

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



Student Name: Noah Castillo

School: Cutler Elementary School, Cutler

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Oscar Zavala

Statement:

Noah Castillo consistently demonstrates excellence both in the classroom and on the field. He is a model student who consistently makes responsible decisions, showing maturity beyond his years. Noah treats everyone around him whether peers, teachers, or coaches with respect and kindness. His commitment to teamwork and fairness is evident in his sportsmanship during PE and in every competition. Whether he's on the field or playing against other schools with the after-school teams, Noah consistently upholds the values of integrity, respect, and dedication, making him a positive role model for his peers. His contributions both academically and athletically set a high standard for others to follow. He truly embodies our school motto, play with the heart of a champion.

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Student Name: Jason Lilis

School: Dinuba Community Based Instruction,
Dinuba

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Krista Cisneros

Statement:

Jason exemplifies the pillar of responsibility. Jason consistently does what he is supposed to do in class and while out in the community. During instruction, Jason participates in class discussions and always has an answer. Throughout the school day, he continually takes care of his supplies. When out in the community, he takes the initiative and helps other students that he notices need a helping hand. Jason works hard and always does his best. Jason repeatedly cleans up after himself without being asked to do so.

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Student Names: Kylie Lopez and Sanjog Pannu
School: Dinuba High School, Dinuba

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominators: Tonya Pennebaker And TJ Celaya

Statement:

Two current Dinuba High School juniors who exemplify upstanding citizenship within our community are Kylie Lopez and Sanjog Pannu. Both young ladies are leaders on campus as officers of Dinuba High School's HOSA club for the Medical Academy, ASB, and the Mental Health club known as NAMI. Apart from this, both students have volunteered countless hours for the Central Valley food bank giveaway as well as other school functions. Despite their current involvement in these endeavors, their primary focus has been to spread awareness through a campaign that warns of the dangers of an epidemic that has affected many lives. Kylie has taken a tragic situation involving her family and has turned it into something remarkably positive with the help of her friend, Sanjog Pannu. What started as a school project has now become an ongoing passion of these young ladies as they seek to spread awareness on the dangers of fentanyl. Kylie and Sanjog have dedicated themselves to start a campaign called "One Pill will Kill." This Campaign's goal is to educate teenagers about the dangers of fentanyl with the hope of saving lives. Since last September, they have attended community events such as carnivals, parades, health fairs, town halls, and school assemblies to advocate for their important campaign message.

Kylie was also recognized last April as the Teen Woman of the Year for Tulare County. She was awarded this prestigious honor by County Supervisor Eddie Valero for the success of their campaign and for willingly participating in the aforementioned community events to spread their message. Since then, Kylie and Sanjog have been featured on local news where a special publication highlighted their efforts and campaign. This report showcased Kylie and Sanjog's work as they reached their goal in educating over 2,000 teens on the dangers of opioid and fentanyl use. They hope to double that number this school year. With their presentation, they have led instruction for adults and peers on proper Narcan training for emergency preparedness. Both students deserve to be recognized for their strong character qualities as well as their commitment to their peers and community. They both want to make a difference and change their lives for the better. Their continued involvement in school leadership and community service reveals their passion and determination.

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Student Name: Austin Thiessen

School: Jefferson Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Judy Estala

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Austin Thiessen for the Kid of Character award. He exemplifies the core values of respect and caring in every aspect of his school life, making him a true asset to our learning community. Austin treats others with kindness and consideration, embodying the principle of treating others the way he would like to be treated. His respectful demeanor is consistently evident in his interactions with both peers and teachers. He actively listens when others are speaking, showing genuine interest in what they have to say. This attentiveness not only fosters open communication but also encourages classmates to express their thoughts and ideas without fear of judgment. Austin recognizes the importance of including everyone in group discussions and activities, trying to ensure that all voices are heard and valued. This positive attitude has created a welcoming classroom environment where every student feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute. Austin consistently goes out of his way to help classmates who may be struggling, demonstrating compassion and empathy. He is always on the lookout for those who may need a little extra support, whether it be academic help or emotional encouragement. He has a unique ability to sense when someone is feeling down or overwhelmed. Austin takes the initiative to check in on those classmates, offering a kind word or a listening ear. Whether it's sharing a smile, giving a compliment, or simply being present, his caring nature has a profound impact on those around him. He understands the importance of fostering a supportive community and actively contributes to building strong relationships among classmates. His actions create a positive ripple effect throughout the classroom, encouraging a culture of kindness and support. I wholeheartedly believe that he deserves this recognition for his outstanding character and unwavering commitment to making our school and community a better place for everyone.

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Student Name: Kevin Castro

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Deanna Campbell

Statement:

Kevin is a very responsible student. He consistently completes his class work and homework and returns his assignments on time. He comes to school prepared and ready to learn each day. He shows his personal best by giving his best effort to his classroom assignments. He does a great job turning in his work and taking his time to do it right the first time. Kevin strives to do his very best on any task given to him.

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Student Name: Kimberly Carmona

School: Roosevelt Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Jessica Hernandez

Statement:

Kimberly is a top athlete in the various sports she participates in, which offers plenty of opportunity to play fair... or not. However, she chooses daily to play by the rules at recess and during her extracurricular activities. I observed her take a leadership role during kickball, football, and basketball when others were frustrated or under pressure to win. Sometimes, it's a board game or a learning game in class, but she models and advocates for fair play. She influences others to do the same through her respectful demeanor, including peers that may not have wanted to follow rules. Kimberly always tries to win fair and square, trusting the skills she and her teammate bring to the table.

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Student Name: Mikayla Jaime

School: Washington Intermediate School, Dinuba

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Hilda Osorio

Statement:

I would like to wholeheartedly recommend Mikayla Jaime for the pillar of TRUSTWORTHINESS. Throughout the time I have known her, Mikayla has consistently demonstrated the qualities that make up a trustworthy individual. She has demonstrated this trait through a situation that required honesty during a difficult situation. She has also demonstrated TRUSTWORTHINESS through her commitment to her participation last year in leadership activities and during Girl's Retreat. In addition, Mikayla consistently shows integrity in her everyday actions. She is a good friend, and she is committed to getting help from those in need. She's a very reliable friend and student. Her interactions with students and staff are honest, as she takes responsibility for her actions. Mikayla embodies what it means to be trustworthy. Her actions not only contribute to a positive and supportive school environment but also set a strong example for other students.

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Student Name: Emily Garcia

School: Wilson Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Doris Guzman

Statement:

Emily Garcia consistently demonstrates a deep sense of care and compassion for her peers, teacher, and our school community. Whether she is helping a fellow student with their studies, offering to help her teacher with any classroom jobs or offering emotional support, Emily's empathetic and hardworking nature shines through in everything she does. She is a reliable friend and an attentive listener, always willing to lend a hand when needed. Emily regularly volunteers to help classmates who struggle with certain subjects, offering her time and patience to ensure they understand the material. Whether it is writing, reading, assisting classmates with technology, or with emotional needs, she is there to help. She also takes the initiative to assist her teacher with jobs she notices need to get done by offering to coach one of her peers or checking her classmate's homework. A true example of Emily's caring nature was evident when one of her peers needed emotional, academic, and social support in our class. She has been a rock for this classmate since they both were in third grade. She has done this selflessly and without the teacher's prompting. Emily's caring nature and leadership qualities were evident within our classroom. Her peers often look up to her as a role model for kindness and her caring qualities. Emily Garcia is a student who truly characterizes care and compassion. Her positive influence on her peers and her willingness to help others make her an outstanding member of our school and classroom community!

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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!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Rajveer Singh
School: Alila School, Earlimart

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Kimberly Garcia

Statement:

Rajveer is the epitome of respect! He comes in ready to learn and to share his knowledge. He raises his hand when he wants to share and waits patiently to share his knowledge with the class. He thinks outside the box but is never boastful. He is always kind and respectful in and outside the classroom. If someone treats him poorly, he does not do it back, he shows them how wants to be treated or he simply walks away. He does not cause trouble or harm. He is a kind, calm and peaceful young man.

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Student Name: Sofia Osorio

School: Earlimart Elementary School, Earlimart

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Narcedalia Montes

Statement:

Sofia Osorio is an exceptional student both inside and outside the classroom. Her compassion and respect for others shines through in everything she does. Sofia is a thoughtful listener who truly understands and empathizes with the feelings of those around her. Whether it's offering comfort to a friend facing a tough time or readily lending a helping hand, her caring nature is evident in all her interactions. For these reasons, I am proud to nominate Sofia Osorio for the CHARACTER COUNTS award.

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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: Mateo Magana

School: Ivanhoe Elementary School, Ivanhoe

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Maria Botello

Statement:

Mateo meets several of the pillars for Kids of Character, however, I will talk about the amazing things Mateo demonstrated in the pillar of responsibility. I have had the honor of being Mateo's teacher a second year but this time as a 6th grader. Mateo is the perfect example of what a responsible student looks and acts like in and out of the classroom. He is self-disciplined and makes sure his work is completed daily; Mateo takes charge of his actions and his words. He is careful with what he says and will take time to process what comes out of his mouth. He takes responsibility for his education and asks questions when he doesn't understand something. Mateo is a hard worker that knows the value of education and the value of a job well done. Mateo is worthy of the recognition for a Kid of Character representing RESPONSIBILITY. With great honor and admiration, I nominate Mateo Magana.

