to lend a helping hand to anyone in need. He was humble during competitions and encouraging to all around him. Regardless of any situation, Travis conducts himself the great pose."

Latisha Harris

Tulare Tech Prep High
School, Tulare

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Liz Rocha,
Luis Cobarruvias, Silvia
Sausedo



Nominators state, "There are so many things I can say about this amazing student. Latisha falls under so many of these pillars. She is respectful and cares about herself and those around her and I have seen this student do exactly what she is supposed to do. There are times that she might be hesitant to do something only because she second guesses herself, but she comes through and amazes me. When no one else is willing to step up, Latisha is. Her character is admirable and her compassion for others is unparalleled. Latisha is committed to family and service."

Paisley Doi

Tulare Union High School,
Tulare

TRUSTWORTHINESS

nominated by Lourdes
Campos, Mark Reindl



Nominators state, "Paisley is a responsible young lady. She is a self-disciplined student, and turns in all her assignments on time. She participates in class. She has a very positive attitude, and she sets a good example for other students. Paisley best exemplifies the trait of Trustworthiness. One of the biggest issues that we as teachers face with distance learning is how to accurately assess student learning, particularly if using traditional testing formats. It's very easy for students to look up information as they test, since even a lockdown browser isn't a guarantee that they don't have another device ready to use to look up information. When we took our first assessment, Paisley missed class that day. She came in during my study hall period the next day to take the exam, and although it was not required, took the exam while online with me. When I scored the exam, she received a perfect score on the short answer portion, but it was obvious that it was her own work. I know that it was because she has been very conscientious about writing and working to improve her writing throughout this first part of the school. I know that many students, especially when doing writing assignments outside of a classroom, would use other resources, but she demonstrates each and every day that she earns her grades through hard work, not through Google."

Kayden Miller

Tulare Western High

Nominator states, "Kayden Miller is a senior at Tulare Western

School, Tulare
RESPONSIBILITY
 nominated by Wendi Powell



and has taken on many responsibilities while on distance learning. She is taking her senior level courses at TW, enrolled in two COS classes, and watching her two younger cousins daily, while her Aunt and Uncle are at work. She is doing an incredible job while juggling all these adult responsibilities. Her family couldn't be more proud of her and the positive choices she has made in her life. She is a young lady you can count on during this difficult time."

Sophie Grisham
 Waukena Elementary
 School, Tulare
CARING
 nominated by Jennifer
 Tenhet



Nominator states, "Sophie is a sweet, kind, and generous young girl. She exercises patience and kindness especially for those who may not have the same access. For example, Sophie has proven to be a caring classmate as she offered to give up her new whiteboard so that others who had not received one yet could have one available to them. My whiteboard supply was in short demand. She had her old one from last year that she said she could use instead of using her new one. I was very proud of her for speaking up and offering to give hers away."

Adolfo Ramirez
 Wilson Elementary School,
 Tulare
FAIRNESS
 nominated by Janet Daily



Nominator states, "Adolfo is a student who respects other students' contributions to the class environment. He is patient and raises his hand at the appropriate times to respond to questions and discussions. Adolfo is a team player during activities and learning games. He enjoys learning new things during group time and sharing his knowledge with others."

Angel Corona
 Annie R. Mitchell
 Elementary School, Visalia
RESPONSIBILITY
 nominated by Megan
 Madsen



Nominator states, "Angel Corona is a pillar of responsibility. He is always on time to class meetings with his supplies and materials ready. He turns in all assignments in a timely manner. He is always engaged and participating in class discussions, activities, and assignments. When Angel is struggling to understand a concept or an assignment, he makes contact through email immediately or attends office hours to get clarification so that he can do his best at all times. He is a great example to his classmates of how to navigate this new way of learning."

