

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Ruben Gonzalez

School: Cutler Elementary School,
Cutler

Pillar: Caring

Nominators: Rita Marquez and Megan
Thiessen

Statement:

Nominator: Rita Marquez states: When I had to pick the pillar to characterize this student, I had a hard time deciding because Ruben Gonzalez exemplifies every pillar. I have seen Ruben in every grade level since he was in the second grade. I do not work directly with Ruben, yet in every class that I have worked in I can always count on Ruben to be an exemplary student. He is helpful, friendly, kind, caring, sympathetic, and empathetic. He demonstrates the Wildcat way daily: shows respect, makes good decisions, and solves problems. He also shows compassion to our Special Education students and is willing to help them and others students whenever he can. He always has a positive attitude. Ruben aspires to become a firefighter when he grows up and I think he has the perfect mindset to attain this goal. My favorite thing about Ruben is he always has a joke to tell and a smile on his face.

Nominator: Megan Thiessen states: Ruben consistently demonstrates a profound and selfless concern for his classmates, making him a true embodiment of this pillar.

Ruben's caring nature is evident in his daily actions. He is a diligent student who finishes his own work efficiently. However, once his assignments are complete, he immediately turns his attention to his peers. He goes out of his way to help those who are struggling, not only assisting them with their schoolwork but also using his fun and

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engaging personality to make them laugh. He understands that a positive attitude can be just as important as academic support, and he helps ensure that everyone can complete their work and participate in our end-of-the-week fun activities. This act of prioritizing his classmates' success over his own free time is a clear reflection of his generous spirit.

Beyond academics, Ruben shows great empathy and kindness on the playground. He is always looking out for others, and if he sees someone standing alone or without a friend during recess, he goes out of his way to invite them to join him. This simple yet powerful gesture ensures that no one feels left out and that everyone has a chance to feel included.

Ruben's consistent acts of kindness, both in the classroom and during recess, create a more positive and inclusive environment for everyone. His genuine compassion and readiness to help others truly make him an outstanding role model and an ideal candidate for this recognition. He doesn't seek praise or attention for his actions; he simply cares about the well-being of those around him.

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Student Name: Amalia De La Cruz

School: Dinuba Community Based Instruction, Dinuba

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Krista Cisneros

Statement:

Amalia exemplifies the character trait of fairness. She tells the truth and consistently follows through on her commitments. Amalia willingly gives up her turn to give others a chance and speaks up to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in school activities. She is reasonable and treats everyone with fairness and respect.

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Student Name: Luis Rico

School: Dinuba High School, Dinuba

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Jessica Guzman

Statement:

Luis has been part of my AVID class for the past two years and has consistently demonstrated responsibility, compassion, and a strong commitment to service. He has completed over 40 hours of community service at Washington Intermediate—supporting football as a team manager, helping at Parent Night, AVID fundraisers, Robotics events, and campus beautification projects. Beyond school, he volunteered at Tulare’s Winter Wonderland and assisted with AVID student interviews.

Luis approaches every task with integrity, humility, and a genuine desire to help others. He also showed leadership by founding the Lunchtime Cinema Club, creating a safe and welcoming space for students to connect and build friendships. His actions reflect Tulare County’s values of citizenship, community, and inclusivity.

Balancing his service with a 4.0 GPA, Luis exemplifies dedication both in and out of the classroom. He is one of the kindest, most giving students I have taught—a true example of how leadership and service can strengthen a community.

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Student Name: Josue Gomez

School: Grand View Elementary
School, Dinuba

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Ruth Hernandez

Statement:

Josue is a compassionate student who consistently goes out of his way to help his peers. He doesn't just wait to be asked; he has a big awareness for noticing when a classmate is struggling. Examples of this would be walking a classmate to the nurse when they are sick or injured or encouraging good behavior.

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Student Name: Kimberly V. De Jesus Carreto

School: Jefferson Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Breanna Matthies

Statement:

I am pleased to nominate Kimberly for the Pillar of Responsibility. Kimberly has consistently demonstrated exceptional integrity and a strong sense of accountability in everything she does. Kimberly consistently follows through on her commitments, whether it's completing assignments with attention to detail or stepping up to help classmates when they need assistance. She never seeks shortcuts and always takes the time to ensure that her work reflects her best effort. Even when challenges arise, Kimberly remains dedicated, showing resilience and determination to meet her responsibilities.

What truly sets Kimberly apart is her honesty and transparency. She holds herself to the highest standards and can be trusted to make decisions that are fair. Kimberly doesn't shy away from tough situations; instead, she faces them head-on, taking responsibility for her actions and setting an example for others to follow. Kimberly's unwavering sense of responsibility extends beyond academic duties. She is a reliable team member in group projects, always willing to take on her share of the work and support others in reaching their goals. She leads by example and fosters an environment of mutual respect and trust, encouraging her peers to do the same.

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Student Name: Valeria Mendoza

School: John F. Kennedy Elementary
School, Dinuba

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: RubyAnn Alvarado

Statement:

Valeria has shown outstanding responsibility. She consistently comes to class prepared with her materials and assignments completed on time. She takes ownership of her learning by staying focused, asking thoughtful questions, and making sure she gives her best effort in everything she does. Valeria also demonstrates responsibility beyond academics—she helps keep the classroom organized, reminds her classmates of expectations, and is trusted with important tasks because she follows through reliably. Her actions show that she can be counted on to make good choices and serve as a positive role model for her peers.