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Student Name: Kaysie Grove

School: Kings River Union School, Kingsburg

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jenny Burrow

Statement:

Kaysie Grove is in my GATE class for this year. She has shown perseverance and grit to continue in our GATE class. She continues to maintain open communication to ensure she is keeping her commitment to the program and the grade requirement. Over the semester, Kaysie strived to keep her grades up in Math. Math in middle school is not easy so I respect how much effort she puts into her work to achieve this.

GATE is an academic subject requiring students to maintain a 3.0 or better in their core classrooms to stay in. There are several other criteria as well including good behavior, attendance, citizenship and respectfulness. Kaysie goes over and beyond all the character requirements for GATE. She also is one of the most talented artists I have seen in many years for her age. Kaysie should be recognized for her perseverance and hard work to achieve something she really wanted in her academics. I am very proud to teach such a hard-working and dedicated student.

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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: Brandon Madrigal Garcia

School: El Monte Middle School, Orosi

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Nancy Murillo Salas

Statement:

Brandon exemplifies both caring and kindness in his interactions with classmates. His gentle and approachable demeanor makes others feel comfortable seeking help. When leading partner share or group share activities, he uses patient and encouraging language, never making anyone feel inadequate for not understanding. His kindness is evident in his warm smile and supportive words, creating a positive and inclusive atmosphere within the classroom. He celebrates others' successes and offers comfort during challenges, showing a deep sense of empathy and compassion. Brandon's actions go beyond mere academic assistance; he genuinely cares about his peers' well-being and strives to make everyone feel valued and supported.

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Student Name: James Moreno

School: Esperanza High School, Oroquieta

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Karen Stuart

Statement:

James has done outstanding work in independent study. He has met and exceeded his goals monthly. He has been a model independent study student.

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Student Name: Alexis Sandoval

School: Golden Valley Elementary School, Orosi

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Raquel Barragan

Statement:

Alexis Sandoval excels in STEM and consistently approaches class with an eagerness to learn that inspires his peers, as well as myself. He is always on task, striving to produce his best work. Alexis challenges himself to focus deeply on each activity, and his dedication shines through in everything he does. Recently, during a research project on different types of robots, Alexis did a stellar job. His presentation on humanoid robots was captivating, and he engaged the audience with thoughtful questions and insights. For a moment, I forgot he was only in 5th grade because he conducted himself with such maturity and poise. Besides his academic achievements, Alexis's character stands out. At the end of each STEM class, while others line up to leave, Alexis stays behind to help organize the classroom. His willingness to collect name cards and reset the pocket chart for the next class demonstrates his thoughtfulness and responsibility. Alexis embodies what Character Counts is all about. His actions reflect kindness, responsibility, and a genuine desire to help others. It's simply who he is, and it's a privilege to have him in class.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Ruby Figueroa
School: Lovell High School, Orosi

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Victoria Guzman

Statement:

Ruby Figueroa is our brand-new board representative. She is a brave young lady who put aside her nerves and stepped up to the plate to serve her student body. We are proud of Ruby's accomplishments as a student representative and as part of the school's leadership team.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Aaron Jimenez

School: Orosi Community Based Instruction AcCEL Program, Orosi

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Diana Oliver

Statement:

Aaron consistently demonstrates a strong sense of responsibility both in the classroom and on campus. He comes prepared and eager to learn each day. Additionally, he willingly volunteers to help with tasks such as cleaning tables and picking up trash around the school. His commitment to contributing to our community is truly commendable. While Aaron faces challenges with his speech, he consistently puts forth his best effort to participate in discussions. It's heartwarming to see him take pride in his accomplishments, no matter how small.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Anthony Garcia
School: Orosi High School, Orosi

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Kathleen Giannandrea

Statement:

Anthony is a student in my dual enrollment English class for COS at Orosi High School. He is also enrolled in an engineering course at Reedley College. This requires Anthony to leave our 5th- period English course 10-20 minutes early, and he misses out on a lot of information, instruction, and practice. Anthony always completes the work, though. After his long day of learning and even longer afternoon of football practice, he goes home to check our slide deck and completes the work needed to continue learning at the same pace as the rest of the class. I think this is a great example of the Character Counts pillar of responsibility.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Nazareth Zavala Hernandez

School: Palm Elementary School, Orosi

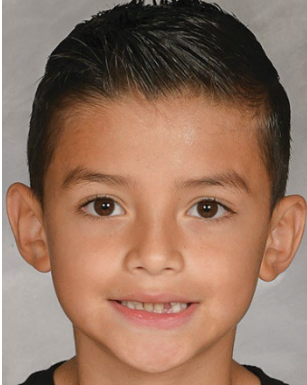
Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Vanessa Sierra

Statement:

Nazareth is an outstanding student. She has taken initiative in group activities, showing leadership by organizing tasks, motivating others, and managing responsibilities effectively. She always completes her assignments and meets deadlines on time showing that she can be counted on by teachers, peers, and family. Nazareth has addressed challenges with a growth mindset and a proactive attitude, finding solutions and taking responsibility for her own learning. She has set a positive example for peers by adhering to rules, being honest, and showing ethical behavior in both academic and social situations. I am honored to have Nazareth Zavala as my student this 2024 school year.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Ivan Moreno

School: Pixley Elementary School, Pixley

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Jason Araki

Statement:

Ivan took a week off from school for a family funeral out of the country. In the week he was in Mexico, he not only went to his relative's funeral, but had served to help pass out donations of school supplies for children who lacked the resources in his relative's community in Mexico. As he was close to his relative who passed away, he took the time to help the community from which his family is originally from.

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Alessandra Ruiz

School: Pixley Middle School, Pixley

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Luis Dorado

Statement:

There is a poet named Tupac Shakur who wrote a poem called The Rose that Grew from Concrete
“Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete? Proving nature’s law is wrong, it learned to walk without having feet. Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams, it learned to breathe fresh air. Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else ever cared.”

-Tupac Shakur

I read this for the first time with my 8th grade class, and I am blessed that I had the opportunity to use this poem to teach my students about analyzing figurative language, but most importantly to teach a valuable lesson about resilience and courage. The rose physically growing through a damaged concrete foundation is reflected in the success stories of many of our Pixley students. Many of our students are considered economically disadvantaged, are English Learners, and sadly, may be living in a not ideal home life. Ask anyone of our students, and most of them will tell you that it is not easy to be successful when you have obstacles like these in your way. As educators, we need to remember that for some of our students demonstrating resilience during troubled times does not come naturally. It is up to us as educators to help build this resilience in them. We as educators only hope that our students will heed our cries and believe in themselves when others do not. This poem also reminded me of one student in particular. Her name is Alessandra Ruiz. I hope that she can show our students that despite the challenges that one might face in life, at home, and even at school, one has a duty to family. That includes being an example of resilience.

Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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!

Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

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



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.

Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

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



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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Newspaper Student Representatives**



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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
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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.

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



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.

Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

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



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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Newspaper Student Representatives**



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!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Newspaper Student Representatives**



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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

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



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!

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



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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Newspaper Student Representatives**



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.

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



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.

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



Student Name: David Garcia

School: Woodville Union School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Connie Estrada-Tsuboi

Statement:

David is a kindhearted and lovable learner. He always finds joy in everyone or anything he does. He comes to class with a smile on his face and ready to take on the day. If he is playing with a toy and another learner would like to use it, he will take the time to let them have it. He is well mannered and reminds others to use their “manner words”; as he models for them. He always is willing to help around the classroom and the playground. There are times you find him picking up trash in the playground instead of playing during recess. David’s empathy is shown daily when someone needs a hug. He is the first to offer, and when someone needs an encouraging word, he is the first to let them know.

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



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

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



Student Name: Ailani Malagon Rayo

School: Monson-Sultana Joint Union School,
Sultana

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Kristyn Wagenleitner

Statement:

Ailani is a shining example of what it means to embody the pillar of Caring. As a second grader, she demonstrates remarkable empathy, kindness, and an instinct to help others every single day. Her sweet and gentle nature creates a warm and supportive atmosphere in our classroom, and she consistently goes above and beyond to make sure her classmates and teacher feel valued and cared for. One of the first things you notice about Ailani is her genuine thoughtfulness. Whether it's a simple act of kindness like sharing supplies with a friend or offering a comforting word to someone who is upset, Ailani is always tuned in to the feelings and needs of those around her. She has a unique ability to recognize when someone needs help, and she steps in without hesitation. Her empathy is truly special, as she not only understands the feelings of others but also takes action to make a positive difference. In addition to her caring heart, Ailani is always eager to help. Whether it's assisting a classmate with a tricky math problem or helping tidy up the classroom, she is quick to offer her support. Her willingness to lend a hand is not just about getting tasks done. It's about making sure everyone around her feels supported and encouraged. This kind of generosity and selflessness is rare, especially in someone so young, and it is a testament to Ailani's strong character. Her kind spirit is contagious, and her actions remind all of us how important it is to show care and kindness to others. She leads by example, quietly and humbly, making our classroom a more loving and supportive space for everyone. For all these reasons and more, Ailani is truly deserving of the Character Counts award for Caring. She is a bright light in our classroom, and her caring heart makes a lasting impact on everyone she meets.

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



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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
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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.

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



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.