Isabel Arzaga
 Blue Oak Academy, Visalia
RESPECT
 nominated by Jocelyn
 Hendershot



Nominator states, "Isabel is a constant model of respect. During distance learning she has been respectful by following our digital rules and what our school refers to as the "Core-4" respecting people, property, process, and presentation. Isabel demonstrates her respect of people with both her classmates and her teachers. When interacting with her classmates, Isabel waits for others to finish talking before she begins. She listens attentively to the ideas of others and shows this by building on their ideas, articulating her agreement with them, or respectfully disagreeing. She shows respect to teachers by asking questions to help clarify ideas, demonstrating her engagement with her learning. Isabel is also patient when technology does not work as smoothly as we would like and even offers encouraging words during frustrating moments. In addition to being respectful of people, Isabel is respectful of her property. She treats her Chromebook with care and is gentle with the other supplies she has been given during

distance learning. She has an understanding that these supplies are to help her learning and treats them with value. The last two areas Isabel demonstrates respect is in process and presentation. The way Isabel respects the process of learning is by following directions quickly. She knows the daily routine and comes prepared to learn. In regards to respecting presentation, Isabel is present. Not just physically, but also mentally. She is engaged in learning, actively participating in class, completing assignments both during class time and independently. She consistently impresses me with the respect she has worked towards in these areas. Overall, Isabel is an outstanding scholar. She demonstrates respect on a daily basis during both our live interactions and during her independent work. She is a role model for respecting people, property, process, and presentation, even during difficult and uncertain times. I am grateful for the opportunity to recommend Isabel for this award and thankful to have such an exemplary student in my class."

Christopher Guzman

Central Valley Christian
School, Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Edith
Guzman



Nominator states, "This cavalier has made the best out of a tough distance learning start, proving that Character Counts at CVC! He has displayed character traits from every pillar, but most of all he is responsible. He is thriving both academically and socially. I am honored to be nominating Christopher for this award."

**Angelo Barcelo
Fregoso**

Compass Program, Visalia

CARING

nominated by Nisha
Lozano, Mariangelina
Sanchez-Perez



Nominators state, "Being caring is someone who shows concern and kindness for others. Angelo is the most caring kid I've ever met! He is so mindful of other people's emotions. Angelo always shows concern when a student or a staff member is not present. Angelo is very attentive to others; he asks questions to see if they are okay and if they are not feeling well. When others are not feeling well Angelo shares with that class that it makes him sad. He tells the class that it would really make him happy if the person absent was in class and gets better. When the class is given options on activities done in class he makes his choice based on what would make his classmates happy. He always wants to do things to make others happy. Angelo has ways to put others before him that is why he deserves to win the Kids of Character Award."

Olivia Garcia

Cottonwood Creek
Elementary School, Visalia

CARING

nominated by Chandra
Mendoza



Nominator states, "Olivia decided on her own to help the community's homeless population. She made bracelets and sold them to others with all proceeds going towards care packages for the homeless. She is a very caring person and deserves to be recognized! She also assisted in classrooms last school year with students who were struggling. Thank you and great job!"

Noemi Morales

Crescent Valley Public
Charter School II, Visalia

TRUSTWORTHINESS

nominated by Christine
Anderson

Nominator states, "Noemi exemplifies trustworthiness in all she does. This is the second year this young lady has been nominated for exemplifying such great character!"


Presley Casby

Crestwood Elementary
School, Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Amber Avila



Nominator states, "Presley Casby is a stand out student. She is the first one on the zoom call each morning ready for school. Her enthusiasm to learn is admirable. She demonstrates responsibility for her learning by asking questions or asking for clarification when she needs it. She can always be counted on to be paying attention in class and to be participatory during a lesson. Not to mention, she is complementary and encouraging to others. Her excitement carries over to the entire class, including her teacher."

Keston Nilsson

Denton Elementary School,
Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Alisen Moore



Nominator states, "Keston Nilsson is one of my students from my kindergarten based Specialized Learning Center at Denton Elementary School. Each morning, Keston arrives online early, and anxiously awaits our lessons for the day. He stays focused, participates in every activity, and completes all of his work in a timely manner. At the beginning of the year, I was worried for all of my special education students because I did not know how distance learning would work for them. However, Keston's dedication has blown me away and shown me that anything is possible. I am watching this student advance in his vocalization, his fine motor skills, and his academic skills. Initially, these activities were difficult to grasp, however, with more practice he is learning our routine and moving on to the next activity on his own. I have no doubt that Keston's responsibility is what is helping him thrive in this distance learning model, and I cannot wait to see the improvement he has throughout the remainder of the school year."