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Student Name: Karielle A. Camaquin

School: Lincoln Elementary School,
Dinuba

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jayboy Camaquin

Statement:

Karielle is a top student in the fifth grade who always works hard to do the right thing, whether she is at school or at home. Responsibility is the most important part of Karielle's personality. We see this trait clearly in her school performance. Her teachers report that she is a perfect example of an accountable student. She always finishes her assignments on time. More importantly, she shows she really owns her learning. When she has hard projects, she plans very well. This planning helps her manage her time efficiently, and she delivers excellent, high-quality work without needing reminders from us or her teacher. What is truly special is watching her use her strong work habits every day at home. She handles all her domestic responsibilities and chores (like cleaning her room or helping around the house) very carefully. She follows a clear schedule, which allows her to balance her housework and her schoolwork perfectly. She takes on these tasks without hesitation or needing reminders, and we never have to ask her twice. She sees her duties as chances to contribute and feels pride in everything she does. For a fifth grader, this ability to manage herself, be organized, and be so efficient is highly impressive and rare. Karielle consistently shows high standards of reliability, self-discipline, and proactive engagement. She is a dedicated and organized young person who understands how important it is to follow through and take ownership of her commitments. For all these reasons—her consistent efficiency, her strong commitment

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to meeting all obligations with pride, and her capacity for taking initiative—Karielle truly deserves this important recognition. She perfectly represents what responsibility means.

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Student Name: Abdrahman Ali

School: Ronald Reagan Academy,
Dinuba

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Terry McReynolds

Statement:

Abraham Ali is a responsible, hard-working student. He works beyond the level of expectations set aside for him. For example, he earns 4 to 5 credits a week instead of the normal 2 credits a week assigned in class. As of today, he has earned all "A's" on his report card. Abraham is currently working in his family business- a chain of grocery stores. He is currently responsible for check cashing, accounts receivable, and accounts payable. Abraham has a sense of capability and competence, belief in control over one's success, self-reliance, ability to plan and problem solve. While I communicate with him, I often notice his ability to pause and think before responding. He demonstrates self-respect and respect for others. He is a positive example of our model student R.A.P. (Respect, Accountability, Perseverance).

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Student Name: Adelyn R. Popp

School: Roosevelt Elementary School,
Dinuba

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Rosa Popp

Statement:

Adelyn Popp is a student who shows care and kindness in everything she does. As her teacher, I see every day how she treats those around her with compassion and patience and a genuine heart. She listens carefully when others speak and is thoughtful in the way she communicates. She looks for ways to make those around her feel supported and valued. One of the many ways Adelyn shows her caring nature is through how she helps others without being asked. She checks in on our newcomer student who is learning English as soon as she finishes her own work. She offers patient support and encouragement in a way that makes him feel included and confident. She is incredibly kind to our special friend in class and shows patience and understanding that come naturally to her. Adelyn notices what others might need and quietly steps in to help. She is thinking of others before herself. Her caring heart is also seen in the small everyday actions that make a big difference. She stacks chairs for classmates and grabs backpacks at the end of the day if she sees someone is still plugging in their computer. She looks for opportunities to make things easier for her peers and these thoughtful actions never go unnoticed. Adelyn shows care for her own learning by putting forth her best effort and taking pride in her work. Her positive attitude helps create a classroom where everyone feels safe and supported. As both her teacher and her mom I could not be prouder of the person she is becoming. Adelyn is a true example of what it means to

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lead with heart. Her kindness and compassion make a difference every single day and she reminds us how powerful it is to care deeply for others.

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Student Name: Andy Lopez

School: Sierra Vista High School,
Dinuba

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominators: Celia Garcia and Anabel Reveles, Amy Coats, Damaris Valdez, and Vanessa Villegas

Statement:

Nominator: Celia Garcia states: Andy Lopez has demonstrated respect towards one another and has shown empathy. She is also part of the student council where she shares and expresses her opinions. She is very kind, outgoing, and always ready to learn. Andy is known for her character and passion towards helping other students and also helping staff with extra activities. May her passion continue to grow.

Nominator: Anabel Reveles states: Andy consistently demonstrates outstanding citizenship both in and out of the classroom. She leads by example through her positivity, integrity, and willingness to help others. Whether assisting peers, supporting younger students in the ELOP program, or volunteering at community events, Andy embodies the values of kindness and service.

She goes above and beyond in every activity—helping set up the school pantry, creating decorations for senior events, serving on the school site council, and volunteering at the Dinuba Health Care facility. Her participation in school fundraisers, including annual pizza sales at the park, further reflects her dedication to community.

In addition to her strong academics, Andy stands out for her compassion, dependability, and maturity. She treats everyone with respect and strives to make her environment

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welcoming for all. Andy Paola Lopez truly exemplifies responsibility, caring, and good citizenship.

Nominator: Amy Coats states: It is with great pride that I nominate Andy Lopez for recognition in the area of Trustworthiness. Andy is an exceptional student who models what it means to be someone others can depend on. She has earned the trust of her teachers, staff, and peers through her consistent integrity, reliability, and willingness to go above and beyond.

Andy takes her responsibilities seriously, completing assignments on time and with care. She often stays after school to check if teachers or staff need assistance, and she readily volunteers her time to support projects and extracurricular activities. What stands out most about Andy is her eagerness to help others and her openness to learning new skills in order to be of service.

Her dedication and character make her a role model for her peers and a true asset to our school community. Andy Lopez not only exemplifies trustworthiness, but she also inspires others to follow her example.

