

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Nolin Aguilar

School: Ducor Union School, Ducor

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Megan McFarlane

Statement:

Nolin Aguilar is deaf with cochlear implants and must work twice as hard as the other students. He is amazing at working hard and pushing himself past his limits. He is my son who I have the privilege to work at his school. I get to hear him read along with ASL. I know how hard he works at not only reading the word but creating the sound with his cochlear implants and learning the signs for those words. The staff here pushes him, and he overcomes each push by doing above and beyond. He is also kind to everyone, students and staff alike. He always does what is asked of him even though it's harder and takes more time, he will do it. He is an amazing kid!

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Student Name: Efrain Cisneros

School: AcCel Exeter Community Based Instruction,
Exeter

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Susan Wendt

Statement:

Efrain is a young man who exemplifies all the Pillars of Character in every aspect of his school day, but I will focus on the Pillar of Respect. He attends school at Exeter CBI. Although some of his classmates struggle in school and completing everyday tasks. Efrain is always ready and willing to help any of his classmates when he sees one struggling or having a hard time. He is kind and respectful to everyone with whom he interacts and genuinely cares about his family and friends. He treats others the way he wants to be always treated, while at school. Efrain's parents have raised a very polite, respectful and kind young man. He is also an amazing artist and enjoys giving his drawings to others. I cannot say enough about how nice, kind and considerate Efrain is to everyone around him. He does not see himself as better than anyone and humbly shares his strengths and abilities with others to help build them up.

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Student Name: Adalberto Luna

School: Exeter Union High School, Exeter

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Anthony Chavez

Statement:

Beto has been involved with Exeter Unified Workability Program for the last two years. He has demonstrated responsibility throughout his employment as a custodian working on campus. He goes above and beyond to make sure the job is not only completed but completed correctly. Making sure to follow directions in areas of organization, landscaping and classroom cleaning, Beto has grown into a young man that has been requested to participate in the program again this year based on past performances and overall ability to get the job done. It is my pleasure to nominate Beto for the Character Counts award.

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Student Name: Charlee Summers

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Exeter

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Justine Lucatero

Statement:

Charlee is a student on our campus that exemplifies all 6 pillars. Narrowing it down to just one would not describe her character and work ethic. She is a member of my Lion K.R.E.W. Student Council and is always one that I can count on. Not only is she responsible for her own actions but takes on the responsibility of demonstrating leadership to others on our campus. Charlee is someone that I can trust to carry out any task that is asked of her and has the heart to want to help others. Even the first week of school she was assisting staff with walking kindergarten students to their playground. This is just one example of many. I believe that she deserves recognition for always being responsible, her kindness, and achievements.

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Student Name: Gavin Ramirez

School: Rocky Hill Elementary School, Exeter

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Alicia Bovetti

Statement:

Gavin is always kind and helpful. As a student in my class I could always count on him to show respect to teachers, students, and other support staff. The thing I liked about Gavin was that he had great self-control and would set a great example for everyone else. Gavin is a model student. When necessary, Gavin was always willing to help. This could have meant helping me, the school, or even another student. He is 100% reliable. He pushed himself out of his comfort zone and always gave 100%. Anyone would be lucky to have him as a friend.

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Student Name: Mateo Bustos

School: Wilson Middle School, Exeter

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Lorena Verduzco

Statement:

I want to nominate Mateo because he is an excellent student. You can ask all his teachers, and I am pretty sure they can give you good references for him. Mateo is a good student who is always on time and on task doing all his work from school. He has always got good grades and yesterday he received his first middle school grade report. He is doing so well he got almost all A's except for a B on his first report. I like that when he doesn't understand a math problem he stays there and asks for help.

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Student Name: Jazel Perez

School: Deep Creek Academy, Farmersville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Charles DeFevere

Statement:

Jazel is a kind and personable classmate to her class and respectful and inquisitive with the school staff. She is a valuable asset to our student body and to our school as a whole. The “Dragon” spirit is very present and visible in her actions and demeanor which is ideal since we are known as “The Deep Creek Academy Dragons.”

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Student Name: Hernan Robles Ramirez

School: Farmersville High School, Farmersville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Audrey Westbrook

Statement:

It has been my absolute pleasure getting to serve not only as Hernan Robles teacher the last 3.5 years, but his coach on multiple CDE and LDE teams, and advisor to some of his many Supervised Ag Experience Projects. Hernan has grown so much in the last 3 and a half years, but one thing has remained consistent: he always does what he is supposed to. He is incredibly responsible, and completes tasks required of him for not only his classwork but his many SAE projects outside of class time. He is helpful and assists other students in getting things done. But not only does he help his peers, he is always the first one to ask what I need help getting done for our Ag department and on our school farm. He was the first student to come to mind when thinking of a nominee for this award. It is without any reservation that I recommend Hernan Robles Ramirez for this award.

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Student Name: Hennessy Cruz

School: Freedom Elementary School, Farmersville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Sebastian Santillan

Statement:

Hennessy exemplifies the qualities of being a trustworthy student by always being honest in class. She would always tell the truth even when she knew that she had made a mistake. Hennessy always kept her promises with her friends in class. When Hennessy said she would do something, you knew for a fact that she would do it. I could depend on her for taking items to other staff at school. Hennessy is a great example of a trustworthy student.