Cindy Tayagua-Abarca

El Diamante High School,
Visalia

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Randy
Hendricks



Nominator states, "I would like to formally submit a nomination for Cindy Tayauga-Abarca in recognition of her efforts within the Pillar of Citizenship. Following a stellar performance in my Math 1 class her freshman year, we have remained in contact - even through the social changes COVID ushered in. I have regularly observed Cindy intrinsically fulfilled by her contributions to the community, impressed by her own academic drive for success and have been happy for her when she has had the opportunity for formal recognition. I hope this nomination provides an additional formal recognition opportunity. Campus contributions include active involvement in Key Club, Ablaze Catholic Club, Animal Charity Club, Diversify our Narrative (current VUSD petition movement) and CSF. AVID and Link Crew are also big parts of her campus outreach. She had recently started tutoring one of my current Math 2 students and is on-call for another student. During her homeroom she also actively tutors her peers. Outside of El Diamante, Cindy tutors two elementary students. Community contributions include active volunteering with her church. Notably she was part of Preemptive Love this past summer."

This is a quintet that has raised over \$1500 for refugees affected by COVID. (More information at <https://preemptivelove.org/playing-love-2020/>) Cindy also has time for self-enrichment. Cindy's personal drive for practicing violin was the initial hobby that helped frame my opinion of her during her freshman year. Cindy has pushed herself to excel in music which is a contrast to many students who have private lessons and adamant parents pushing music development at a very young age. Last year when she returned from the Honor State Orchestra retreat at UC Santa Cruz, I admired her perspective when she noted how proud of the chair she earned, especially when she was competing against kids with far more resources. In addition to state recognition she was also named to the Tulare County Honor Orchestra and participates in the COS Symphony, Tulare County Jr. Strings and Symphony and the Tulare-Kings Symphony. She has been in dual enrollment at COS since her freshman year. Recognition for Cindy has paled in comparison to her actions and who she is as a person. Beyond the Honor Symphony Recognition for both County and State she has a cumulative GPA of 4.1 and has earned the Tulare Symphony League Scholarship for the last two years which has finally provided an opportunity for additional private lessons. Cindy is an amazing individual that could be nominated under many of the pillars, but I am proud to know her, have been inspired watching her development from Freshman to Junior and thankful to have her as part of our community. Please consider Cindy as the Tulare County Office of Education Recipient for the Pillar of Citizenship."

Elijah Hagen

Elbow Creek Elementary
School, Visalia

RESPECT

nominated by Nancy Stout



Nominator states, "Eli displays respect daily through his actions and words. He is thoughtful of others in that he waits his turn to speak and is attentive to others as they share their thinking. He is willing to share his knowledge with others and is patient when explaining how to do something. He is a model student in every way and is a joy to have in class."

Hailey Juan

Four Creeks Elementary
School, Visalia

CARING

nominated by Suzanne
Mosley



Nominator states, "Hailey has been such a help by continuously raising her hand to share ideas, ask questions, and demonstrate student engagement. She frequently volunteers to share her answers and submitted work assignments with her class, offering wonderful examples to her peers. I appreciate her willingness to be a role model to other students as we embark on this new journey of distance learning."

Milagros Chavez Borja

Global Learning Charter
School, Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Dominique
Biello Rivera



Nominator states, "'Works tirelessly to be successful.' This sentence barely scratches the surface of describing Milagros' dedication to her learning. At the beginning of this year, Milagros was having technology difficulties with her hotspot. Even though she could not log on to Zoom to be with the class, she would complete work on her own time. Her family and her worked with the administration to figure out that her iPad was having trouble connecting to the hotspot. So, she received a Chromebook. Milagros had never worked on a Chromebook

before, but you would never know! She worked hard to navigate the new Chromebook elements to participate with us on Zoom, upload her work to Seesaw, and complete her other asynchronous work. Everyday she logs on to Zoom, she demonstrates scholarly characteristics. I never have to ask her to complete her assignments, she participates, and she goes above and beyond to complete that work. She completes over an hour of reading on her own each day, and multiple Lexia units a day. For several days, Milagros had to complete a diagnostic assessment on Zoom and she never gave up to complete the assessment. She took her time, and at one point I told her she could finish it with me that day or with the guest teacher. She chose to stay after class, and finish up the assessment. Besides staying after to complete work, she completes her daily assignments before she logs on to the PM Zoom class, and is always prepared with her materials ready. Milagros' dedication to her learning is beyond impressive, and her positive attitude is going to take her far."