Nominator: Damaris Valdez states: Andy Lopez has not only shown exemplary citizenship by being supportive to her family and community, but also throughout her attendance at Sierra Vista for her junior and senior year. At such a young age she has experienced the loss of her father and with great responsibility and care she helps her family financially by working weekends in a catering business. She carries herself with great pride knowing she is helpful and caring just the way that her dad taught her. She proudly shares she has great satisfaction being of help and providing service to others. She is eager to sign up year round to volunteer for Senior Center visits and child development classes where she is able to share her care and compassion with the elderly and youth.

Nominator: Vanessa Villegas states: Andy is an amazing leader and role model on campus. She goes over and beyond to help our school and the community. For every event held on our campus, another campus within the district or the community, she is helping organize and volunteer for the event. These events include food distribution, visits to the Dinuba Healthcare convalescent home, SVHS pizza sales, senior sunrise and many more. She is also a part of our Student Voice Group, which helps make changes and improvements on our campus. Andy is involved in everything and brings a

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positive attitude at all times. She makes an impact on our school, community, and I have no doubt she will continue to do so in the future.

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Student Name: Ranfery Solorzano
Ferreyra

School: Washington Intermediate
School, Dinuba

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Kelly Graves

Statement:

Ranfery is an exceptional young man whose responsibility, diligence, and compassion make him a model student and citizen. From the first day of school, his preparedness and focus revealed a maturity beyond his years. He embodies trustworthiness, respect, fairness, caring, and citizenship—qualities that guide both his actions and attitude.

A “straight-A” student and English Language Learner, Ranfery approaches every assignment with care and commitment, consistently producing thoughtful, high-quality work. His dedication reflects not just academic ability, but discipline and a deep respect for learning.

This same responsibility extends beyond school. At home and in his community, Ranfery demonstrates reliability, respect, and integrity. He is a quiet leader whose actions inspire his peers, showing that true success comes from hard work and a strong sense of duty.

In every way, Ranfery represents the best of our school’s values—responsibility, perseverance, and kindness. He is not only an outstanding student but a remarkable person and role model for others.

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Student Name: Robyn Valdivia

School: Wilson Elementary School,
Dinuba

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Michelle Cruz

Statement:

A shining 5th grade student who shows compassion and fairness to all is Robyn Valdivia. Robyn is an amazing Wilson Warrior who never strays from serving her peers and striving to include others in all that she does. Robyn was nominated to serve on our Wilson Buddies counselor to assist students with peer conflict resolution.

Robyn understands the importance of inclusion with all students and will often volunteer to work with students who may not have a partner or aren't asked by others to partner with. She sees the need of students who struggle with peer engagement and jumps into action to support others.

Robyn is a young lady who goes above and beyond to be fair to others. She is a role model not only to her 5th grade peers, but also to our young Warriors in our primary classrooms. Her willingness to put herself out there as a trusted student and supporter of ALL students is inspiring.

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Student Name: Lawrence J. Macias

School: Ducor Union School, Ducor

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominators: Angela Maestas and Simón Silva

Statement:

On September 15th and 16th, I had the pleasure of leading two art workshops at Ducor Elementary School, something I've done annually for 36 years. After so many years, it's rare for a student to truly stand out—but Lawrence Jesus Macias did.

During my 7th and 8th grade presentation, Lawrence showed genuine curiosity, kindness, and respect. After noticing a painting of Emmett Louis Till, he approached me with a thoughtful question that reflected deep understanding and courage to engage in meaningful dialogue. Later, he personally thanked me, introduced himself with confidence, and shared his own interests—a gesture of sincerity and maturity uncommon in someone his age.

When I returned the next day, Lawrence greeted us warmly, leaving a lasting impression on us both. His self-awareness, integrity, and respect for others are truly exceptional. Lawrence represents his school, family, and community with dignity and grace.

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Student Name: Bella Delgado Tejada

School: Alila School, Earlimart

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Kimberly Garcia

Statement:

Bella demonstrates the pillar of respect by being attentive, she not only listens with her ears, but her eyes and body too! She listens quietly when others are speaking and waits her turn to share. She uses kind words, even if she disagrees. She treats staff and classmates with courtesy. She values other people's ideas, feelings, and belongings which helps create a positive classroom environment. She is always giving her best - 100%! She is an outstanding kiddo and I cannot wait to see her continuous respect and growth throughout the year.

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Student Name: Angel Encizo

School: Earlimart Elementary School,
Earlimart

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Maryann Tavares

Statement:

Angel demonstrates all the pillars but I choose caring. Angel shows caring by always helping others inside and outside the classroom. He brings his soccer ball to school everyday and shares it with anybody who wants to play. Angel is kind to everyone, especially to adults. He always has a positive attitude when he comes to school and still has a positive attitude when he leaves.

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Student Name: Esmeralda Ramirez

School: Earlimart Middle School, Earlimart

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jessica Powell

Statement:

I'd like to recognize Esmeralda Ramirez for the exceptional excellence she brings to everything she does. From day one, Esmeralda has stood out—not only for her academic talent, but for her enthusiasm, determination, and heart.

Her energy lights up the classroom, inspiring everyone around her. She approaches every assignment with care and rigor, always seeking feedback and striving to improve. Esmeralda consistently goes above and beyond, taking full ownership of her learning and pushing herself to the highest standard.

Beyond her own success, she uplifts others—creating practice questions for classmates, clarifying concepts, and ensuring everyone has a chance to grow. Even on difficult days, Esmeralda radiates positivity and kindness (and often shares her snacks, which never hurts!).