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



Student Name: Maya Maryanow

School: Three Rivers Union School, Three Rivers

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jami Beck

Statement:

I am nominating Maya for the pillar of responsibility. This is Maya's first year at TRUS. She consistently demonstrates exceptional responsibility traits daily. Maya's commitment to her schoolwork is truly commendable. She works hard and is dedicated to achieving her goals. She was the first person in my class to achieve her Accelerated Reader Goal. She has surpassed her goal and continues to keep reading. She ensures to complete all her classroom assignments. She tries her best. If Maya is unsure of something she will ask questions to make sure she understands. She is always prepared. Maya's sense of responsibility extends beyond the classroom. She makes sure to put recess toy equipment away. She will also pick up other toy equipment that other students have left on the playground. Maya approaches her tasks with a great attitude and a strong sense of dedication. She strives for success. I am honored to nominate Maya for the pillar of responsibility.

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



Student Name: Sebastian Moreno

School: Tipton School, Tipton

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Janet Uresti

Statement:

I was Sebastian's teacher a couple of years ago and he has not changed one bit. Sebastian is the kindest and the most intelligent student. One day I had my students out at PE, and I noticed he was helping the yard supervisor with the trash cans. That is not something he HAD to do; it was something he WANTED to do. This is just him. He is always helpful to his peers and his teachers. He loves fishing and cars and is hoping to find a job working with cars. There are not many students who are as amazing as Sebastian!

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



Student Name: John Ramos

School: Traver Joint School, Traver

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Linda Navarro

Statement:

John is a very quiet soft spoken young man but always has a smile on his face. Whenever he comes in the office, he is such a polite and well-mannered student not only to the office staff but also to his peers.

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



Student Name: Julizza Barba

School: Accelerated Charter High School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Michelle Reindl

Statement:

Julizza is a student of mine, and she is also my aide. Every day she does what is asked of her in class when she is my aide. Julizza asks me if there is anything else when she finishes her work. She is always polite and caring in her interactions with me and others. She is amazing! I will be sad when she graduates. I can count on her to do anything I ask with a kind and generous spirit.

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



Student Name: Andres Diaz

School: Alice G. Mulcahy Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Matthew Johnson

Statement:

Andres (Andy) Diaz is an outstanding example of the pillar of caring. Despite the challenges, I have never once seen him doing anything that did not demonstrate strength of character, integrity, and a heart that cares for others. He uses words that make others laugh, but never does so at the expense of another person's dignity. He models compassion and empathy, setting a positive example for his classmates. Andy has the kindest disposition one could imagine and is loved by his classmates, friends, and teachers. It is with immense pride that I nominate him for this honor. He is well deserving of it.

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



Student Name: Jacoby Padilla

School: Alpine Vista School (K-4), Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Jennifer Brinkley-Shannon

Statement:

Jacoby is a model of good citizenship, always striving to make his school community a better place. He takes pride in doing his share, whether it is helping with class projects, or contributing to a positive atmosphere at school. Jacoby's cooperative spirit shines through in everything he does. He works seamlessly with others to achieve common goals. His dedication to improving his surroundings and his willingness to lend a hand wherever needed make Jacoby a valued member of the community. His actions inspire others to do the same, showing that even small contributions can have a significant impact.

Jacoby's sense of responsibility and commitment to the greater good make him an exemplary citizen.

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



Student Name: Elyse Delima

School: Alpine Vista School (5-8), Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jenna Porchia

Statement:

Elyse has had nothing but a stellar attitude since the first day of school. She comes into class prepared and ready to learn every single day. When Elyse's Chromebook malfunctioned and affected the quiz she was taking, she asked for a retake on a classroom Chromebook so that it would not happen again. Then she took her time on the quiz, using the provided novel to make sure that all her answers were correct. She takes her learning seriously and she does not have a single missing assignment in any of her classes. As a 7th-grader, this is Elyse's first time having multiple classes and multiple teachers so the beginning of the year could have been difficult for her. She makes it look easy. She is a wonderful student who stays on top of her work and makes sure her tasks are completed. Besides doing well in my Honors Language Arts class, Elyse is taking Honors Math, and she is a part of the Lighthouse Leadership class, which is responsible for building school culture, putting on school events, and producing ideas on how to connect with the community. Outside of school, she is active in her dance studio. Elyse is super involved in and out of school, yet her schoolwork never suffers because she prioritizes her learning, assignments, and her responsibilities. Elyse is the picture of a responsible student and is a pleasure to have in class.

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



Student Name: Noel Ramirez

School: Buena Vista School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Alex Mendes

Statement:

Noel Ramirez consistently contributes to our Buena Vista School community. He plays a key role in keeping our campus neat and organized. Noel is often one of the first students to put away recess materials left on the grounds, frequently taking the initiative before being asked. When any of his middle school teachers need a task completed or an errand run, they can rely on Noel to handle it promptly and accurately. His willingness to help and his dependability make him an integral member of our middle school community.

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



Student Name: Elian Martinez

School: Cherry Avenue Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Ryan Turner

Statement:

Elian is one of the most caring students I have come across. He genuinely cares about other people and often goes out of his way to care for others. What is even more impressive about him is that I do not think he even thinks about it, it just is something that comes out of him naturally. There is an innate sense in him that others matter and how he treats them matters. His parents have done an excellent job nurturing that in him as well.

One example (of many): Elian's class was going to lunch and his teacher dismissed them to line up. Elian waited behind and held the door for his teacher, so she did not have to walk alone. When his teacher said, "Elian, you didn't have to wait for me, thank you." His reply was simply, "you are my teacher, of course I'm going to wait for you." I am so proud of this young man and excited for his bright future!

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



Student Name: Isaac Villigran

School: Countryside High School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Cherilyn Austin

Statement:

Isaac Villigran surpasses the expectations for the Character Counts pillar of Citizenship. He demonstrates a strong commitment to his work and the campus environment, often taking the initiative to clean up trash without prompting. Additionally, he actively participates in class discussions and is emerging as a leader in our school leadership class.

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



Student Name: Andrew Varela

School: Cypress Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Annie Braun

Statement:

Andrew is a team player in our classroom. If I ever need someone to help stack the chairs, put equipment away, or pick up trash, Andrew is always willing and able to help. He is respectful and kind to his classmates and adults alike, and people enjoy his company. From what I understand, he is also helpful at his house. He tells me he is responsible for making sure everyone wakes up in the morning, and he is always looking out for his younger siblings. I am proud of the way Andrew contributes to our class and his family.

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



Student Name: Oliver Ortiz

School: Frank Kohn Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Francine Heller

Statement:

Oliver Ortiz can easily be selected for any pillar. He is exceptional, he helps with home responsibilities without complaints. He knows his parents appreciate his help around the house and with his siblings. He is the big brother in many ways. To add, he helps students in the classroom when he has finished his work without hesitation. He thrives on doing the right thing and helping others along with keeping up with his responsibilities at home, in the classroom, and on the soccer field. We are fortunate to have Oliver Ortiz in our classroom. He is a great role model for everyone.

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



Student Name: Phillip Gamez

School: Garden Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Sydney Gilbert

Statement:

Phillip Gamez is a very caring young man. As this school year began, we had a classmate that was having a hard time returning to the school routine. Each day, Phillip would keep an eye out for his classmate to arrive and would approach him, put his arm around him and tell him that it would be okay and that we were going to have a great day. After a week, our friend began to arrive with no tears. Phillip's caring ways helped his friend make the transition back to school earlier. Thank you, Phillip!

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



Student Name: Sofia Castellon

School: Heritage Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Monica Cisneros

Statement:

Sofia is a prime example of what it means to be a compassionate and responsible student. Her behavior consistently showcases a profound level of respect and consideration towards everyone in her school environment. She habitually displays excellent manners in all interactions, whether she is engaging with her peers, teachers, or school staff.

Sofia's dedication to her responsibilities is evident through her meticulous approach to her academic work and her proactive stance on completing assignments. Her sense of duty is matched by her eagerness to assist others. She frequently goes out of her way to offer support to classmates who may be facing challenges with their studies or contributes positively to collaborative projects, demonstrating both teamwork and encouragement. In every facet of her school experience, Sofia embodies the qualities of an exemplary student. Her polite demeanor, strong sense of responsibility, and willingness to help others illustrate her exceptional character and make her a valuable asset to the school community.

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



Student Name: Ellis Marvin

School: Liberty School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Kayla Govea

Statement:

Ellis, a kindergartner, has demonstrated a deep understanding of kindness, making her a deserving candidate for recognition. From the very first day of school, Ellis has displayed a natural instinct to help her peers. She often checks in on classmates who may be feeling sad or overwhelmed, offering comforting words or a friendly smile. Her ability to sense when someone is upset and provide support, even at such a young age, highlights her compassionate nature. In the classroom, Ellis has taken the initiative to include everyone in playtime activities. She often invites quieter classmates to join in games, ensuring that no one feels left out. This inclusivity fosters a sense of belonging among her peers, creating a positive and welcoming environments for all.

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



Student Name: Rodrigo Jara Mora

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Jill Lee

Statement:

Rodrigo is the type of student every teacher dreams of. He is not only extremely bright but always goes above and beyond in all class work. He is also very kind and respectful towards other classmates, teachers and staff. He is always willing to help others if he sees him/her struggle or assist with assignments. He cares about every person's feeling. He follows rules in class and always tries his best in all he does. He is also a very responsible student. He cares about other people's feelings and would never make another student feel bad. He also cares about our school, doing his part to clean up the campus if he sees litter. As you can see, Rodrigo is a wonderful example of being a terrific citizen and I am so honored to be able to nominate him for this special award.