Hannah Ocampo

Golden Oak Elementary
School, Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Jennifer
Fowler



Nominator states, "Hannah has been such a pleasure to have in class this year! We are all learning in this new virtual environment and she is constantly helping other students, and myself, with navigating Schoology and other websites. She is my go to student who is constantly on top of every assignment, will notify me if something is working on her end, and will help explain how to get to assignments and submit assignments to other students in class. Hannah is also my top participant in class! I appreciate her hard work and dedication as we navigate through distance learning together."

Cathryn Lopez

Goshen Elementary School,
Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Winona
Knight Hudson



Nominator states, "Cathryn SOARs everyday during our virtual learning classes. She takes her time on all of her assignments and turns in high quality work for a second grader. Learning on Zoom has not prevented her from showing " S-Self respect: she is dressed to learn, sitting in a place with no distractions, O-On-time and On-Task: she works continuously during class time and completes her daily assignments when she is not on Zoom, A-Act Responsibly: she comes to class every morning with all of her learning tools and always shares her thoughtful responses. R-Respects Self and Others: she waits for her turn to be called on and listens attentively to her classmates when they speak. It's not easy getting up and getting dressed to be ready for her 8:20 am class on Zoom but she is on the camera with her smiling face eager to learn. Her persistence in learning how to navigate technology is admirable. She ends her day with, "By, see you tomorrow!" Cathryn, you deserve to be recognized today!"

Cristian Medina

Green Acres Middle School,
Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Yolanda
Hyatt



Nominator states, "Cristian Medina turns in all work in a timely manner. When he is unsure of an assignment or needs feedback, Cristian reaches out to his teacher and implements what is suggested. Cristian is a kind and respectful young man. He is very polite and a good role model to others."

**Jaundy Perez
Becerra**Highland Elementary
School, Visalia**CARING**

nominated by Megan Garay



Nominator states, "This is my 7th year working with Jaundy. Each year, she impresses me with her kind and compassionate heart. She builds others up, encourages her peers, and even cheers herself on when she is working on something difficult. Since kindergarten, Jaundy has been known at our school for her bright smile, joyful laugh, and uplifting spirit. Jaundy is a friend to all and treats others with compassion and generosity. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to work with Jaundy each day and I know that her positive attitude will take her far in life. Way to go, Jaundy!"

Marco AlaridHouston Elementary
School, Visalia**RESPECT**nominated by Andrea
Robles, Tiquio Arellano

Nominators state, "Marco shows respect by raising his hand when he wants to share. He also waits his turn to answer questions and listens quietly to those who are speaking. Marco is never absent from Zoom unless he has a doctor's appointment or is feeling sick. He is always on time. He is always excited about learning even if it is virtually. Marco loves to listen to the ABC Sounds video; he sings along and says the sounds as he listens. He gets excited about reading the books the teacher displays through Zoom. Marco is an excellent example of what teachers would love to see from all students on Zoom."

**Brandon Meek-
Flores**La Sierra Military Academy,
Visalia**RESPONSIBILITY**

nominated by Ronni Aguilar



Nominator states, "Brandon Meek-Flores has been a student at our school off and on for the past four years. He has been through some very difficult situations and still he has worked very hard to stay on track to graduate this year. This school year he has turned in all of his assignments and has been very responsible in this online learning environment. He emails to make sure he understands assignments and he asks what he can do to improve. This is a very nice and welcome change. His goals are to do well in school, possibly attend the military and have a career where he can take care of himself and his younger brother. I nominate Brandon for the Kids of Character Award for Responsibility. He not only cares about his own education, but cares about doing well so he can care for others."