Her intelligence, work ethic, and passion for learning make her truly exceptional. Esmeralda's curiosity, resilience, and generosity will undoubtedly carry her far.

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Student Name: Emily C. Negrete

School: AcCel Exeter Community
Based Instruction, Exeter

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Susan Wendt

Statement:

Emily "Cheyenne" Negrete has worked so hard over the last 2 years to become the young lady she is today. She has worked on the Pillar of Citizenship by learning and practicing to respect authority and those around her. When Cheyenne first came to the Exeter CBI classroom, she struggled with her attitude and the language she used. She has gone from a poor attitude to one of the students in my class that I talk about as a good example. There are days that I can see she is struggling to keep her composure and not use bad language or show disrespect. But the amount of times that she makes the right choices far outweighs the times that she does not. She comes to school with a smile on her face, even though she is sometimes tired, and is willing to do what is asked of her and do it with a good attitude. She has also learned to not be influenced by others that may have a poor attitude or may be choosing to be disrespectful. In the past this would set her off and she too would follow what the other student was doing. So very proud of the growth she has made and all the hard work she has put into herself.

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Student Name: Andrew Plyman

School: Exeter Union High School,
Exeter

Pillar: Respect

Nominators: Rochelle Mayorg and
Andrew Montes

Statement:

Nominator: Rochelle Mayorg: Andrew Plyman is being recognized for showing respect in the classroom. He consistently listens to others and treats classmates, teachers, and school staff with courtesy. By valuing different opinions and showing considerations for others' feelings, Andrew helps create a positive and welcoming environment where everyone feels heard and supported. His respectful attitude sets a great example for others to follow.

Nominator: Andrew Montes: This student-athlete is simply excellent in everything he does. To begin with, he is a 4.0 student. He takes advanced classes, and is part of our FFA program at Exeter High School. As a sophomore, he is our starting varsity quarterback. He was a three-sport athlete his freshman year, and lettered on our basketball team. But more important than athletics, or even academics, this young man is known around campus as being kind, respectful, and responsible. He is a leader among his peers, in the classroom, on the field, and in the community.

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Student Name: Rylie Shipman

School: Lincoln Elementary School,
Exeter

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Elizabeth Ruesch

Statement:

Rylie stands out as truly exceptional. She is extremely kind and shows remarkable respect and compassion when interacting with students in special education. Rylie goes above and beyond to make others feel included. She introduces her peers from general education to students in special education, always sharing their names and pointing out something unique that they enjoy. This thoughtful gesture helps every student feel seen, valued, and appreciated. As a parent of a child with special needs, I know firsthand how meaningful it is for children to have a friend who genuinely cares for them. Rylie is that friend for so many. She is generous with both her time and her spirit. During recess, when she could be playing freely, Rylie chooses instead to spend time with students who might otherwise be left out. She takes the time to connect with nonverbal students, working to understand what they want or need. For example, she once asked me to blow bubbles for the students, knowing it was something that made them happy. These seemingly small actions reveal her deep empathy and selflessness. Rylie is a joyful, compassionate soul who makes every child feel included, respected, and loved. She exemplifies the Caring pillar and serves as a wonderful role model for her peers.

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Student Name: Harmony R. Hill

School: Rocky Hill Elementary School,
Exeter

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Patricia Calderon

Statement:

It is with great pride and admiration that I nominate Harmony Hill for the 2025 Kids of Character award under the pillar of Responsibility. Despite the challenges she faces, she has demonstrated exceptional growth and an inspiring level of responsibility this school year. Harmony comes to school each day prepared and ready to learn. She follows the classroom schedule consistently. Her ability to take ownership of her behavior in the classroom has improved tremendously, and she is now able to participate more meaningfully in both academics and social activities. One of the most remarkable examples of Harmony's development has been her progress in writing and self-regulation. She is learning and paying attention actively in class. Harmony's strides in communication, behavior and daily routines are a testament to her hard work, perseverance and growing sense of responsibility. She is an exceptional student who amplifies what it means to take responsibility, and she continues to inspire everyone who works with her. I wholeheartedly recommend Harmony Hill for this recognition.

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Student Name: Jacob T. Follett

School: Sierra View Junior Academy,
Exeter

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Carol Bovee

Statement:

Jacob Follett consistently demonstrates the pillar of Responsibility through his actions, leadership, and service. He is an innate helper who takes initiative and follows through with dedication. During a recent mission trip, Jacob embraced significant responsibilities—assisting in dentistry, installing walls and cement floors, and digging for a septic tank installation. He approached each task with maturity, showing that he can be trusted to carry out important work with excellence. What sets Jacob apart is that he does not wait to be told what needs to be done; instead, he often asks, “Is there anything I can do to help?” This proactive attitude reflects a deep sense of responsibility to those around him and to the broader community. His peers and teachers know they can count on him not only to help when asked, but also to recognize needs on his own and respond with kindness and initiative. Jacob is a natural leader who guides others in a positive and encouraging way. His leadership is rooted in responsibility—modeling dependability, accountability, and service. Having spent his entire academic career at Sierra View Junior Academy, Jacob has consistently embodied the values of responsibility and service, making us extremely proud to nominate him for this Character Counts Award.