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Student Name: Miguel Zarate

School: George L. Snowden School, Farmersville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Kayla Vest

Statement:

Miguel Zarate is always making sure everyone gets a fair chance! Whether it's during a game at recess or working on class activities, Miguel makes sure everyone is included and treated equally. For example, when his class was playing a game, he took the time to explain the rules to a new student and made sure teams were balanced so everyone had fun. In group work, Miguel listens to everyone's ideas and encourages everyone to share, making sure no one feels left out. His sense of fairness and treating people equally really stands out and helps make the classroom a better place for everyone!

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Student Name: Emma Trujillo

School: JE Hester School, Farmersville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Sara Corona

Statement:

My nominee is first grader Emma Trujillo. Emma is a joy to have in class. Her warm caring spirit radiates from the smile she gives everyone as she enters our room to the good morning she says to her classmates. Emma always acts with thoughtfulness in mind. She is the first one to help or to share. She checks in on fellow students on the playground who may be having a tough day, and she is quick to offer a kind word to cheer them up. Emma is a leader in the classroom modeling respectful behavior for all.

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Student Name: Paloma Aguilar Espinoza

School: Jefferson Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Julia Lemus

Statement:

Paloma is an excelling student in her learning community, who exhibits and surpasses all the qualities of a Lindsay learner. She is part of a special group, Team EMPOWER, who welcomes administrators and educators from all over the country to visit Lindsay Unified to learn about the district's performance-based system. Paloma is well-versed in the district's mission statement, "Empowering and Motivating." for Today and Tomorrow". Part of her duties in Team EMPOWER include welcoming visitors from around the country to our school, explaining her role and responsibilities as a learner in the district, and leading visitors to visit our classrooms, called learning communities, to point out items that symbolize our mission statement. Apart from her duties on Team Empower, Paloma also lends a helping hand to her family, looking out for her younger siblings at school, and helping her parents by providing and explaining her responsibilities at school, making sure her family is well-informed of her academics. Overall, Paloma is an excellent candidate for Tulare County's Character Counts award, as she personifies an amazing example of being a self-directed, lifelong learner, who serves and participates in her learning community.

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Student Name: James Gutierrez

School: J.J. Cairns Continuation High School,
Lindsay

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Amalia Lopez

Statement:

James is an incredibly dedicated young man to his community. As a learner, he takes his role as a learner seriously and supports his peers with both academic and personal support. Notably, James takes his role as a future voter and member of the community seriously. He is a founding member and the President of the Alternative Education Key Club (the first for a continuation high school) and a member of All Student Body (ASB) and actively supports serving in events, both at school and in the community. He was selected as a student speaker when Congressman David Valadao visited our school and shared community and school needs and emphasized how important it is to take action to serve the community. James exemplifies the Lindsay Unified Core Values of integrity, accountability, and excellence. He will be an early graduate in the Class of 2025 and is a remarkable example of character, citizenship, and trustworthiness.

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Student Name: Isabella Nave

School: Kennedy Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Lorena Leon

Statement:

Isa is what we call her. She is a very responsible learner that sets up the school flag and leads the flag salute every Monday. She is careful about how she carries the flag with respect. She communicates to all learners to take hoods/hats off, place your hand over your hearts and patiently glances over to ensure everyone has followed her commands.

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Student Name: Daniel Ceballos

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Julie Denni

Statement:

Daniel is the model learner when it comes to how to show respect. He is a true gentleman - and I wish there was a box for ALL OF THE ABOVE for which pillar to award, Daniel fits every single category!!! But ultimately, he is respectful in how he speaks to others, how he cares for materials, and in the ways, he handles himself when things are tough. He never gets angry, always has a smile on his face and is just lovely to work with.

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Student Name: Beatriz Reyes

School: Lindsay High School, Lindsay

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Ana Benitez

Statement:

Beatriz embodies the core value of respect. She has consistently demonstrated a high level of respect in various aspects of her school life, making her a standout individual deserving of recognition. Beatriz is known for treating all classmates with kindness and consideration, regardless of their background or differences. She listens attentively during group work and values the opinions of others. This respect for others has made her a trusted and well-liked peer, often sought out for advice and collaboration. She steps in to mediate conflicts with fairness and empathy. Her behavior exemplifies the core values we strive to instill in all learners and sets a standard for others to follow. Beatriz's respectful nature not only enriches her own learning experience but also enhances the overall environment, making our school a better place for everyone.

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Student Name: Alexandro Arredondo

School: Loma Vista Charter, Lindsay

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Juana Moreno Martinez

Statement:

I am nominating Alex Arredondo as a Kid of Character for the responsibility he has shown as an independent studies learner at Loma Vista Charter. Alex consistently pushes himself to be the best learner he can be. Alex not only attends his academic meetings but also school events virtually even if his circumstances would make it easy for him not to. Alex strives for academic excellence by preparing for his exams and doing all he can to make progress in his classes. He does all this with an optimistic attitude and a smile on his face. His efforts are truly admirable, and he deserves to be recognized.