Elisabella AvalosLinwood Elementary
School, Visalia**CARING**

nominated by Julie Cates



Nominator states, "We can experience Elisabella's warm, kind and caring attitude even through distance learning. When our class of sixth graders meet on Zoom, I know I can count on Elisabella to arrive with a smile on her face and a willingness to help others navigate tech platforms. I appreciate that she continues to be a role model during this unique learning experience."

Adalynn EsparzaManuel F. Hernandez
Elementary School, Visalia**RESPONSIBILITY**nominated by Chelsea
Padilla

Nominator states, "This student always completes her work. She is a hard worker, always prepared and ready to go. She aims to succeed by being ready and eager to learn. She asks a lot of questions and wants to participate as much as she can. Adalynn is always focused and paying close attention. She is a model in the classroom and is able to help other students when they get lost, even on zoom. She is a joy to have in the classroom as she is optimistic, resilient, and full of energy."

Arianny Craddock

Mineral King Elementary

Nominator states, "Responsibility in the time of COVID is more difficult than ever. I know that as a teacher, and as a parent.

School, Visalia
RESPONSIBILITY
 nominated by Vanessa
 Gonzalez



The need for students to be independent learners and workers has increased. Both students and families are finding they have more responsibility in their own learning. I am nominating Arianny Craddock because she has really stepped up to the plate. Arianny effectively uses her time by completing assignments on her own from her mom's office while her mom works. When she submits an assignment she doesn't just do what is asked but she goes above and beyond. While the teacher may ask her to read one book a day, Arianny spends 30-40 minutes a day reading books on epic. She has really taken charge of her learning and it has really shown in her reading skills. I am proud to nominate Arianny as a Kid of Character superstar!"

Nixon Thompkins
 Oak Grove Elementary
 School, Visalia
CARING
 nominated by Lindsey
 McMahon



Nominator states, "Nixon does a great job being a caring member of our classroom community. He is always aware of others and if someone is having a hard day, he will bring it to my attention and try to help that person. He frequently shows he cares by making sure his twin brother is on task, has what he needs, and even goes over to console him if he's having a hard afternoon."

Evelynn Martinez-Ochoa
 Pinkham Elementary
 School, Visalia
TRUSTWORTHINESS
 nominated by Dona
 Johnson



Nominator states, "Trustworthiness is a character trait that often takes time to build within a school setting. However, within the first few days of school, it was clear that Evelynn could be trusted to reveal several character pillars required to be a successful student. In addition to her trustworthiness, she often displays an eagerness of empathy and caring to assist anybody in need. Her selfless character enables other students to strive to become a stronger student. Evelynn demonstrates responsibilities, but she is eager to encourage others to rise up and succeed as well in all facets of school. Evelyn continues to strive to do her best and soar even with her mom being deployed abroad and not in her daily presence."

Kristilyn Hetherington
 Redwood High School,
 Visalia
CITIZENSHIP
 nominated by Nick Miller



Nominator states, "Kristilyn Hetherington is a hard working journalist. She is a four-year member of the Redwood Gigantea staff and Editor in Chief and a sports writer. She has a passion for sports journalism and works incredibly hard to use her journalism skills to report on the Redwood sports community."

Sebastian Mendoza
 Ridgeview Middle School,
 Visalia
FAIRNESS
 nominated by Jessica
 Malmsten



Nominator states, "Sebastian is a conscientious learner and leader in class. During breakout sessions and group assignments, I can rely on him to be a team leader and contribute his fair share to an assignment. Sebastian is very mindful and he takes his classmates' opinions and points of view into consideration while working collaboratively."

Adrian Gonzalez
 Riverway Elementary
 School, Visalia
RESPONSIBILITY

Nominator states, "Adrian is such a responsible boy. As his mother, I do not have to remind Adrian of our rules because he always follows them. Adrian has never missed a homework assignment even when we go on vacation. He always makes sure all his work is completed. Adrian is a great role model not

nominated by Yasmin
Gonzalez



only to his peers, but to his sister as well. Adrian always follows the rules, and helps around the house without being told to do so. As a mother, I am proud to call Adrian my son. He has gained our trust by proving that he can be responsible. Along with our trust, he has also gained the trust of others in our community. Our neighbor has even asked Adrian to water her plants while on vacation in which Adrian did an amazing job. Adrian is the perfect example of what it means to be a responsible individual."