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Student Name: Blake Wallis

School: Wilson Middle School, Exeter

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Dona Johnson

Statement:

It is not often that teachers get the opportunity to have a student in elementary school and then again in middle school. As a teacher, this is truly an extra special year. Respect is deeply rooted within Blake's character. He has not wavered through the years. Blake sets high goals for himself. Furthermore, the great character trait about Blake is that he helps others set and meet their goals too. When Blake enters our classroom 1st period, he is always caring and greeting many. Blake can define each one of the character pillars to the highest level of excellence. It is an honor to have him as a student, but it is even more important that I have the opportunity to learn from him as well this year. Blake will continue to make a difference on our campus. More importantly, Blake will make a difference in this world.

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Student Name: Ramon Munoz

School: Farmersville High School,
Farmersville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Audrey Westbrook

Statement:

Ramon Munoz is the epitome of an outstanding citizen in his community! He has a true heart to serve others, and does so in a number of ways. Ramon has volunteered for the Food Link distribution in our community more than a few times to help ensure food is handed out to those in need in his community. He serves his Farmersville FFA chapter by serving as a chapter officer, now for the 2nd year in a row. He leads the charge on setting up community service opportunities for our FFA members, even going so far as to "Adopting a Highway". His service for others doesn't stop there as he also volunteers at Kaweah Delta Hospital many hours each week. He gets up early on late start Monday's before school to put in a few hours, goes after school at least 1-2 times per week, and even goes in on weekends to give of his time to serve those in need at the hospital. That kind of selfless dedication from a teenager is a rarity these days. Ramon has put in over 100 hours of service in just the last 6 months. I know his servant leadership doesn't go unnoticed at my site, and am proud he inspires others around him to also rise to the challenge of serving others. Please help me in recognizing this outstanding student, Ramon Munoz!

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Student Name: Diego Esquivel
Gonzalez

School: Farmersville Junior High
School, Farmersville

Pillar: Respect

Nominators: Lynzie Seminario and
Berenise Macias

Statement:

Nominator: Lynzie Seminario states: Diego is an outstanding example of what it means to show respect on a daily basis. He is always polite, kind, and consistently treats both students and teachers with courtesy and consideration. As an office aide, Diego has shown great trustworthiness, helpfulness, and responsibility, often going above and beyond when asked to complete tasks. He demonstrates respect not only through his words, but also through his actions—listening attentively, following directions, and valuing the contributions of others.

Both in and out of school, Diego continues to be a model example of a respectful young man. He treats everyone around him with fairness and kindness, creating a positive environment wherever he goes. His character and behavior reflect a genuine commitment to respecting himself, others, and the school community. Diego's consistent demonstration of respect makes him not only deserving of this award, but also an inspiration and role model for his peers.

Nominator: Berenise Macias states: Diego is a kind and respectful young man who consistently does what is asked of him and goes above and beyond when helping others. He is one of a kind—trustworthy, reliable, and outgoing. We truly appreciate his positive attitude and the way he contributes to our school community. As our office aide, Diego has been a joy to work with, and we are grateful for all he does.

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Student Name: Oscar J. Zuniga

School: Freedom Elementary School,
Farmersville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Robert Ortega

Statement:

Oscar has shown outstanding responsibility and determination this year. At first, he believed arithmetic would be easy, but when he realized it required more effort and organization, he quickly adjusted his work habits and applied classroom strategies to improve. His willingness to adapt and learn was an early sign of maturity.

Oscar now approaches every challenge as an opportunity to learn rather than a setback. Once hesitant to read aloud, he now volunteers confidently in any setting. His positive attitude, determination, and commitment to self-improvement have made a strong impression on both his peers and teachers.

Oscar truly embodies the character trait of Responsibility and is highly deserving of this recognition.

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Student Name: Alanna Quintero-Delgado

School: George L. Snowden School,
Farmersville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Megan Hoyt

Statement:

I would like to recognize someone who could probably run a whole classroom by herself! Alanna is the definition of responsibility. She always comes prepared to learn... and honestly, sometimes I think she's more prepared than I am. She tries her best at everything, even when she makes mistakes. And the best part? She actually learns from them. Alanna also helps me stay organized. Seriously, without her I'd probably lose half my papers, three pencils, and maybe my mind. She gives me amazing ideas for learning too, sometimes I wonder if she secretly has a teacher's manual at home. One of my favorite things about Alanna is that she takes accountability for her actions and her words. Even if she's a little too honest sometimes, like the kind of honesty that makes you laugh and say, 'Well... she's not wrong!' She's also a great friend who always wants things to be fair. And the coolest part is, she knows that life isn't always fair, but she handles it with maturity way beyond her years. I'd like to celebrate Alanna for her responsibility, her honesty, her brain full of great ideas, and for keeping all of us just a little more organized.

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Student Name: Leonardo Quiroz

School: JE Hester School, Farmersville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Ms. Sara Corona

Statement:

I wish to nominate Leonardo Quiroz, a third grade student at J.E. Hester school in Farmersville for the pillar of responsibility. Leonardo sets academic goals he has worked hard to achieve. He is a leader in our classroom and role model for his fellow peers. He embodies our school's shared vision of creating a warm learning environment that is both safe and fun. He shows responsibility in his dedication to his role on the chess team as well. Which he has awards to show for it.

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Student Name: Yaretzi Sanchez
Amador

School: Ivanhoe Elementary School,
Ivanhoe

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Francisca Vega Hernandez

Statement:

Yaretzi Sanchez is an amazing student that is very caring. She is very kind to her classmates in class, outside of class, and she is so helpful to myself in the classroom. I can count on her to always be on task at all times. When I have had rough days with behavior in class, she tells me that I am an amazing teacher and that the reason she comes to school is because of me. She makes my day better and helps me realize that I am making a difference. She has a smile on her face every day and she spreads kindness across Ivanhoe Elementary every day. I am so glad to be her teacher. Keep spreading kindness everywhere you go!