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Student Name: Harlow Riemer

School: Reagan Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Kala Mendonca

Statement:

Harlow Riemer is an amazing learner who exemplifies greatness in all Six Pillars of Character. However, it is her exceptional compassion and empathy towards others that makes her stand out among her peers. Harlow is always helping her peers with classwork, whether it be with words of encouragement and motivation or modeling how to complete the task. She often takes it upon herself to provide comfort for her peers when she notices they are having a hard day. She allows her peers to share their feelings with her and then makes their day better with a joke, funny face or her friendly smile that can light up the darkest room. No matter the task, Harlow does all these things from the kindness of her heart. Harlow's genuine concern for the happiness and success of those around her makes our learning environment, school and community a better place for everyone.

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Student Name: Leeanna Lott

School: Roosevelt Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Amanda Robles

Statement:

I am honored to recommend Leeanna Lott for the 2024 Character Counts award for 'Responsibility.' Leeanna is a member of our Roosevelt Tech Team and has shown impressive leadership. She is responsible for her recording group and takes her role very seriously. Leeanna consistently meets deadlines and manages her time effectively while showing commitment to our school. Not only does Leeanna take pride in her video editing skills for our team but she also extends her actions of integrity with peers and faculty on campus. She communicates effectively and collaborates well in team settings while maintaining a positive attitude. I am confident that Leeanna's abilities and perseverance will allow her many opportunities in the future.

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Student Name: Jasmine Gonzalez Espinoza

School: Washington Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Angel Cortes

Statement:

Jasmine is a learner who leads by example. She is respectful, polite, and very responsible. Jasmine is in multiple programs and teams here at Washington Learning Community. She is in R.E.A.P, a scholarship program that emphasizes striving for Levels (High grades). She is in Team Empower, a program across LUSD where learners assume the responsibility of leading visitors from other districts and programs around our school campus to show the Performance Based System (PBS) in action and answer questions about our PBS. Lastly, Jasmine is taking on the challenge of taking a 9th grade math class while still in 8th grade. She shows up to all meetings on time and does what is asked of her. Jasmine stays committed to all these tasks and maintains her responsibility evenly and does so in a calm and collected manner. Jasmine has great aspirations and is motivated to achieve those aspirations that seemingly come in, and after, high school.

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Student Name: Anahi Navarro

School: Pleasant View Elementary School, Poplar

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Tashima Irving

Statement:

Kind, helpful, loving, considerate, and consistent—these words perfectly describe Anahi Navarro. She joined our school late last year as a 3rd grader, after facing challenges at her previous school, including bullying and difficulty finding her voice. When Anahi first arrived, she struggled with assertiveness, expressing her thoughts, and managing her emotions. Her mother shared her concerns with us, and from day one, we were committed to surrounding Anahi with the love and support that Pleasant View is known for. Fast forward to today, Anahi is now thriving as a 4th grader. She has blossomed into a confident young lady, excelling in sports like basketball and boxing, and making significant academic strides, progress she hadn't experienced before joining us. What's more, Anahi's happiness is evident in her outgoing nature. She eagerly assists with passing out supplies and staying after to clean up following our TRI groups. She's no longer afraid to speak up and advocate for herself, a testament to her incredible growth. Watching Anahi's transformation has been nothing short of inspiring. Her positive change and strong character are truly commendable, and I am incredibly proud of her. I am confident that Anahi's future holds great things, and I look forward to seeing all that she will accomplish.

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Student Name: Giovanni Nava

School: Alta Vista School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Vanessa Reilly

Statement:

Giovanni Nava is a second term "Aquila Eagle." What that means is he is our school's mascot. He has initiative; he doesn't wait for me to tell him to suit up. He is kind with his time with the primary children. He is always ready to lend a helping hand/claw. Gio has also been on ASB for two years. He represents the school at leadership symposiums put on in the county. Gio is a strong leader in the classroom as well as on the court/field for sports. It was important for him to complete his duty as Aquila even if the friends were no longer on ASB. Gio and responsibility go hand and hand. It is a rare characteristic in an 8th grade young man to keep stepping up to the plate. But he always does. He does not waiver when an obstacle is placed in front of him. This is why Giovanni Nava has been chosen as a Kid of Character.

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Student Name: Denise Cavazos

School: Bartlett Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Rebeca Guerrero

Statement:

This student is a total standout in my 8th grade science class! She consistently shows responsibility by always being prepared, whether it's bringing her materials, turning in assignments on time, or spreading her positive attitude in the classroom. Denise stays organized and on top of her work without needing reminders, and she's always ready to dive into any task, whether it's individual work or a group project. What's even more impressive is how Denise takes the initiative. She asks questions when she needs help and goes the extra mile to make sure she fully understands what's going on. She's not afraid to try new ways to study or tackle a problem, showing her drive to succeed. In group activities, Denise is reliable and encourages her classmates to stay focused and give their best effort. She knows how to shine, and her sense of responsibility makes her a role model for everyone around her. It's clear she's headed for great things in the future!

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Student Name: Natalya Fernandez

School: Belleview Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Judith Church

Statement:

Natalya is trustworthy. She can be trusted to do the right thing and always keeps her promises.

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Student Name: Alan Zamora

School: Burton Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Leslee Taylor

Statement:

Alan is an honest young man. He can have open discussions about topics that are sometimes difficult for third graders, such as playground disagreements. He can openly talk about and solve problems with his peers. Not many third graders can explain how they are feeling and then truly listen to their classmate explain his or her point of view. This rare skill makes him stick out as a trustworthy young man. Honesty, truthfulness, and promise keeping are tough skills for young people, but Alan consistently demonstrates these things!