Anthony Camberos

Royal Oaks Elementary
School, Visalia

CARING

nominated by Tena Ficher



Nominator states, "I would like to nominate Anthony because he is such a kind and respectful student. He not only says thank you he is always asking how I am doing and thanking me for teaching him each day. He does his work on time. Raises his hand and often asks if he can go check on his Nana to make sure she is ok. It would be a joy and honor to see my kindergartner Anthony Camberos receive this honor. Through these difficult times it makes my heart happy to see Anthony so enthusiastic to learn each day. He comes to each meeting with a smile and a greeting of "Good afternoon Mrs. Ficher." Thank you Anthony for being such a caring and respectful student and being an example to all the other students in our class."

Maddyson McGill

Shannon Ranch
Elementary School, Visalia

RESPECT

nominated by Monica
Pasquini



Nominator states, "Maddyson exemplifies all the pillars of character! She was respectful, responsible, and caring! She was always ready for class and always got her classwork and homework done. She was kind to students and adults. Everybody spoke kindly of Maddyson. If anybody needed help, she was there to help. One time during circle time, she was paired with a quiet student who she didn't really hang out with. They had so many things in common, that they hung out at recess. She went above and beyond anything that was asked of her. It was my pleasure to be her teacher last year."

Andrew Garcia

Stone Corral School, Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Lenor Roman



Nominator states, "Andrew Garcia has been extremely responsible this school year. He has demonstrated great responsibility using exceptional time management and by making good choices when completing his class work and homework. Andrew has chosen to put his education first and stay focused on his academics. He is aware that within these current times it is difficult for all and he is doing what he is supposed to do. It is easy to forget his responsibilities but Andrew pushes forward and asks questions when necessary, participates in discussions, and takes his responsibilities seriously."

Julia Lima

Sycamore Valley Academy,
Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Erika Chan



Nominator states, "Julia Lima consistently demonstrates the Pillar of Responsibility in both the physical and virtual classrooms. I had the honor of being her 5th grade teacher last year, and her strong work ethic has transferred to our new online reality. She comes to Zoom class early, and submits her assignments on time. Julia asks questions when instructions aren't clear to her; this is so important because her question might be someone else's. This pandemic has been a huge learning curve for us all, and Julia helps me to understand what is working and what isn't. She is also another set of eyes when her teacher makes an online mistake, like forgetting to

include a link on an assignment, or reminding students when the chat is closed. Being responsible is more important than ever right now, and Julia should be very proud of herself for adjusting to a new format while exceeding her teacher's expectations."

Abigail Munyon

University Preparatory High
School, Visalia

CARING

nominated by Kenny
Munyon



Nominator states, "We want to nominate my daughter, Abigail Munyon for the 2020 Character Counts. While we think Abigail exemplifies all Character Count traits, she is truly one of the most caring individuals we have ever met. Her caring nature was evident ten-fold in March of 2020 when students were thrust into distance learning. With two parents working full time, Abigail and her siblings faced distance learning on their own. This was made even more difficult for Abigail's younger sibling who is on an IEP. Without Abby, we do not know how we would have kept the house running. In addition to her own set of classwork, and Zooms, Abigail made meals for her siblings, kept them entertained, and even helped her sister take her medication every day. Her calming nature and quiet demeanor brought a sense of peace to a difficult and scary time. Abigail's caring nature shined brightest around her younger sister. Abigail took the lead on teaching her school work with patience and kindness, even when frustration was high. Throughout this, Abigail maintained her status on the Principal's Honor Roll and her above 4.0 GPA, while also taking college classes at COS. As we moved into the Fall, Abigail has continued to care for her sister throughout the new school year. This includes helping her little sister navigate through the 9 separate zoom links she needs to attend each week. Abigail has her own loaded schedule with 10 classes, including another college course, and has once again maintained her high GPA. We could not be more proud of how nurturing and kind Abigail is to her siblings time and time again. While most people in her situation would be frustrated or angry, Abigail is far from it. When we come home from work every day, laughing and giggles can be heard coming from inside the house. The girls are usually dancing and singing together. During a time when many students are feeling anxious and upset, Abigail and her sister continue to smile. Abigail does not do all of the above because we have asked her to or because she was forced to. Abigail does it because that is just who she is. Her innate caring nature has been evident since she was a young child. While the circumstances are not ideal, we are truly grateful for the tremendous bond these two sisters have formed over the course of this unique situation."