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Student Name: Karen Jarquin

School: Kings River Union School,
Kingsburg

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Briana Nino

Statement:

Karen deserves the Caring Award for her outstanding contributions to the classroom environment since day one. She consistently demonstrates a willingness to not only give her best effort but also to assist her classmates in understanding their tasks, especially when language barriers or learning struggles arise. Karen has taken on the role of a supportive peer, ensuring that everyone knows what to do. She is respectful to all individuals on campus, whether they are adults or fellow students. Moreover, she is always the first to pick up trash, showing her commitment to maintaining a clean environment, regardless of whether it belongs to her or not. Her actions truly exemplify what it means to care for others, making her deserving of this recognition.

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Student Name: Lindsay Duran

School: Jefferson Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Caring

Nominators: Jalissa Estrada and
George Gonzalez

Statement:

Nominator: Jalissa Estrada: Lindsay is always willing to lend a helping hand to classmates, whether it's assisting with schoolwork, offering encouragement, or including others in group activities so no one feels left out. She demonstrates empathy by noticing when someone is upset and taking the time to check in, listen, or offer kind words to brighten their day. In addition to the classroom, she brings the same caring spirit to the volleyball team, where she consistently demonstrates leadership by supporting her teammates, encouraging them to do their best, and modeling good sportsmanship. I also see her positive influence during the After School Program, where she continues to treat others with kindness, respect, and patience. Her thoughtful actions create a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone, making her a role model of caring for her classmates, teammates, and our school community.

Nominator: George Gonzalez: Lindsay Duran is a caring and kind 5th grade student at Jefferson Elementary who is always ready to help others. She is generous with her time, whether it's sharing supplies, helping classmates with schoolwork, or offering a kind word when someone needs it. Lindsay also attends the STARS after-school program, where she continues to show her helpful and thoughtful nature, making her a positive role model for her peers both during and after class.

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Student Name: Mateo Espinoza
Moreno

School: Kennedy Elementary School,
Lindsay

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Antonia Ramirez

Statement:

This learner advocates for his own learning. He has an incredibly respectful manner and has taken on the responsibility of talking to his learning facilitator and Kennedy's administrators to ask if he can be provided with a more challenging curriculum in math. He provided evidence that he is achieving his targets, and was incredibly polite and thoughtful. He has been taking on additional math targets above his content area and he is very proud to touch bases and keep everyone apprised of his work and accomplishments.

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Student Name: Hailey Sophia Jiménez Soria

School: Lindsay High School, Lindsay

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Esequiel Bedolla

Statement:

I would like to nominate Hailey Sophia for the well-rounded character she demonstrates as both a scholar and student-athlete. In addition to her talents in athletics and playing the guitar, she stands out because of her humility and grounded nature in her teenage years. She remains engaged in her school community and beyond, showing that her leadership extends off campus as well. Her commitment to learning, service, and respect for others makes her an outstanding example of citizenship.

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Student Name: Antoinette Cervantes

School: Reagan Elementary School,
Lindsay

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Manuel Cobarruvias

Statement:

Antoinette is a model of a Learner who exudes the characteristics defined in the pillars of the Character Counts program through TCOE. Antoinette is a wonderful helper and kind to her peers. She has taken on the responsibility of helping some of our neediest Learners with the operations and procedures of our Learning Environment. It is not easy at times, but Antoinette doesn't complain and has empathy for her friends. In addition to being a good friend and caring towards others, Antoinette exhibits excellent work habits and strives to do her best daily with her classwork. After school Antoinette holds the hand of a kindergarten student to make sure she gets on the bus safely. No one asked her to help the younger child. That is just the kind of girl she is. Antoinette is one of the most caring students at our school and a great role model for others.

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Student Name: Jenna Roman

School: Roosevelt Elementary School,
Lindsay

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Briana Zepeda

Statement:

Jenna is a very caring learner to anyone who is around her. She is the first to offer a helping hand and makes sure that everyone feels included in our games and activities. She is a wonderful example of a kind and sharing learner. When someone is feeling sad or hurt she is right there with a gentle hug or a kind word to help them feel better. Jenna lights up our classroom with her kindness and friendly smile.

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Student Name: Brandy Sanchez

School: Washington Elementary
School, Lindsay

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Veronica Nunez

Statement:

Brandy Sanchez is very kind and caring when it comes to helping others. In her table she sits with two learners who need extra support and she helps guide them by re-explaining the assignment and refocusing them. In doing so, her two peers with special needs work for tokens to get extra free time for working hard. She also reminds them where to sit on the carpet and there's been times when it takes her a little longer to finish her work because she puts her peers' needs before hers. She even will join them when playing for a reward.

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Student Name: Abraham Baltazar

School: El Monte Middle School, Orosi

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Jayboy Camaquin

Statement:

I am honored to recommend Abraham Baltazar for the Character Counts Award for his exceptional caring heart. As a seventh grader, Abraham showed remarkable empathy and selflessness when a new student from the Philippines struggled to adjust to a new school, campus, and language.

Despite still being new himself, Abraham immediately took the student under his wing—offering reassurance, helping navigate classes, and providing emotional support during a challenging transition. His kindness went beyond friendship, demonstrating deep empathy and dedication while managing his own stresses.