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Student Name: Aracely Bravo

School: Burton Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Betsy Bautista

Statement:

It is with great enthusiasm that I recommend Aracely Bravo for the “Respect” Kids of Character award. Over the past year, I’ve had the privilege of seeing her demonstrate exceptional integrity, leadership, and commitment. As a captain of the BMS award-winning Auxiliary squad last year and now as the solo majorette, ASB officer, and a 4.0 student, Aracely continually exemplifies respect in all she does. Her consistent hard work and genuine nature make her deserve all accolades. What truly sets her apart, however, is her unwavering commitment to representing her family, her school, and herself with the highest level of integrity and effort. Aracely embodies the respect one should have towards education, property, others and self. She is honest about her shortcomings, and her commitment and reliability are truly remarkable. She not only spends countless hours practicing her craft with the baton, she also is a 4.0 student and volunteers in the community. She is the kind of student every teacher hopes to have—an exemplary student who genuinely likes to learn. When I had her in my science class, Aracely would nod in affirmation, ask questions and work on the projects and labs with a focus unlike others her age. Aracely is the kind of student you can trust completely, even with something as small as a candy jar on the table. In my homeroom class, she wasn’t just someone who refrained from taking candy herself—she made sure others knew it wasn’t right to take any either. Her commitment extends beyond her school duties. Aracely manages a side business and performs as a majorette for Spin Academy in Porterville, all while maintaining an impressive balance between her personal and academic responsibilities. This level of maturity and dedication not only highlights her self-respect but also reflects her respect for her family and our school community.

In conclusion, Aracely Bravo is a model of respect and character, and she is more than deserving of the “Respect” Kids of Character award. Her exceptional qualities and dedication make her an outstanding choice for this honor.

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Student Name: Makayla Galvan

School: Butterfield Charter School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jeanne Fedel

Statement:

Makayla takes full responsibility for her education and future. Not only does she have her work always diligently completed on time, but she anticipates questions her parents, teacher, counselor, administrators, and herself have of each other and doing her utmost to facilitate open and clear dialogue between all parties. It is very rare that a matter is brought up that she has not already addressed. Through our interactions, I have noticed that this self-sufficiency is Makayla's natural approach to life, and she is a responsible member of her community.

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Student Name: Denise Vargas Bedolla

School: Granite Hills High School, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Tammy Keith

Statement:

We are so proud to recognize Denise, a quiet but shining example of trustworthiness, responsibility and kindness. She found a wallet by the gym and, without hesitation, turned it into the PE teacher—never even glancing inside. When we brought Denise into the office to thank her for being such a superstar, we shared that the wallet had \$300. True to her humble nature, she smiled.

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Student Name: Uriel Zamora

School: Hope School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: Mrs. Johnson and Flor Martinez

Statement:

I would like to nominate my 6th-grade student, Uriel Zamora, for the Responsibility Award. When Uriel first joined our school, he had numerous concerns about his academic performance. However, he quickly took the initiative to identify areas where he needed improvement and set ambitious goals that, as his teacher, I was excited to be a part of. Uriel's dedication and determination to improve both in mathematics and ELA have been nothing short of extraordinary. He took on these challenges with a strong sense of purpose, and his growth has been remarkable. What began as small steps turned into giant leaps as he turned his goals into a reality. As his math and science teacher, I have watched Uriel transform into a student who not only excels academically but who genuinely loves learning. His performance in math skyrocketed, moving from being at the bottom to being the top student. Every day, Uriel expressed his enthusiasm for learning, frequently sharing his progress with his classmates and motivating them to believe in themselves, just as he had done.

Uriel's humility and gratitude also stand out. He consistently thanked me for making math seem easier for him to understand, and just recently, he approached me to say, "You teach us something new every day, and now I feel like I know everything!" His excitement and positive energy are contagious, and he truly embodies the spirit of perseverance and excellence. Uriel Zamora is a student who has demonstrated remarkable growth, a passion for learning, and an unwavering commitment to his education. He is a role model in our classroom, and I am proud to nominate him for this recognition. He is, without a doubt, deserves to be recognized. Uriel goes above and beyond to help anyone in need. He is kind to all his classmates and brings joy into the classroom every day.

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Student Name: Julian Bravo

School: Jim Maples Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominators: Kirk Stinson and Audra Wilson

Statement:

Julian Bravo is a fabulous citizen. He works to make the school a better place. As part of the lighthouse team, he has served JMA as a mentor to a “little buddy” on campus. He often shares ideas to make JMA more equitable for all. Julian is inclusive of all people and ages. He is a good role model for the younger students. He is trustworthy and respectful of adults. Julian is a respectful student. He can recognize his audience and speak appropriately. He acts when needed and works to protect or defend those who may need an ally. His ability to maintain patience and restraint stands out among his peers. Julian has been a part of our Lighthouse team for two years.