Melia Carlton

Valley Life Charter School,
Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Brandi Travis



Nominator states, "Melia could probably be an example of every single one of these pillars, so it is hard to select just one. But when I think of Melia, the first thing that comes to my mind is responsible. She will 100% always do the right thing and she looks to make sure those around her are doing the right thing as well. She gives every effort to make sure she is following instructions and is on top of her responsibilities. She will hold herself accountable to her own high standards even if no one else is requiring it. If she has earned a 3 on a test and has shown her full effort to receive a very good grade, she will come to the teacher to review what she missed so that she can

practice in hopes of getting a 4 next time. Melia will ask those around her if there is something she can be helping with to help things run more smoothly and volunteers in a heartbeat if there is a job that needs to be done. Melia works slowly and methodically to make sure that what she is turning in is something she can be very proud of and that she has done it to the best of her ability because she will not accept less than the best from herself. Not only that, but if she sees someone else struggling with accountability, she will offer to help them so they don't fall behind. Finally, another example of how high of a standard Melia has set for herself; during distance learning in the Spring, we were not doing the last round of reading testing, but she had been practicing so much to pass the next level that she asked if I could come sit in the yard with her and give her reading test at home since she so desperately wanted to pass the next level she'd worked so hard for. I'm so proud of her and her amazing effort!"

Zuleima Medina

Valley Oak Middle School,
Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Jazmine
Rodriguez



Nominator states, "Zuleima has gone above and beyond to make sure she is up to speed in her classes as a new middle school student. As a responsible 7th grader, she is advocating for herself by sending emails to myself, the school counselor, as well as to her teachers to obtain the support and resources that she needs through distance learning. As the oldest sibling in her family, she is using this same knowledge to support her four younger siblings through the challenges of distance learning. She is responsible. She is a leader. She is resilient. Despite English being her second language, she continues to push herself in her English skills by utilizing any and all resources offered to her. She takes matters into her own hands and is not afraid to ask for help when needed. I wholeheartedly believe Zuleima Medina to be a Kid with Character and I know her commitment to responsibility will lead her to continue to be an exemplary student and the lawyer she dreams of becoming in the coming years."

Grant Alves

Veva Blunt Elementary
School, Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Andrew
Quesada



Nominator states, "Grant Alves is one of the most responsible students I have had the privilege of teaching. Grant always shows up on time to school ready to learn. He is always positive and always stays engaged the whole time we are in synchronous learning. He completes his daily assignments and puts one hundred percent into everything that he does. He takes his time on his assignments and does them everyday without me having to even remind him. It has been an honor to have Grant in my class."

Madison Beggs

Visalia Technical Early
College High School,
Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Travis Wyrick



Nominator states, "Madison Beggs has really stepped up this year for VTEC High School and its FFA Program. As school was shutting down in March she heard a call for student leaders in her FFA Organization. She and seven other students turned in applications to be officers during one of the most uncertain times they have ever seen. Maddie has taken the role of President, directing her team in uncertain times with the theme for the year being "Make it Happen." Together they have planned out the year, accounted for meeting activities and variables and made it their responsibility to see VTEC FFA through this year successfully. Along with her FFA Chapter

Commitment, she chose to run and was elected as the Tulare/Kings Sectional Vice President. As an officer she is bringing chapters across Tulare and Kings Counties together during uncertain times. She is continuing to take classes at COS and is remaining active in school. She has made commitments, sees her responsibility in honoring those commitments and is managing her time well."

Aubree Hubbard

Washington Elementary
School, Visalia

CITIZENSHIP

nominated by Elizabeth
McKercher



Nominator states, "Aubree Hubbard is a hard worker. She cares for others and makes sure she can help during virtual classroom time."