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



Student Name: Alexa Vasquez

School: Live Oak Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Joe Costa

Statement:

I am honored to nominate Alexa Vasquez she exemplifies the qualities of Trustworthiness. Honesty: Alexa has consistently demonstrated honesty throughout their academic journey. For instance, when she encountered a challenge with a project, she openly communicated the issue and sought feedback rather than concealing her difficulties. This level of transparency not only shows integrity but also fosters a collaborative environment in the classroom.

Telling the Truth: On multiple occasions, Alexa has shown their commitment to truthfulness. During a group project, she provided constructive and honest feedback to peers, which significantly improved the quality of the work. Her ability to speak the truth while being considerate of others' feelings has been remarkable.

Impact: The trustworthiness of Alexa has had a positive ripple effect throughout our school community. Her example encourages others to be more honest and dependable, creating a more supportive and trustworthy environment for everyone.

In conclusion, Alexa embodies the core values of honesty, truthfulness, and reliability. Her dedication to these principles makes her an exemplary candidate for this recognition. I am confident that she will continue to uphold these values with distinction.

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



Student Name: Niall Seechan

School: Los Tules Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Rhonda Sousa

Statement:

Although we have just begun the school year, I can already tell that Niall is an extremely responsible student. He always raises his hand to speak, waits patiently for me to help finishing others before asking for help, speaks kindly to his peers when they are working together (even if they have different answers), and he always volunteers to help me or his classmates. He brings permission slips, etc. back to school in a timely manner and has all his materials ready to go each day. He asks permission for everything! I could have nominated Niall in any category, and he would be a model choice for each one. He is an all-around outstanding kid, and I am so looking forward to being his teacher this year!

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



Student Name: Joslyn Castro

School: Maple Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Gina Paim

Statement:

Joslyn has shown a great deal of responsibility in fourth grade. She comes in every morning and gets right to work with no distractions. She has been wonderful about completing everything I have asked of her. I have also witnessed her taking the time to explain an activity to another student in class and encourage him to do his work. I know I am going to really appreciate having Joslyn in my class this year!

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



Student Name: Diana Sanchez

School: Maple Learning Center, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Denise Lozano

Statement:

Diana is kind and compassionate to others. She is friendly and always greets people with a firm handshake. She is a great friend to her peers and staff.

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



Student Name: Angel Mora

School: Mission Oak High School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Lucas Jones

Statement:

PE is a challenging subject. It is the only subject that requires students to change their clothes amongst their peers. It also requires students to give physical exertion, which can be difficult in the extreme hot temperatures of the Central Valley. The student I am nominating understands expectations and does not allow external stresses to undermine his own standards and goals. He always arrives to class ready and excited for what the day will bring. He excels in each activity, giving every inch of his ability, and he enjoys himself in the process. He has a strong peer group and even encourages them to do better; he sets the standard. I wish every student would approach PE with as much enthusiasm as he does.

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



Student Name: Kylah Avalos

School: Mission Valley Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Dennis Hulseby

Statement:

In the brief time we have been back at school, Kylah has already established herself as one of our most adept students both academically and socially. With regards to Character Counts, I truly appreciate how responsible Kylah is. She is extremely efficient with her time. She looks at her responsibilities, analyzes the directions, and quickly takes on the tasks she has been given. Kylah always comes prepared for the school day, is great at looking at where the week is headed and being prepared for what lies ahead. Kylah does not need her teacher to stay accountable, either. I have complete trust in her ability to make good choices in other areas of campus where more independence is given. Kylah's demonstration of responsibility allows adults to trust her with significant tasks, and I'm sure it will lead to her accomplishing great things as she moves forward in school and life. Thank you so much Kylah for your effort in exemplifying responsibility.

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



Student Name: Emma Vieira

School: Oak Valley Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Kelsie Pitigliano

Statement:

Emma Grace shows what a true Oak Valley Raider is when it comes to citizenship. She has really stepped up the past 2 years and shows her family and her peers how to be kind, respectful, responsible, organized, sufficient, and a self-starter. She was elected as our Oak Valley FFA president this year which is a huge role that entails overseeing our FFA program and helping run the Ag. Department in its entirety. She shows lambs for Oak Valley 4-H this year and is always willing to help other students who need help with their animals.

Keep up the great work Emma Grace!

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



Student Name: Aaron Ceja

School: Palo Verde Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Anthony Nguyen

Statement:

During an intense football game against a rival school, Aaron paused at the end of a play and gave a friendly high-five to an athlete on the opposing team. He did this following a great catch the other student had made. Such sportsmanship is a model for all students!

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



Student Name: Emmitt Alaniz

School: Pleasant Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Amy Duffy

Statement:

I had the pleasure of being Emmitt's third-grade teacher last year. It was during this time that I observed Emmitt's quiet determination and sense of responsibility speak volumes. He set high expectations and worked very hard to complete his assignments accurately, even if that meant spending extra time or making corrections on them. Although this is something that he would consistently do, it was during the week of state testing that he stood out in this area. Emmitt knew that it was his responsibility to do his best for himself and our school. He made sure that he was well-rested, on time for school, and that he used all the test-taking strategies that he learned. Emmitt's hard work, perseverance, and sense of responsibility are what help make him a successful student and a positive role model for his peers.

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



Student Name: Alannah Holt

School: Roosevelt Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Alicia Vega-Mercado

Statement:

Fairness is one of the six ethical values of Character Counts. Alannah, you were chosen for this award because you understand how to play by the rules, take turns, and share. You are very thoughtful and care about the feelings of others. When we do our work at each center, I always see you sharing and making sure the other students in your group have the supplies to complete each task. When we play games, I see you trying your hardest to wait patiently to take your turn, which makes you a good friend and student.

Well done ALANNAH! I am very proud of you!!

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



Student Name: Nevaeh (Adreix) Duncan-Salas
School: Sierra Vista Charter High School Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Daniel Dutto

Statement:

I am writing to nominate Nevaeh (Adreix) Duncan-Salas for the Character Counts pillar of Respect. Adreix has consistently demonstrated a high level of respect for all members of our school community. Adreix has always been courteous and polite to school staff, treating them with kindness and consideration. Adreix has made significant strides in academic performance, showing a dedication to their studies and a willingness to improve. Additionally, Adreix has maintained excellent attendance, demonstrating commitment to education. Adreix's respectful behavior and positive attitude have made a positive impact on our school environment. Adreix exemplifies the qualities of respect, including courtesy, kindness, and consideration. I believe that Adreix is a deserving candidate for this award and would be a wonderful representative of our school.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
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Student Name: Emma Hearn

School: Sundale Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominators: Kaysie Hearn, Cecile Harrell, Jenna Facchini, Nicole Thierry, John Hearn, Marilyn Malloy, Brandee Sparks, Kellen Ornellas, and Cody Johnson

Statement:

Emma has such a kind heart. When she's not giving her all at school or in cheerleading, she is spending time at our local animal shelter. Emma spends her free time on the weekends volunteering at the Tulare Animal shelter. She loves helping dogs feel comfortable with humans and teaches them how to trust again. She joins the monthly volunteer board meetings, fundraiser events and even takes treats to the shelter to train the dogs to learn new tricks. With the help of her family, she takes some dogs home for visits and trips in the car. Emma and her mother also promote the dogs on social media, trying to get them adopted. She has many pictures of her with the dogs on Friends of Tulare Animal Services. She helps get so many dogs out of the shelter with her adorable pictures and because we can safely say which dogs do great with kids.

Emma has a very soft heart for animals and does great work for them. She has a huge heart for these dogs.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
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Student Name: Zerric Russell

School: Tulare Tech Prep High School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: Rachel Sausedo and Silvia Sausedo

Statement:

Zerric is always a pleasure to have in class. He comes to school early every day ready to work and do what he is supposed to do. He is friendly to everyone and stays away from any problematic behaviors and continues to do what is expected of him. He is respectful to all of his peers and the staff. He also joins the school sports and is a great addition to the team. He plays by the rules and always tries his best. He is also on track to be an early graduate. He is very respectful and is kind to staff and to his peers.

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



Student Name: Dayana Magana Moreno

School: Tulare Union High School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: McKenzie Langlie, Ivan Arce, and
Melany Miller

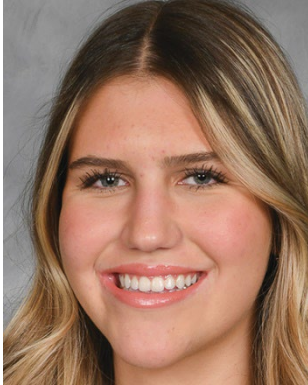
Statement:

Dayana is one of my favorite students I have ever had!! She is kind, funny, caring towards others, and an extremely hard worker (working 2 jobs her sophomore year!!). She is great at including others and making people feel seen, known, and valued. She is respectful of all staff and students, always modeling great manners, attention, and care. She perseveres through tough times and continues to have a positive outlook always. She is simply one of the best!

Dayana, is a very polite and responsible student. She always shows up to class with a positive attitude and is respectful to all her teachers.

Dayana is a bright light and a great public speaker! She always arrives to Speech class with a smile and positive energy. She helps make our class a great one!

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Julia Van Scyoc

School: Tulare Western High School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Katherine Nunes

Statement:

For the pillar of responsibility, I am nominating Julia Van Scyoc. Julia is a senior at Tulare Western High School where I have had the pleasure of being her counselor since her freshman year. She is one of the most well rounded and dedicated students I have encountered. She is driven, committed, and seeks out opportunities to improve her community as well as her own personal growth.