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Student Name: Ximena Diaz

School: John J. Doyle Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Lizet Lagunes

Statement:

Ximena consistently demonstrates reliability and accountability in all aspects. Whether it's completing assignments on time or supporting her classmates, she takes ownership of her actions and follows through on her commitments. Her ability to prioritize tasks and manage her time effectively sets a wonderful example for her peers. She does an amazing job at following ALL expectations and procedures in and out of the classroom. She is a natural leader who is slowly starting to step out of her shell. She demonstrates determination when it comes to succeeding, and I know that I can depend on her for anything. She shows an admirable sense of integrity. Ximena is always honest and fair, earning the trust and respect of both her teachers and fellow classmates. She also willingly takes on leadership roles in class activities, guiding her teammates with encouragement and enthusiasm.

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Student Name: Carlos Angel Sanchez

School: Los Robles Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Mariya Duran

Statement:

Carlos shows trustworthiness in the classroom by always being honest with his teacher and classmates, even when he makes mistakes. He consistently follows through on his commitments, whether it's completing assignments on time or helping a classmate with a project. Carlos is also dependable, as his teacher and peers know they can count on him to keep his promises and follow the rules. Additionally, he takes responsibility for his actions, owning up to any errors and working to make things right.

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Student Name: Kristy Cha

School: Monache High School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Robert Sundre

Statement:

Kristy Cha is an amazing young lady. Not only is she doing great in my US History class, but I have known her as a soccer player for the last 3 years. I know she keeps busy in the AVID program and aims for the stars. In the time span that I have known her, she has always been reliable. In my history class, she will come during brunch, early in the morning or at lunch to either study or ask about her assignments. She strives to be the best that she can be and never complains or blames anything or anyone else when things don't go her way. Whenever I need some help, she is the first to volunteer. I know that I can rely on her. Kristy just got back from SCICON last week and volunteered her time with elementary school children for the entire week. When she got back, she comes to my classroom in the morning, asks me about some work and went straight to studying. Kristy knows that there can be an amazing future in front of her, but that she needs to work at it and be consistent. Many people know this, but she applies it daily.

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Student Name: Abel Martinez

School: Monte Vista Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Francisco Orozco

Statement:

Abel leads by example in the classroom and among his peers. He can always be counted on to help set up the classroom, remind others of upcoming assignments, and model appropriate behavior in group discussions. His classmates respect him for his dependability, and I appreciate his proactive approach to both academic and school life. He often stays behind to help clean up or prepare materials for the next class without being asked, embodying a true sense of ownership over his environment.

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Student Name: Michael Suarez

School: Oak Grove Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Elizabeth Zamudio

Statement:

Michael is the most caring person! He is kind, helpful, and shows concern for other's well-being. He is compassionate, loving, kind, helpful, sympathetic, concerned for other feelings, thoughtful, generous, and humane. He is always kind and takes great consideration even when others are not. He helps others find a way to help themselves, he acts with empathy and takes accountability when he is wrong. His biggest strength is looking out for others, even when no one is watching.

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Student Name: Evelyn Jeronimo

School: Olive Street Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Ashlee Spears

Statement:

Evelyn consistently demonstrates honesty, which is a wonderful quality that sets a strong example for her peers. Her ability to tell the truth and keep promises builds trust within the classroom community, and it is heartwarming to see her values reflected in her interactions with others.

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Student Name: Aolani Perez

School: Pioneer Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Preston Phillips

Statement:

Aolani exemplifies what it means to be a remarkable student through her unwavering commitment to helping others. With a warm and approachable demeanor, she goes out of her way to assist her classmates, whether by tutoring those struggling with challenging subjects or lending a listening ear to peers facing personal difficulties. Her proactive attitude and selflessness not only enhanced the learning environment but also inspired her peers to adopt a similar spirit of collaboration and kindness. Through her dedication to uplifting others, Aolani truly embodies the qualities of an outstanding and compassionate student.

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Student Name: Julio (Angel) Torres

School: Pleasant View West School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Natalie Martinez

Statement:

Angel (Julio) stayed for 10-15 minutes after class to make sure all chairs and stands were put away. He cleaned up the mess others had left and showed respect for the Band Room. I think he needs to be recognized for going the extra mile.

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Student Name: Ryleigh Schoonover

School: Porterville High School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Mallory Thompson

Statement:

I am pleased to put forth my nomination for Ryleigh for the Character Counts Award. Ryleigh embodies the core values represented by each of the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. However, I firmly believe that the pillar of respect aligns most closely with her character. Throughout her time at Porterville High School, both academically and in her athletic pursuits, Ryleigh has consistently demonstrated a profound respect for her peers, teachers, and the community. She treats everyone with kindness and consideration, making it a priority to listen and understand different perspectives. This respect has not only earned her the admiration of her classmates but also established her as a role model within our school.

Ryleigh's commitment to respecting others is evident in her interactions every day, whether in the classroom, during sports events, or in casual conversations. She consistently goes out of her way to uplift those around her, making Porterville High School a more positive place for everyone.