Alysa Ramos

Willow Glen Elementary
School, Visalia

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Cindy
Jacobsen



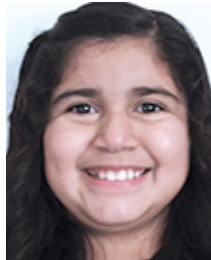
Nominator states, "Alysa has not only adapted to distance learning; she is working to assist her colleagues as well. She had submitted all assignments at an advanced level, completed all honors and assignments and uses her asynchronous time in a manner that shows she is autodidactic. She frequently offers to tutor and mentor her colleagues by making the most out of our Zoom break- out rooms and suggesting ways to extend learning to the benefit of all of our students. Alysa reaches out for feedback on all assignments and then applies that feedback to improve her work; she then extends that knowledge to also assist her colleagues. She is a model of responsibility in our 8th grade learning community."

Harmony Foley

Castle Rock Elementary
School, Woodlake

RESPONSIBILITY

nominated by Laine Read



Nominator states, "I was Harmony's Reading Resource Teacher last year when she was in second grade at F.J. White Learning Center, a TK-2 campus, and again this year while she is attending Castle Rock Elementary School virtually for 3rd grade. Harmony had perfect attendance all 4 years that she attended FJW. Harmony began distance learning with me on March 16, 2020 and had 100% compliance with completing and returning all assignments. As a third grader, Harmony began virtual distance learning with the same level of enthusiasm and work ethic that she had last year. You are a joy to have as a student, and I predict that you will be a successful adult if you keep up the good work, Miss Harmony! Thank you for being responsible to me and to yourself."

Angela Dominguez

Francis J. White Learning
Center, Woodlake

CARING

nominated by Daniel
Salazar



Nominator states, "Angela Dominguez was my student last year. She was kind to all around her. Angela spoke softly and kindly. Words spoken by her were always of a polite nature and with good intention. Angela was helpful to her neighbors. She shared her knowledge by being willing to help others with their work, and share school supplies when necessary. Furthermore, Angela displayed a generous amount of patience. She waited for her turn, waited in line, waited to share, and waited for recognition. I will not soon forget Angela and her excellent character."

Alexis Morales

Woodlake High School,
Woodlake

Nominator states, "The Woodlake High School After School staff would like to nominate Alexis Morales for Pillar of Responsibility. Alexis is a senior at Woodlake High School."

RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Mike Flores



Alexis has been a great asset to our after school program. He shows up everyday to zoom whether it be to ask for help on his homework, participate in our enrichment classes or just come online and talk about the day. He has been a great recruiter for our program getting other students to join in. During these difficult times he pushes forward and makes the best out of a difficult situation. He has been keeping up with his crazy schedule at Woodlake High which also includes a couple of college courses at College of the Sequoias. He also makes time to be involved in extracurricular activities such as Band and Key Club. We really admire his drive and determination to make the best out of his senior year. We believe he is a perfect example of the pillar of responsibility."

Jennifer Salinas
Woodlake Valley Middle
School, Woodlake
RESPONSIBILITY
nominated by Courtney
Hengst



Nominator states, "Jennifer Salinas Cisneros has been absolutely amazing during distance learning. She is extremely tuned in to the requirements of my classroom. She checks Google Classroom daily and works hard to be ahead of what I am expecting. Multiple times Jennifer has informed me of some glitch, mistake, or missing link of which I am not aware. This old-school-ish teacher is new to navigating technology at this level! Simply put, though well intended, I miss things. Jennifer emails me with the kindest, most respectful emails alerting me of situations that I need to address. Because she is so proactive, Jennifer's being aware and seeing mistakes or glitches, and alerting me, alleviates multiple emails that I would subsequently have received from other students when they discovered the mistake. The floods of emails teachers are receiving during distance learning can be overwhelming. Jennifer's proactiveness has subsided many of these emails, simply because she is so on top of things. Currently, our school is addressing proper email writing and communication. Jennifer is the banner student for that! Her emails include an appropriate subject line, a salutation, a kind opening dialogue, a statement of the situation or problem, and lovely closing. This level of responsibility of hers sets a standard for the middle school, and in my opinion, deems her very worthy of the Responsibility Character Counts award during this crazy, trying time for education!"

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

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