Throughout high school, Julia has been in our premedical academy, which is a 4-year program that allows students to focus their studies on the field of health. Along with this rigorous program, she has taken several honors and AP courses to make up an extremely challenging course load each year. At the finalization of her high school career, she will have taken 10 honors courses, 7 AP courses, and 2 college courses. This year she is also volunteering her time to tutor other students in math. Thus far, she has earned all As and has a GPA of 4.25.

At school, Julia has been heavily involved in FFA, the district-wide dance program, the school cheerleading team, the Portuguese club (SOPAS), CSF, Be the Change, The Red Cross Club, and pre-med. Outside of school, Julia has served as Fatima Queen and is involved in the Lusa American Youth Council. Last year she personally raised over \$43,000 selling raffle tickets benefiting the Lusa American scholarship foundation. She also traveled to the Azores this year where she represented our area in the Sister-Cities festival. This is an event where Portuguese- American heritage is celebrated and the bridge between our area and the Azores is promoted. Through all of her involvement, Julia always shows patience, courtesy, and kindness. She is humble and treats others with respect and fairness. With everything that Julia does, she fully dedicates herself. She is responsible, conscientious, and punctual, ensuring things are completed to the best of her ability and that she follows through on her commitments. She is self-motivated and takes pride in participating in a variety of activities and projects. When Julia started elementary school, she was very shy and timid. She has worked hard to get involved, improve her public speaking and communication skills, and become more outgoing. Through her experiences, she has definitely grown and has excelled both academically and socially. I am confident that Julia is well prepared for college and on- going philanthropic involvement and that she will continue to shine in all areas. She is honestly a great representation of all pillars of Character Counts.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
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Student Name: Holly Curtsinger

School: Waukena Joint Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominators: April Curtsinger and Amanda Henry

Statement:

Holly is a hard-working honor roll student. She is the current Waukena School Leadership President. It is a job she does not take lightly. Holly is a positive role model for her fellow classmates and for all students on campus. She never hesitates to volunteer to help school faculty and other students inside and outside the classroom. She is at every school event lending a helping hand. Holly stays after school every Tuesday to help school faculty in their classrooms with whatever they may need. When Holly is not in school, she is working hard on the field with her travel softball team. Holly exemplifies the true essence of responsibility in every aspect of her school life. Whether she is meticulously completing her assignments on time, volunteering to help her classmates understand challenging concepts, or contributing thoughtfully to group projects, Holly consistently demonstrates reliability and dedication. Her teachers and peers alike are impressed by her ability to balance academic commitments with extra-curricular activities, all while maintaining a positive attitude.

Holly's conscientiousness and proactive approach not only make her a role model for her fellow students but also highlight her readiness for future challenges. Her unwavering sense of responsibility makes her truly deserving of recognition and admiration.

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



Student Name: Zeek Seals

School: Wilson Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Angel Alvarez

Statement:

Over the course of the previous three school years, I have had the privilege of observing the kind and gentle nature that is Zeek. While he is currently a student in the AcCEL program, he is known by his peers as the nice boy who enjoys greeting others with high fives and hugs around campus. Zeek has garnered many friendships with his smile and joyful personality and is well known by his Wilson School family. In the classroom, Zeek is eager to offer praise and encouragement to his classmates and share generous thoughts with his teacher and staff. Zeek has enjoyed being a classroom leader and helper whenever opportunity calls! This wonderful young man has demonstrated firsthand that he can champion all his abilities with no limits in sight! Zeek exemplifies what it means to be helpful, kind, and generous!

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



Student Name: Jenasys Mendoza

School: Annie R. Mitchell Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Megan Madsen

Statement:

Jenasys is always showing respect on school campus in and out of the classroom. She shows respect when working with peers by listening to what they have to say including making eye contact to show her peers that she cares about their ideas and opinions. Jenasys shows respect by helping others when needed. She also shows respect towards others by having empathy for them and supporting them in ways they need. Jenasys does not exclude others and willingly works with all classmates. Jenasys is a SOARing example of what it means to be a Golden Eagle!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
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Student Name: Alice Holeman

School: Blue Oak Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jessica Juarez

Statement:

Alice consistently shows responsibility in the classroom by diligently completing her assignments on time and to the best of her ability. She takes ownership of her learning by asking questions when she doesn't understand something and seeking additional resources to improve her understanding. Alice is prepared for class, bringing the necessary materials and staying organized. She also takes initiative in group projects, ensuring tasks are completed efficiently and fairly. Additionally, Alice frequently volunteers to answer questions in class, showing her active engagement and willingness to contribute. Even when faced with challenging questions, she approaches them positively, demonstrating a Growth Mindset. When given classroom duties, Alice fulfills them with care and reliability, showing her commitment to doing what she is supposed to do. Her responsible behavior and dedication to self-improvement set a positive example for her peers, making her deserving of recognition.

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



Student Name: Austin Howard

School: Conyer Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Lyndsay Gentert

Statement:

Austin comes to school every day ready to learn with an eager attitude. Austin does not let hard things get in his way. He approaches every assignment with grit and determination. Austin makes friends easily, is a role model to his peers, and is an absolute joy to have in class. Austin is the first to offer a helping hand to a student in class, invite a friend to play, or help welcome a new student. Austin is generous and kind in all aspects of his day and always does the right thing.

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



Student Name: Bree Jones

School: Cottonwood Creek Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Luis Balderas

Statement:

This student exemplifies all areas of character. If there is one area that must be selected it would have to be caring. Bree is one of the brightest, most caring individuals that I have had the honor of teaching in my career. Bree is caring in all areas of this Character Counts. She cares about telling the truth. She cares about being respectful to adults and peers. She also cares about her responsibilities as well as being fair to others. Caring comes automatic to Bree Jones, and it is in her nature. Lastly, she cares about being a good citizen. She has always cared about doing the right thing, helping other students and people when in need, and caring about her actions.

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



Student Name: Jeremiah Gonzales

School: Crescent Valley Public Charter School II,
Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Danielle Griffiths

Statement:

Jeremiah Gonzales is an amazing young man and student who exemplifies the pillar of RESPECT every single day! Jeremiah shows up for his appointments, completes his work on time (and sometimes early!) and is respectful and kind. He has a goal of joining law enforcement as an adult, which I have no doubt he will accomplish! I wish I had more students like Jeremiah!

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



Student Name: Jasmine Contreras

School: Crestwood Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Kasey Nip

Statement:

Jasmine has been an extraordinary student and quickly learns the class routine. Once familiar with the expectation, she is not only doing it but helping others to follow the instructions. She does so by doing tasks alongside others, holding their hands to guide them, and even motivating her classmates by reminding them of what they should be doing. She is a pleasure to have in class.

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



Student Name: Mia Alvarez

School: Crowley Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Hortencia Martinez

Statement:

Mia is a great class participant. She follows directions and completes her learning tasks. She is always eager to learn and help a classmate when needed. Thank you, Mia, for being responsible in all that you do.

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



Student Name: Lincoln McFarlane

School: Denton Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Mrs. Ernst

Statement:

Lincoln is an extremely responsible Kindergarten student. He is always prepared, organized and ready to learn. He cares about the content he is learning and wants to glean deep knowledge in all academic areas. If we are writing, he wants to properly use new digraphs, spell his sight words correctly, and make sure he covers all three parts of a narrative. He takes his time to ensure his illustrations reflect and depict his story with detail! He always thinks outside of the box, and he is never afraid to try something new! He takes ownership of his learning and has all the qualities of a responsible leader! Lincoln McFarlane sets the bar high! Keep up the fantastic work Lincoln! Mrs. Ernst is proud of you!

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



Student Name: Grady Williams

School: Divisadero Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Gabriela Ceballos

Statement:

Our student, Grady Williams, has been a truly exceptional addition to our campus. He has only been at our school since the start of this academic year and has already made his mark. He's leading the way with the start of our Bible Club by helping other students not typically involved in school activities. In addition to his efforts in clubs, he's an amazing student and civic leader. He attempts to learn all student and staff names and tries to include those who are often off to themselves or excluded from the crowds. There is no doubt in my mind that this student will have a successful life. I am extremely happy to see the ray of sunshine he has been to the campus and being caring and kind to all those he encounters.

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



Student Name: Kaylee Rivera

School: El Diamante High School Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jessica Cervantes

Statement:

I am nominating Kaylee for responsibility because she is always doing what she is supposed to be doing. In the classroom, on the court and in the community, Kaylee is very responsible. Kaylee always is on time and holds her peers and teammates to the same standard. Kaylee puts her academics before any extracurricular curricular activities but can manage all that she does because she is responsible. If she is going to be gone, she lets her teachers and coaches know well in advance and gets her assignments to make sure to stay on top of things and not fall behind. She is a responsible leader and sets great examples of how to do the right thing.

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



Student Name: Atlas Needham

School: Elbow Creek Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Kim Needham

Statement:

Atlas has proven over and over how much of a caring young girl she is. She volunteers to help before school starts with kindergarten by walking them to their classroom. Atlas is kind to her friends at school and meets them with smiles each day. Atlas shows the same characteristics at home. When someone needs help feeding their animals, she is willing to take care of that. She never complains. Atlas understands that it is important to spend time with others to show that you care. Atlas is very generous to others with her time.