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Student Name: Andrew Dohnke

School: Porterville Military Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Destiney Warren

Statement:

Andrew has merited recognition in all these categories, however, in the category of respect he truly shines. One of the keyways I see him show respect always is his ability to disagree or offer a different perspective in a caring and understanding matter. I have had Andrew in English class since his freshmen year (he is now a current junior) and while our classes frequently discuss controversial topics throughout our curriculum (including identity, freedom of speech, etc.) he has never failed to offer his perspective in a way that not only invites further discussion but discourages black and white views. He is unfailing in his moral code; even when others are not around, he continues to:

- 1) Show respect to himself, his peers, and his teachers.
- 2) To encourage other students to do the same. He does not allow students to speak poorly of the school, the teachers, or their classmates and while he has had his fair share of disappointments, he handles them with grace. For instance, when selecting students to speak to our school board, his group was not chosen due to one of his partners being unprepared. He did not speak ill of that student, instead (though disappointed) he reassured her and himself that there would be other opportunities. This summer while on a strenuous wilderness survival experience, he continued that character of respect, for example, even though he had not eaten in days, was hot, sweaty, hungry, and tired, he did not let his attitude change. Instead, when challenged he continued to speak and respond respectfully even when he was not shown the same courtesy. I watched as (despite how tired, hot, and hungry he was) he said "yes mam"; to a staff member who spoke unkindly to him because she was uncomfortable.

This to me is the biggest sign of character:

- 1) someone who is respectful no matter who is watching
- 2) encourages others to do the same
- 3) no matter what circumstances they are in they still carry themselves with that respect.

That means that it is ingrained in who they are, not just something they are doing for show. This is why I believe Andrew deserves this award. He always embodies respect and has proven it again and again.

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Student Name: Valeria Avalos

School: Roche Avenue Elementary School,
Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Dulce Ramos

Statement:

Valeria is an exemplary student who consistently shows respect in all aspects of her behavior. She is always attentive during lessons, actively listening and engaging thoughtfully with the material. Valeria not only follows instructions but also goes above and beyond to ensure she understands and contributes meaningfully to class discussions. Her respectful attitude is especially evident in how she interacts with her peers, offering support and kindness, and always being considerate of others' opinions. Her approach to learning and relationships fosters a positive and inclusive environment that enhances the classroom experience for everyone. Valeria's respectful demeanor is a key factor in her academic success and the strong connections she builds with those around her.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Melani Reyna

School: Santa Fe Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Jessica Ramirez

Statement:

Melani is being recognized with a Respect Award for consistently showing consideration and respect toward her peers, teachers, and the classroom environment. She listens attentively, follows instructions, and treats everyone with kindness and fairness. Melani's respectful attitude shines through in the way she values other's opinions and demonstrates good manners in all interactions. Her ability to create a positive and harmonious atmosphere makes her a role model for her classmates, contributing to a respectful and welcoming learning environment.

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Student Name: Andrea Baca

School: Sequoia Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Ryan Corwin

Statement:

Andrea is an upstanding student who is always doing the right thing. She maintains a 4.0 GPA, is a member of our Leadership class, and participates in extra-curricular activities. Aside from all of this, her best virtue is how CARING she is for ALL the people around her. I have witnessed how helpful she is to her campus by frequently picking up trash from the snow cones that our Leadership class sells at lunch time. However, the biggest example of Andrea's caring personality is when she recently cleaned the bathroom walls after a group of students splashed paint all over the walls while preparing for a volleyball game. When I asked Andrea why she cleaned up the mess even though she wasn't participating in the face painting, she stated, "I felt bad for Chuck, our daytime custodian, because he didn't even make the mess and now it was going to be extra work for him". These are just a few examples that demonstrate what a caring person Andrea is. It is truly a blessing that she is a Sequoia Hawk!

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Student Name: Alejandro Solis

School: St. Anne's School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Sylvia Herrera

Statement:

Alejandro is a big guy on campus yet he's a gentle giant. He is not too cool for school because when we needed him to step up and join academic competitions, he did it graciously. He has grown in his confidence, has been flexible, and has helped us where we need it. He has shown tremendous responsibility by keeping up with schoolwork, extracurricular activities like sports and competitions for academics and even helping with student council. Some of his friends are not involved with school activities but that does not stop Alejandro from doing what needs to be done. He is a responsible young man and is dependable and trustworthy.

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Student Name: Lucas Banuelos

School: Summit Charter Academy Mathew
Campus, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Maria De Jesus Gonzalez

Statement:

Lucas Banuelos is an outstanding student. He has many great traits and would fulfill all the pillars of character. Lucas is eager and ready to learn in class every day. He makes good decisions, cares for his friends, finishes his work, and is always focused. I love Lucas's enthusiasm and friendly personality. He is a role model student, and I know he will accomplish many amazing goals this school year with his strong and responsible demeanor. Congratulations to Lucas! Your teacher is very proud of you.

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Student Name: Nevelyn Lopez

School: Summit Charter Collegiate Academy,
Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Sharon Turner

Statement:

At Summit High School, one student stands out for her responsibility, leadership, and immense school pride: Nevelyn Lopez, the President of the Spirit Club. She has embraced this role with enthusiasm and determination, making it her mission to raise the school spirit to new heights. From organizing fundraisers to planning themed events for sports games, Nevelyn is always at the helm, ensuring every detail is thoughtfully executed. Despite the challenges of balancing her academic commitments with the demands of leading the Spirit Club and many other activities she is involved with, Nevelyn handles it all with grace, demonstrating impressive time management and dedication. Under her leadership, the Spirit Club has expanded in both size and influence. Nevelyn has worked tirelessly to build unity among students, involving not just upperclassmen but all grades in the school's activities. Whether she's leading efforts to decorate for games, collaborating with student government, or reaching out to local businesses for sponsorships, Nevelyn always goes the extra mile to foster a positive and energetic atmosphere.