Abraham's willingness to recognize and respond to his peer's needs with compassion and generosity truly embodies what it means to have a caring heart. For his initiative, selflessness, and constant commitment to inclusion, Abraham is highly deserving of this recognition.

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Student Name: Blanca Rodriguez

School: Esperanza High School, Oroquieta

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Karen Stuart

Statement:

I want to recognize Blanca for her exceptional responsibility and dedication to her studies. Blanca has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to learning by taking the initiative in her studies. Her ability to stay organized, set goals, and manage time effectively has been remarkable. Through her focused efforts, Blanca has shown that responsibility is not only about meeting deadlines but also about taking ownership of their education. Whether working through challenging assignments or seeking out additional resources to enhance understanding, she approaches every task with a mature and thoughtful mindset. I am proud of the hard work, self-discipline, and initiative Blanca has displayed, and I look forward to seeing her continued growth as a student. Her dedication to independent study not only reflects her academic strength but also her admirable character.

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Student Name: Jose Z. Rodriguez

School: Golden Valley Elementary
School, Oroquieta

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Norma Lupa

Statement:

Jose is an incredibly caring 5th grade boy! I often see him at the playground sitting with any student who is having a rough day or is having trouble making friends. Jose sits quietly and listens and then he offers advice. We currently have a boy who is worried about his parents because they are going through a couple of difficult situations. The boy comes to school with a stomachache most days and often cries in the morning and wants to go home to be with his mom. I overheard Jose 'counseling' him last week during recess. He was giving the boy advice regarding the situation. Jose himself is going through something difficult at home with his parents, and it is very kind of him to put his troubles aside to help others. Jose has some medical issues, but he comes to school in an optimistic mood every day. I often tell Jose that we need more kids like him at Golden Valley!

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Student Name: Jason Rosiles

School: Lovell High School, Orosi

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Antonio Diaz

Statement:

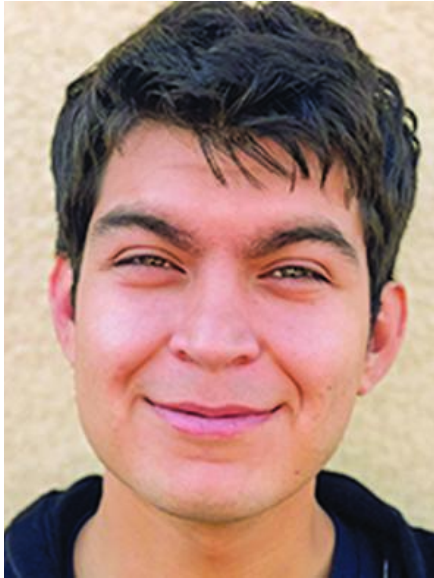
I've had the privilege of knowing Jason Rosiles for two years. When I first met him as a sophomore, he was timid, adjusting to a new school setting, but I quickly saw his strong determination to succeed and catch up on credits to return to a comprehensive high school.

At Lovell High, Jason not only focuses on improving himself but also supports those around him, taking initiative in school activities despite not being in the leadership course.

At home, Jason is the dependable youngest sibling, balancing his family responsibilities while consistently arriving at school on time—even with early mornings. Motivated by his parents' hard work in the fields, Jason is determined to break that cycle and create a brighter future for himself and his family.

His dedication, leadership, and perseverance make him a remarkable student and role model.

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Student Name: Juan Salazar Flores

School: Orosi Community Based
Instruction AcCEL Program, Orosi

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Erin Elliott

Statement:

Juan exemplifies all pillars, but maybe CARING the most. He can relate so well to others and truly cares about everyone. He understands feelings and makes an effort to pay attention to the feelings of all the other students in the class. He notices every little thing. He came in one morning and asked if I would like to buy a key chain that he made. I asked him, "How much?" and he said, "\$7", which is the exact amount of a school lunch. I asked him if he needed money for lunch, and he said, "No, but I know a classmate would like it. Whenever I get lunch, he always asks me for my leftovers, and he always only brings the same thing from home every day." He spent what he had, material and his time, to make something in the hopes of being able to earn money to give to this other student.

I am new to this classroom this year. In the morning of the second week of school, he came in early to tell me that he thinks I am doing really well and "handling the behaviors great". We have one student who has some difficult behaviors at times, and Juan will always sit next to him to make sure he is okay. These are just some examples, but his character shines through every day. Juan will go without giving to others. Every day, he welcomes each student with a hug or high five and ends each day with the same. I have never heard him say a negative word about anyone. I can not say enough good things about him. I could add the qualifier that he is "special needs", but honestly, I think he is

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a better person than most "typical" people I know. I am so lucky to know him, and I wish everyone could be as blessed to know someone like him.

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Student Name: Peyton Adame

School: Orosi High School, Orosi

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Juan Carlos Campos

Statement:

Peyton is a shining example of being active in her community and consistently exhibits the graduate outcome of being a productive citizen. Peyton has maintained a GPA of 3.2 or higher every semester of her high school career. She is a full participant in the color guard program at Orosi High School, and she is quickly rising up the ranks at the Sheriff Explorers program. These after-school activities require her to work hard after school. She has worked more than 70-hours of community service, including events such as Winter Wonderland, the Tulare County Fair, and the World Ag Show. Peyton works hard and keeps a positive attitude every day. Although she keeps busy and excels in all she does, she still finds time to help those in need, such as carrying heavy boxes for someone in need.