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



Student Name: Bryce Minturn

School: Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominators: Alisha Lewis and Lisa Hardy

Statement:

Bryce is an incredible leader in our high school program. He is involved in our student leadership class, leads our Queer Student Alliance Club, take college classes, and still manages to earn straight A's. He is respectful and well-liked by his peers and his teachers. He is conscientious, compassionate and hardworking and is a true example of a student with AMAZING character! To be honest, Bryce Minturn displays every single one of these attributes, so it took me a minute to figure out which one to nominate him for. I finally realized that "Caring" covers all the other traits as well, so I selected that one. Bryce is an extremely helpful and involved student. He lightens the load for us teachers. Twice a year we have a performing arts showcase at our school and Bryce designs and creates the programs for those events. He is part of the student activities class and helps to plan and carry out spirit days and other fun events at the school. Whenever an event is happening, Bryce helps! Bryce is truly one of the most caring students on our campus. He is president of the QSA club (Queer Student Alliance) and makes our school a kinder and more inclusive place. He works hard and gets good grades, and he exemplifies all the traits of the character award qualities. We are so blessed to have Bryce at our school, and we will surely miss him when he graduates at the end of this year.

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



Student Name: Axel Romero

School: Four Creeks Elementary School Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Maribel Garcia Guzman

Statement:

Axel is a student who embodies the values of respect and good citizenship every day. He consistently shows kindness to his classmates, listens attentively to his teachers, and treats everyone fairly. Whether he's helping a friend understand a lesson or including others in group activities, Axel always makes sure that no one is left out. Axel listens carefully when others are speaking, and he values the opinions and feelings of everyone around him. He never hesitates to lend a hand to a classmate in need, whether it's helping with a difficult assignment or offering a kind word of encouragement. He is polite, uses respectful language, and follows school rules diligently. Axel also demonstrates responsibility by completing his tasks on time and handling classroom materials. His positive attitude, helpful nature, and respect for others make him a role model for his peers. Axel truly deserves to be recognized for being a kindhearted and thoughtful student who makes the classroom a better place for everyone.

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



Student Name: Roberto Cano Lucio

School: Global Learning Charter School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Lydia Hogue

Statement:

I nominate Roberto for the Kids of Character Award because he illustrates the characteristics of a fair and caring person. Roberto is a great student who works well with others. During group activities, Roberto encourages all members to participate and do their part in making sure their table group is successful in completing their learning tasks. Roberto is also a great teammate in sports like soccer. Roberto shows great sportsmanship by keeping a positive attitude, following the rules, and respecting members of his team

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



Student Name: Astryd Oropeza

School: Golden Oak Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Stephanie Hunt

Statement:

Astryd is a wonderful student who shows fairness in all she does. Throughout the week, students can earn tickets by being at school and having good behavior. Then on Fridays, we do a raffle with five winners. One Friday, I had five new and different activity books for October, as prizes. Astryd's name was chosen, and she picked her favorite book. Then another student won. The last name drawn was Astryd's again! I asked her if she'd like the last book, and she declined saying she would let someone else have the chance to win it!

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



Student Name: Jorge Ochoa

School: Golden West High School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Richard Bodily

Statement:

Jorge is an exceptional student when it comes to showing others they matter; he is always ready to be of help. Jorge is quick to greet his peers when they arrive at school with a warm hello and a kind smile. With staff, he asks if they need help with anything, and offers to help carry and put away supplies. When he sees one of his fellow students having a rough time, he will try to comfort them and help them calm down, offering them a friendly hello or patting them on the shoulder saying, "Good job." Jorge is very sociable among regular students and enjoys walking with them saying, "Hi, how are you," greeting them with a polite handshake or fist bump. Jorge is a person who genuinely cares about his peers and leads by example under the Pillar of Caring.

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



Student Name: Neil See

School: Goshen Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Sarah Van Dermyden

Statement:

Neil is a wonderful student in class. He understands that we are all in this together. He will often ask students if they need help cleaning or putting their things away. He models classroom behavior, takes care of his belongings and is always helping make our campus a beautiful place. It is not often that students will voluntarily pick up a piece of trash, but Neil shows care for the campus by picking up after himself and others. He contributes to our community by sharing his thinking, by showing excellent behavior, and by being a leader in his actions and deeds. One specific instance comes to mind. Our class was cutting out lamination. He asked if he could clean the classroom and make sure that all the pieces were up off the floor. He also collected all the scissors and put them away without being asked. Unlike the rest of the students, he did so just because he wanted to do a good job. He wasn't asking for reward tickets or points or awards; just a job well done.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
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Student Name: Davis Welch

School: Grace Christian School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Brooke Bailey

Statement:

Davis Welch is such an amazing student, and I can always count on him to be kind and always helping others. We are so blessed to have a great, caring, and respectful student like Davis. He always makes everyone feel included and that is his greatest treasure, the way he is with others.

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



Student Name: Lucero Rueda Garcia

School: Highland Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Amanda Bennett

Statement:

Lucero demonstrates responsibility every day at school. She is dependable and is always doing what she is supposed to be doing. She takes her class job, as paper leader, very seriously and is always on top of it. Lucero has developed good habits as a 3rd grade student and makes sure to turn in all her classwork and homework. I am proud of her for demonstrating responsibility this year!

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



Student Name: Daniela Hernandez Barvosa

School: Houston Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Henryallen Ralston

Statement:

Daniela is the most caring student I have ever had. Having previously taught her in First Grade, she is now in the Fourth Grade and still just as caring as ever. Daniela cares about her learning, which you can tell by how hard she works to maintain good grades. She cares for her peers by helping whenever she is given the chance to. She checks on students to see if they get hurt. She is someone who asks, "How was your day?" And genuinely cares if you've had a good day or not. She is also a very giving student and likes to give her friends and even teachers a gift just to brighten up their day.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
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Student Name: Avery Avinelis

School: Hurley Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Natalie Hodgin

Statement:

Avery is an amazing role model and a bright light in our classroom. He could truly be nominated for any of the pillars, but responsibility is one that comes to mind first. He comes to school with a positive attitude and a fun mindset! He is eager to learn and is always doing his job! Not only does he complete all assignments on time, but he does so while also being an encouraging and helpful teammate! He even makes sure to reach out for missing work himself when he is absent! He is one of the first to raise his hand to share answers. He is a responsible role model in and out of the classroom, almost always the first one to be standing in line. I know he is setting a great example to the younger students on our campus.

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



Student Name: Jocelyn Moreno

School: La Joya Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Julie Cates

Statement:

Jocelyn Moreno is now in Middle School. She came back to visit me seeking advice and encouragement regarding her Honors English class. This demonstrates great responsibility to self and to family and her teacher. Jocelyn was seeking advice from a teacher in her comfort zone so that she could move herself out of her comfort zone. I know adults who do not take these mature steps. I am impressed with Jocelyn's sense of responsibility.

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



Student Name: Emira David

School: La Sierra Junior Military Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Gabrel Castro

Statement:

I am excited to nominate Emira David for the Kids of Character Award in the pillar of Caring. Throughout her time at La Sierra, Emira has consistently demonstrated kindness, generosity, and a willingness to help others, making her a standout member of our school community. As an eighth grader and a first-year student at La Sierra, Emira quickly made her mark, not only by maintaining an impressive 4.0 GPA but also through her active involvement in Color Guard. Her commitment to her academics reflects her serious approach to learning and her desire to excel, but it is her caring nature that truly sets her apart. Emira is deeply involved in her church, where she assists with functions and fundraising efforts. Her contributions to these activities demonstrate her dedication to serving her community and making a positive impact on those around her. Emira's organizational skills shine not only in her personal life but also in her school environment. She is known for her initiative in helping to keep the classroom organized, often staying after class to tidy up desks and ensure everything is in order. This thoughtful action supports her teachers and fosters a conducive learning environment for her classmates. Her positive attitude and friendly demeanor make her approachable, and she easily connects with her peers.

Additionally, Emira's love for drawing and music reflects her creative spirit, which she shares with others. Whether she's expressing herself artistically or simply enjoying a good song, her joy is contagious. She also maintains an active lifestyle, enjoying exercise, volleyball, and caring for her pets, including her two cats, Greyson and Muffin, and her hedgehog, Amy Rose. This balance of interests shows her ability to lead a well-rounded life while remaining committed to her responsibilities. Emira's aspirations to move into a leadership position at the school showcase her ambition and desire to contribute meaningfully to the school. This goal, coupled with her strong work ethic, reflects her caring nature and her wish to support others.

In summary, Emira David exemplifies the pillar of Caring through her kindness, helpfulness, and generosity. Her commitment to her family, community, and classmates, along with her positive attitude and responsible nature, make her an exceptional candidate for the Kids of Character Award. I wholeheartedly support her nomination and believe she is truly deserving of this recognition.

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



Student Name: Junettzy Esquivel Bernal
School: La Sierra Military Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Gabrel Castro

Statement:

I am honored to nominate Junettzy for the Kids of Character Award for the pillar of Citizenship. Throughout her time at La Sierra, she has consistently demonstrated her commitment to her family, community, and school, embodying the spirit of citizenship in meaningful ways. As a dedicated member of the volleyball team and the school's Leo's club, Junettzy actively engages in community service initiatives, contributing her time and energy to make a positive impact. Her recent promotion to 'Cadet' and current role as a Platoon Sergeant for Charlie 1st Platoon further showcases her leadership abilities and willingness to take on responsibilities. In her position as an S1 Assistant, she oversees students aiming to rank up, exemplifying her supportive nature and dedication to helping others succeed. This level of maturity and selflessness is remarkable for a ninth grader and speaks volumes about her character.