What truly sets Nevelyn apart is her ability to inspire others. She encourages her peers to get involved, ensuring that every student feels welcome, regardless of their interests or background. As a result, school events have become more inclusive, and the student body feels more connected. Thanks to Nevelyn's leadership, Summit High School's spirit is stronger than ever. The energy and pride she has is transforming how students experience their school, and it's clear that Nevelyn is not just leading the Spirit Club; she is owning the role of President with hard work, vision, and unwavering responsibility.

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Student Name: Melissa Rodriguez

School: Summit Charter Intermediate Academy,
Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Bernadette Ornelas

Statement:

Melissa has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to her responsibilities, embodying the highest standards of accountability and diligence. Through her meticulous attention to detail and proactive approach, Melissa has not only excelled in her role as a student but has also set a remarkable example for her teammates. Her ability to manage multiple tasks effectively, meet deadlines, and uphold the values of integrity and dependability has been instrumental in the success of our team. She is involved in extracurricular activities and still manages to excel in her schoolwork. It is with great admiration that I nominate Melissa for her outstanding responsibility

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Student Name: Ali Ali

School: Vandalia Elementary School
Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Mary Arias

Statement:

I would like to recognize the incredible responsibility that Ali has been showing in our classroom. His hard work and focus on writing his numbers all the way to 100 in such a short time is truly impressive and he puts in a lot of effort, and I can see how proud he is of his progress, and I am just as proud of him! Ali's dedication to learning and doing his very best is a great example for his classmates. Keep shining and working hard, Ali! Thank you so much for being such an amazing little scholar!

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Student Name: Eimie Delgado Estrella

School: West Putnam Elementary School,
Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Maribel Cervantes

Statement:

Eimie has consistently exemplified fairness and a commitment to playing by the rules, both in the classroom and beyond. In class, she fosters an inclusive environment by ensuring that every student has a voice during discussions and group activities. Eimie actively encourages her peers to share their ideas, and she respects differing opinions, creating a sense of equity among her classmates. Outside the classroom, Eimie continues to demonstrate her dedication to fairness. Eimie always respects the rules and encourages her teammates to do the same. Whether in competitive settings or collaborative projects, she advocates for fair play and integrity, ensuring that everyone adheres to established guidelines. Eimie's consistent approach to fairness not only sets a positive example for her peers but also helps cultivate a supportive and respectful school community. translate to Spanish

Eimie ha ejemplificado consistentemente la equidad y el compromiso de seguir las reglas, tanto en el aula como fuera de ella. En clase, fomenta un ambiente inclusivo al asegurarse de que cada estudiante tenga voz durante las discusiones y actividades grupales. Eimie anima activamente a sus compañeros a compartir sus ideas y respeta las opiniones diferentes, creando un sentido de equidad entre sus compañeros. Fuera del aula, Eimie continúa demostrando su dedicación a la equidad. Siempre respeta las reglas y anima a sus compañeros de equipo a hacer lo mismo. Ya sea en entornos competitivos o en proyectos colaborativos, aboga por el juego limpio y la integridad, asegurándose de que todos cumplan con las pautas establecidas. El enfoque constante de Eimie hacia la equidad no solo establece un ejemplo positivo para sus compañeros, sino que también ayuda a cultivar una comunidad escolar solidaria y respetuosa.

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Student Name: Abrielle Solmantil

School: Westfield Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Ruth Solmantil

Statement:

Abrielle is currently a 6th grader in Westfield Elem School GATE Program. Abrielle was chosen as President of Expanded Learning Program (ELP) in her school. Through that, she actively participates in meetings and share her ideas with the teachers on how ELP can be better and promote enrichment activities for the after-school program to help fellow schoolmates in participate in activities and find it more enjoyable. Abrielle has also been chosen to do the video morning announcements for Westfield Elementary. She tries to make the video announcements fun and engaging. She brings positive energy and her personal touch to the morning announcements. She also does interviews to her fellow schoolmates and teachers that were also include in the morning announcements once a week. Abrielle loves music, she plays violin and is part of the Westfield Orchestra and Porterville Strings Orchestra. Abrielle also plays the piano. As a parent, I am proud of what she has been doing right now in her school, not only does she enjoy it, but you can see the motivation and the commitment that she is putting into it.

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Student Name: Mariaximena Campos

School: William R. Buckley Elementary School,
Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Clarisa Flores

Statement:

I am pleased to nominate Mariaximena Campos for the Respectful Character Counts Award. She consistently demonstrates exceptional respect for peers, teachers, and the school community. Whether through active listening during discussions or offering support to classmates in need, Mariaximena fosters a positive and inclusive environment. Her kindness and empathy are evident in everyday interactions, as she treats everyone with dignity and understanding. Mariaximena not only upholds the principles of respect but also inspires others to do the same, making her a deserving candidate for this honor.