Her journey at La Sierra has been transformative. Her commitment to academic excellence is evident, as she takes her studies seriously, aspiring to enter a nursing career fueled by her passion for helping others. Junettzy's leadership qualities extend beyond her academic and extracurricular pursuits. She has a natural ability to make new students feel welcome, easing their nerves as they transition into a new environment. Her compassion and empathy shine through these interactions, showcasing her understanding of the importance of community and support.

In her leisure time, Junettzy finds balance by resting on weekends while still dedicating time to help around the house. Her plans to participate in basketball this school year further reflect her desire to stay active and engaged in school life. Additionally, her involvement in History Day last year demonstrates her commitment to learning and personal growth. Junettzy's frequent check-ins with faculty, including her warm greetings and thoughtful conversations, highlight her positive spirit and willingness to connect with others. Her growth in such a short time has been inspiring, and I feel proud to witness her journey.

In summary, Junettzy embodies the pillar of Citizenship through her unwavering support for her family, active involvement in her community, and her dedication to fostering a positive environment for her peers. She is a true leader, and her contributions make her deserving of the Kids of Character Award.

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



Student Name: Dariel Medina-Gutierrez
School: Linwood Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Isabel Beltran

Statement:

Dariel has been an active member of our student leadership club “Eagle Academy” for the past three years! He has dedicated many volunteer hours at before and after school events promoting a positive school culture and supporting student engagement at Linwood Elementary! Some of his leadership activities include weekly school spirit rallies, assisting during award assemblies, and making morning announcements. He has used her confidence, creativity, and communication skills to promote school wide campaigns such as Unity Day, Red Ribbon and Kindness Week and other goodwill projects like our annual Holiday Food Drive and Miracle Mile of Quarters.

Thank you, Dariel! Your service, enthusiasm, and involvement have made a positive difference at our school daily!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Judah Serrato

School: Manuel F. Hernandez Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Rocio Hernandez

Statement:

Judah is a very happy and energetic 2nd grade student with a heart of gold. I am thrilled to nominate Judah for the pillar of caring as his actions have demonstrated what it means to care for others. In our class, we have a student with some very special needs and Judah is always there ready to help his friend in any way possible. Judah's compassion and empathy toward his friend and other students in class truly stand out and are making a significant impact in our classroom.

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



Student Name: Ariel Chavez

School: Mountain View Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Elizabeth Sanchez Sanchez

Statement:

Ariel exemplifies fairness in our first-grade classroom through her balanced and just approach to interactions with peers. She always ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity, whether during group activities or when sharing classroom resources. She is known for treating all classmates with equal respect and never showing favoritism. She takes care to include everyone and make fair decisions, helping to maintain a sense of equity and harmony in our classroom. Ariel's commitment to fairness is greatly appreciated and sets a positive example for everyone.

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



Student Name: Dolores Carter

School: Mt. Whitney High School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Victoria Johnson

Statement:

Dolores Carter exemplifies the pillar of fairness! Dolores plays by the rules and ensures that all her teammates follow the rules. She is an exceptional teammate that mentors all athletes and gives all players an opportunity to thrive! She has unanimously been voted by her team to be a captain this year. It is for her high standard of Fairness pillar that she displays both on and off the court! In addition, she takes her role seriously and makes sure that all her teammates are treated fairly and genuinely wants what is BEST for her team! Dolores also has taken our one freshman under her wings and builds her confidence daily! Mt Whitney volleyball program is BLESSED to have Dolores in our program. She doesn't limit her character to volleyball; you can see it on the basketball court, track, our campus and all that she is involved in!

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



Student Name: Harlow Corona

School: Oak Grove Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Ashley Akers

Statement:

Harlow takes it upon herself to check in with her classmates and help anyone who needs it. For example, she will finish setting up her notes and then will help set up the notes for those who are absent. She will also go around the room and collect the trash to help keep our room clean. In addition, she will share her supplies if someone needs them. For instance, the other day I misplaced a marker, and she immediately handed me a spare marker. She is prepared and ready to lend help to anyone and everyone around.

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



Student Name: Chelsea Iglesias

School: Pinkham Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Ray Cartagena

Statement:

Chelsea has a huge heart, and it shows daily. She always takes the time to make everyone around her feel comfortable and wanted. She seems to embrace the ones that others try to pick on. She's like a shield that keeps them safe. One example is our campus has a lot of SLC students who are not always accepted by others on campus. They love Chelsea, and Chelsea never turns them away when they call her over during break. She will put her time aside with her friends for them. I have also seen after school during HEART, that all the kids in all the grades just love her. From TK to 6th, they cannot resist saying hi, or hugging her. It's amazing how she does this daily and with such a constant happy spirit. In class, she never hesitates to help those who need help, and she always has a smile for everyone. I know she's human, but it's hard to imagine her in a bad mood.

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



Student Name: Samantha Woods

School: Redwood High School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Keenan Naylor

Statement:

During Samantha's time at Redwood High School, she has proven that she is a true Ranger. Samantha is a caring and selfless student, who is always eager and ready to help others. She has helped fellow peers with emotional support, volunteered her time to be a tutor to peers that are struggling in the classroom, helped myself extensively in the classroom as a teacher aide, and provided support to our administration team by giving her time to help them out when the opportunity presents itself. No matter what the job, Samantha is always excited to help others. If she could join and help every club, sport, activity, etc. I know she would. She has a strong sense of responsibility which is reflected in her desire to offer her help/support to others. The staff and students on campus all know Samantha, as she is always going out of her way to share a smile, greeting, or high-five with everyone she knows.

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



Student Name: Zander Ramirez

School: Ridgeview Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Statement:

Zander Ramirez shows all areas of citizenship. He is very trustworthy, caring, respectful, helpful and dedicated to his peers. He is very involved in school activities such as leadership, President for the musicals/play department and choir, and history club. He keeps promises in all that he says and does. He is very dedicated to helping others around him. He loves to help students if in need. You can always count on him to be the first to volunteer to help. He also is a 4.0 student on the principals list. We are so proud of him, all he accomplishes and loves to be involved in.

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



Student Name: Princeton Butler

School: Riverway Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Cindy Guzman

Statement:

For his entire time at Riverway he has always demonstrated compassion and respect toward his peers, and toward any adult. He loves to hold doors for classes and adults, he loves to give compliments to encourage people whether he knows them personally or not. If he sees someone who needs help, he is always ready to offer a helping hand. He perfectly exemplifies what it means to be a Riverway Otter and to show CARE through his actions and words every day.

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



Student Name: Scarlett Zavala

School: Royal Oaks Elementary School, Visalia

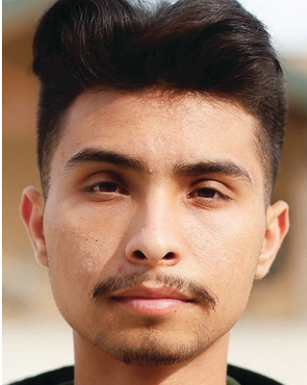
Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Tena Ficher

Statement:

Scarlett is so kind and nice to all her friends. She is especially helpful to another friend in our class that at times needs a little extra help. She will help her friend by opening her milk at breakfast, holding her hand to lead her to the carpet when it's carpet time and help her line up when recess is over. Scarlett has exhibited being a caring person and kind and generous to her friends.

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



Student Name: Pablo Govea Calderon

School: Sequoia High School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Erica Gonzalez

Statement:

This nomination is being made for Pablo Govea Calderon. Pablo is a remarkable young man who has shown responsibility and commitment to his educational journey. As an English Language Learner, Pablo is faced with several obstacles. To be admired is Pablo's outlook on life and resiliency as he turns such obstacles into opportunities. Pablo is respectful and committed to his future. Pablo holds an overnight full-time job and manages to come to school each morning and has remarkable attendance. Pablo is thriving academically and aspires to attend trade school and become a mechanic. Pablo takes pride in his work and helping his family financially. In my short time of being Pablo's academic counselor, I have come to admire his work ethic, dedication, and discipline.

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



Student Name: Brianna Evangelista

School: Shannon Ranch Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Brittany Gray

Statement:

Brianna Evangelista shows respect to herself and others. She is always deeply invested in the conversations she has with others. She makes eye contact and is actively always listening. She respectfully waits for her turn to speak. She does very well with disagreeing respectfully too. She takes care of others and speaks the truth while respecting others. She respects the environment around her. I am impressed by her every day.

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



Student Name: Remi Rollema
School: St. Paul's School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Amy Sanchez

Statement:

Remi has been the best friend to new students coming into class. We have had 2 new students start in the past week. As soon as they walked in the door on her own, she wanted to make them feel welcome and included all day. She holds their hands and takes them to show the toys and tells them about the rules in the classroom and asks them to play with her and the others always. She has been so helpful and welcoming to make sure the new friends are feeling included and helping the fears of starting school get easier every day. It has been so great to see how her heart is growing and caring for others.

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



Student Name: Ariana Robles

School: Stone Corral School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Lenor Roman

Statement:

Ariana Robles truly exemplifies the pillar of responsibility in our classroom, and it is a joy to witness her growth each day. She is always well-prepared, with her materials organized and ready to go, which shows how much she values her learning. During math, Ariana demonstrates great initiative, never hesitating to ask for help when she needs it—whether it’s from me or her peers. This shows her strong commitment to doing her best and continuously improving.

What makes Ariana stand out even more is the positive impact she has on our classroom environment. She kindly encourages her classmates to stay on task and leads by example with her calm and responsible demeanor. Ariana consistently completes her homework and brings it back on time, a reflection of how seriously she takes her responsibilities. Outside of academics, Ariana continues to demonstrate responsibility in everything she does. She lines up promptly after recess, taking charge of her own learning and making sure she’s ready to transition smoothly back into the classroom. She’s also incredibly thoughtful in how she interacts with others; always treating her classmates with kindness and respect. Ariana never makes anyone feel less capable and maintains a positive, supportive attitude when helping others make responsible choices. Her reliability, her caring nature, and her leadership make her a role model for her peers and a student who truly deserves this recognition for her exceptional responsibility.

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



Student Name: Callie Magbanua

School: Sycamore Valley Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Natalie Gonzalez

Statement:

Callie is a bright, caring and responsible student. She is always leading by example and treating everyone with respect. She is constantly striving to stay on task and finish her work. Apart from that she is always ready to help anyone without hesitation. Callie quite often represents all pillars of character counts and especially responsibility. This is my second year having Callie in my class and I could say without a doubt that she deserves this recognition.

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



Student Name: Isaac Serrano-Medina
School: University Preparatory High School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Teresa Cortez

Statement:

Isaac Serrano-Medina is a spectacular student and is most deserving of this recognition. Isaac represents each pillar, but what stands out the most is his passion in sports and sharing his passion with others. His involvement in his community is noteworthy and eye-catching among his peers. Isaac started 10th grade at UPHS and since then has been a marvelous student.

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



Student Name: Hailey Culver

School: Valley Life Charter School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Margie Florente

Statement:

I knew Hailey Culver before she became my third-grade student (this year) as a second-grade leader who was part of Valley Life's leadership team known as The Little Lighthouse Leaders. She participated by attending meetings and took part in leadership activities such as greeting our students as they entered the school gate on Friday mornings and during Fall Carnival. She took part in school's morning announcements and sometimes Friday announcements during Flag Salute Friday. She took part in doing her job seriously and always with a smile. This is how Hailey has shown RESPONSIBILITY with our leadership team. As a third-grade student, I noticed the first week of school how responsible Hailey is. She has completed her work in class, shows student leadership by being an example to her classmates in class and outside the classroom. She is a great example of a leader and showing responsibility. For these reasons, this is why I nominate Hailey Culver for the pillar of RESPONSIBILITY.

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



Student Name: Moises Morales

School: Valley Oak Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Maria Botello

Statement:

I am nominating Moises Morales for the character trait of responsibility. I remember Moises coming to me in 5th grade and explaining that he was not strong in math. I told him that I would help him become better if he stayed focused, asked questions and studied hard. He promised he would. Boy, did he keep his promise! Moises took the challenge. He studied hard, asked questions, asked for help and never gave up! He became one of my strongest 5th grade students! I then got him in 6th grade, last year, he continued to work hard, and I saw tremendous growth in math. He then began to help other students who were struggling with math and became a coach in my classroom. Moises moved on to middle school this year but returned with his mom on Back to School Night to share something important. He shared that he had just moved from a regular math class to an honors math class! I was so excited and may have shed a tear or two of happiness. This goes to show that if you work hard, ask questions and take responsibility for your learning, you will excel. I am honored to nominate Moises for the character trait of responsibility.

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



Student Name: Olivia Hunyady

School: Veva Blunt Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Maria Edholm

Statement:

Olivia is a student that deserves to be recognized for responsibility. She is always doing the right thing in class and at school. She is someone that can be counted on to do what needs to be done. She is always looking for ways to help the teacher and her classmates. She is the first one to volunteer to pass out papers or to read a passage aloud. She is a student that has a very positive outlook on everything. She comes to class ready to learn. She is prepared. She brings all the supplies she needs to succeed in school. In class, she follows directions the first time and helps others as well. She is focused and always on task. I can always count on her to do what is right. Olivia is a student that never gives up even when things are hard. In math, she always asks for help. She doesn't give up and is someone that will do everything she can to learn something until she succeeds. Olivia is an excellent role model in my class and in our school Veva Blunt.

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



Student Name: Garrett Kiester

School: Visalia Technical Early College High School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Travis Wyrick

Statement:

Jack Welch said that “Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.” Garrett Kiester last year served as the VTEC FFA Chapter President and served as a Tulare/Kings FFA Sectional Officer. This year he serves as a Chapter Vice President and chooses to support younger members looking to grow their leadership skills. Garrett has been known to work with students at various high schools in and outside of Visalia supporting their efforts to grow better FFA Chapter Programs. On campus he chooses to look towards the freshman and sophomore members and build up their skills in public speaking and livestock production. Garrett takes the time to empower others and raise them up for their successes.

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



Student Name: Braxden Senior

School: Washington Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Vanesa Ruiz Zamora

Statement:

Braxden exemplifies responsibility and academic excellence, consistently demonstrating a strong commitment to his studies and school community. His dedication is evident through his high grades, active participation in class discussions, and willingness to assist peers. Braxden approaches challenges with determination, inspiring others to strive for their best. This combination of academic achievement and personal integrity makes him a deserving candidate for this award.

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



Student Name: Sophia Munoz

School: Willow Glen Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Andre Navarrette

Statement:

As a sixth-grade teacher I have met many students as they are preparing for their journey through 6th grade and into 7th grade. Some come to me with skills they just need to sharpen. Some come to me with a need for support both academically and behaviorally. It is rare that I get the opportunity to meet a student who already exemplifies so many strengths and qualities of compassion, respect, and caring to begin the year. This year I am lucky to have a student who has already demonstrated all Six Pillars of Character. Sophia Munoz joined my class this year and from day one has exemplified what it means to be a leader, how to collaborate with peers of all backgrounds and academic levels, and how she is looking to Rise to the Top as a Willow Glen Warrior. Sophia takes pride in her hard work and is self-motivated to be successful in all areas of her life. Whether she is acting as a math coach and helping classmates, engaging in thoughtful discussions with her peers, demonstrating and leading by example, or when she is being courteous, respectful, and generous with everyone. Sophia is always looking to do her best and be a positive and supportive friend. I'm looking forward to the leadership role I know Sophia will take on with an open mind and heart. It is with this in mind that I would like to nominate Sophia Munoz as a 2024 Kid of Character.

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



Student Name: Aaliyah Cuevas

School: Castle Rock Elementary School, Woodlake

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Nancy Gordon

Statement:

This student consistently encouraged other classmates throughout the year in third grade. She was quiet, but really paid attention to the needs of her fellow students. At the end of the year, she wrote a letter to the class and asked to read it on the last day of school. In it, she named each individual child and explained at least one thing about them that was positive and affirming. In addition, EVERY DAY for the last quarter of the school year, she left a post it-note on my desk encouraging me and affirming my teaching.

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



Student Name: Illeana Ramirez Morales

School: Francis J. White Learning Center,
Woodlake

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Alondra Aguilar

Statement:

Illeana is so kind and helpful to her classmates! When a classmate cannot find a certain crayon, Illeana shares her crayons. During math, she helps her classmates write numbers by singing them the song that correlates with how to write the numbers. She also demonstrates kindness on the playground. When someone gets hurt, she walks them to the nurse. Illeana is a role model to her peers by exhibiting caring characteristics daily.

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



Student Name: Cecilia Barragan

School: Woodlake AcCEL Program, Woodlake

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Debbie Michaelian

Statement:

Cecilia demonstrates the Character Counts Pillar of Responsibility by doing what she is supposed to do. Cecilia engages in all activities with a cheerful demeanor and willingness to learn.

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



Student Name: Hannah Lafferty

School: Woodlake High School, Woodlake

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Jeannae Carmichael

Statement:

It is an honor to nominate a student that exemplifies Trustworthiness in a myriad of ways. She is reliable and follows through when committing to something. She has been an asset to our Associated Student Body (ASB) by capturing eventful memories at Pep Rallies, Lunchtime Activities, School-Related Events and at WHS Athletic Events. She has received multiple Gold Tiger Awards for having a 4.0 GPA and is an academic athlete. She is the lead photographer for the Yearbook class and goes above and beyond to help deliver quality images and capture student life on campus. She was part of the 2024 Central Section Softball Championship team. She is the pinnacle of trustworthiness and honesty and is a member of the WHS Leadership Team. She has a portfolio that showcases her academic, extracurricular and artistic accomplishments, goals and dreams. She is a stellar student who has overcome adversity and is the perfect candidate to represent Woodlake High School and Tulare County Character Counts.

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



Student Name: Alejandra Aguilar

School: Woodlake Valley Middle School, Woodlake

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Dana Jobe

Statement:

Alejandra embraces ALL the qualities presented in Character Counts. She helps other students in the classroom and has sacrificed 3 days at the end of her last 2 summers to train as a WEB (Where Every Bengal Belongs) leader. This is her second year being a leader of mentoring younger classmates by being an example, showing kindness and patience to students and adults on our campus. She is very observant and offers to help others in need, always has a kind word to say and encourages me personally as I see her change our campus for good. Woodlake Valley Middle School is a better place because Alejandra is here.