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Student Name: Natalia Rodriguez

School: Richgrove School, Richgrove

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Claudia Aldaco

Statement:

I would like to nominate Natalia for her responsibility in my TK classroom. She consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to her duties and has become a reliable resource for both students and staff. Natalia goes beyond in her role, ensuring that every task is completed with care and attention to detail. Her ability to manage her responsibilities effectively while supporting her peers is truly commendable. She creates a positive environment and is very caring. Her proactive approach and willingness to take the initiative make her a standout candidate for this recognition.

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Student Name: Weylin Thompson

School: Springville Union School, Springville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Nicole Merritt

Statement:

Weylin is someone who treats everyone equally and consistently strives to make decisions based on justice and integrity. He doesn't show favoritism or make judgments based on popularity, appearance, or personal biases. Instead, he considers all sides of an issue and makes thoughtful, balanced decisions. In group work, he ensures that everyone's voice is heard, and contributions are valued. He distributes responsibilities evenly and steps in to mediate conflicts, promoting cooperation rather than competition. When disagreements arise, he listens to both perspectives and seeks solutions that are equitable for all involved. Weylin follows school rules and expects others to do the same, leading by example. He doesn't take shortcuts or bend rules to get ahead, and he encourages his peers to act with similar fairness. If a situation seems unjust, he is often the one to speak up and advocate for what's right, whether it's defending a classmate from bullying or addressing unfair treatment. Overall, he creates a positive, inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels respected and valued.

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Student Name: Judith Gomez

School: Harmony Magnet Academy, Strathmore

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Kimberly Marsh

Statement:

Judith Gomez is one of our team captains for Harmony Magnet Academy's Academic Decathlon this year. It's her second year on the team, and she is the type of student who always takes the initiative to move things forward. Judith has taken on a lot of responsibility this year as a leader of the team, showing a great deal of commitment to wanting the preparation and learning experience to be fun for the team. One thing I really appreciate about Judith is that if she offers to do something, she can be trusted to follow through. For example, before school started, she offered to map out a pacing guide for the team's learning for the year. Not only did she follow through, coming up with a solid plan, but the Google Sheets document she created has been very user friendly for any modifications we find that I need to make. In addition to being a positive, encouraging force on the team, she also has taken on the additional responsibility of teaching our science curriculum this year. I am proud of the work she has done to help the team get off to a strong start this year, and I want her to know that her efforts are appreciated.

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Student Name: Paul Holtermann

School: Strathmore Elementary School,
Strathmore

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Erendira Vega

Statement:

Paul has shown great honesty during class time and when playing with others. We were reading during our reading group time when I asked Paul if he had been reading his books at home. He replied with "I've been a little busy and forgot to read"; but without me prompting him, he quickly replied and said, "but today I will put it in my brain to read ok." He did not lie about not reading the previous night. He is a great example of the pillar of trustworthiness.

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Student Name: Jasmine Cortez

School: Strathmore Middle School, Strathmore

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: George Baker

Statement:

Jasmine Cortez is one of the most respectful students in class. She is always careful not to interrupt someone who is speaking. She listens to your instructions and waits to raise her hand if she has a question. Jasmine is very courteous and kind.

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Student Name: Destiny Corona

School: Sunnyside Union School, Strathmore

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Alicia Franco

Statement:

In class, I have a student who exemplifies honesty in everything she does. Recently, she was in a situation where she realized she hadn't been charged for a concession snack. Feeling nervous, she hesitated to approach the attendant. Instead, she came to me, seeking guidance. I encouraged her to do the right thing and offered support. With newfound courage, she went back, explained the mistake, and paid for her Gatorade. Her commitment to integrity, even in a small situation, truly stood out and reinforced the importance of honesty.

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Student Name: Mia Ruiz

School: Carl F. Smith Middle School, Terra Bella

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Mayra Ruiz

Statement:

Mia is an individual who participated in many extracurricular activities at Carl Smith Middle School. She is involved in the Robotics club, MESA club, in baile flocoriko, in leadership, Step- up club, in sports, and church activities. She is always finding ways to give back to the community! Last year she was the leader in doing a free dog/cat vaccination clinic for the Terra Bella community. In addition, she helps me put together a STEM Day for the elementary students to learn more about MESA. She is a friendly person who makes people feel welcome and part of something. In baile flocoriko she embraces the rich Hispanic culture and shares it with others by showing them what she knows. She is a wonderful dancer. I love having Mia as part of my community.

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Student Name: JJ McPhetridge

School: Saucelito School, Terra Bella

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Courtney Castle

Statement:

We have seen JJ demonstrate the pillar of caring towards other students on multiple occasions, especially during sporting events and games. JJ will not only support his own teammates but also support and cheer on students from other schools. This was recently evidenced by another principal from a local school during a travel baseball game. JJ spent the afternoon talking to one of her students and watching his game even though his team was done playing for the day. JJ treats other student athletes with respect and friendliness and can be counted on to help anyone when the need arises.

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Student Name: Gabriela Ruiz

School: Terra Bella Elementary School, Terra Bella

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Mayra Ruiz

Statement:

I would like to nominate Gabriela Ruiz for being one of the youngest step-up club members to participate in the step-up project community event. Gabriela was not afraid to share her ideas and help the Middle School participants with putting together a free dog/cat vaccination clinic in Terra Bella. You could tell she is very passionate about animals and helping the Terra Bella community. She passed out flyers and helped get some of the pets ready to get vaccinated. She was a role model for her peers.