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Student Name: Mya Ornelas Trujillo

School: Palm Elementary School, Oroquieta

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: David Belman

Statement:

Mya is an exemplary student who demonstrated remarkable kindness and empathy, embodying the true spirit of caring. The incident that brought her to my attention occurred on a day when another student was visibly upset and crying at their desk. While other students in the class were reacting with curiosity and judgment, Mya's immediate response was one of genuine concern. With a worried expression, she quietly approached me and, out of respect for her peer's privacy, asked if she could invite the crying student to sit at her desk, as her own partner was absent. Her actions were not only thoughtful but also demonstrated a deep level of compassion. When I later asked her about her decision, she shared that a family member has similar disabilities, allowing her a unique understanding of the challenges others face. This experience has clearly cultivated a profound sense of empathy within her. Mya's behavior was a powerful display of both kindness and maturity. She stood apart from her peers, choosing to offer a helping hand rather than joining in the judgment, and in doing so, she created a safe and comforting space for another student. For her kindness and empathy, I believe Mya is a truly deserving recipient of the Caring Award.

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Student Name: Andres Gomez

School: Pixley Elementary School,
Pixley

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Shelley Heeger

Statement:

Andres is a big help in the classroom. I do not speak Spanish and I have a newcomer that does not speak English. I can trust that Andres will translate for me and the non English speaking student. As a second grade student Andres anticipates when we need that language support. I truly appreciate and depend on Andres's help on a daily basis.

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Student Name: Ashgan Ahmed

School: Pixley Middle School, Pixley

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Deborah McCaskill

Statement:

It is a pleasure to introduce Ashgan Ahmed, a remarkable young scholar and role model from Pixley, a small town that greatly benefits from her example. Ashgan, originally from Yemen, embraces her cultural roots while pursuing ambitious academic goals. As the first daughter in her family aiming for college, she faces the challenge with determination and vision, seeing opportunities rather than barriers of history, culture, or gender.

Last year, as a 7th grader, Ashgan joined the Stanford Middle School Scholars Program, preparing for a rigorous high school experience. Now a third-year AVID student, she consistently demonstrates commitment and strength, impressing her family and inspiring peers.

Active in Student Council, Poetry and Prose, Spelling Bee, and Reading Revolution, Ashgan remains deeply involved in her school community, showing that a small-town setting is no limitation. She is determined to live the virtues of prestigious universities like Brown, ready for the opportunities ahead.

Ashgan's dedication, leadership, and unwavering spirit promise a bright future filled with significant contributions to society.

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Student Name: Amaya Jensen

School: Pleasant View Elementary
School, Poplar

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Maritza Altamirano

Statement:

As the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program Coordinator at Pleasant View Elementary, I've had the pleasure of working with many students, and Amaya stands out as a true example of caring. From day one, she has shown kindness, empathy, and thoughtfulness toward both peers and adults.

Amaya instinctively supports others—helping classmates with tasks, comforting younger students, and encouraging friends when they're frustrated. She treats everyone with respect and compassion, making her a trusted role model who creates a safe and welcoming environment.

Her caring extends to staff and chaperones as well, where she expresses gratitude and positivity, inspiring others to act kindly. Amaya's consistent kindness and empathy embody the Character Counts pillar of Caring.

By living these values daily, she strengthens our program and sets a powerful example for all students. For these reasons, I am proud to nominate Amaya for recognition in Caring.

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Student Name: Andrew Torres

School: Alta Vista School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: Veronica Robles and
Michelle Hatcher

Statement:

Nominator: Veronica Robles states: Andrew Torres showed excellent responsibility throughout the 5th grade. He consistently came to school prepared, completed his work on time, and made thoughtful, responsible choices in and out of the classroom. He could always be trusted to follow through and offer help when needed. His actions set a strong example for his classmates. It is a pleasure to select Andrew for this recognition because of his consistent hard work. I am truly proud to honor his dependable and responsible character.

Nominator: Michelle Hatcher states: Andrew Torres, like his sister Aliyah Torres, is a truly remarkable student who shows the Character Counts pillar of Respect in everything he does. He always goes above and beyond, not only for himself but also for his twin sister and his classmates. Andrew is smart, kind, and loyal, and he treats everyone around him with thoughtfulness and care. He is always willing to help others, whether it's offering support in class or being there for a friend who needs encouragement. Andrew sets such a positive example for his peers, and his younger brother looks up to him with admiration. He leads by example through his actions, showing that respect means lifting others up and treating people the way they want to be treated. Andrew is the kind of student who inspires those around him every single day.

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Student Name: Liam J. Parker
Hernandez

School: Bartlett Middle School,
Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Linda Tejeda

Statement:

Liam Parker Hernandez has shown outstanding responsibility in orchestra by consistently demonstrating reliability and accountability. He always arrives prepared with his instrument, music, and materials, ready to fully participate in class. He follows directions the first time, takes care of his instrument with respect, and manages his time wisely during rehearsals. By doing what he is supposed to do without needing reminders, Liam contributes to a positive and focused learning environment.

Beyond his own preparation, Liam sets an example for others by modeling responsible behavior that supports the success of the entire ensemble. His dependability ensures that rehearsals run smoothly and that group progress is not hindered. This level of responsibility not only reflects Liam's character but also highlights his commitment to the orchestra community. He is truly deserving of the Kids of Character Counts Award for Responsibility.

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Student Name: Nikolai Ruiz

School: Burton Elementary School,
Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Stacie Crisp

Statement:

Nikolai is a wonderful student, a teacher and school will never forget. He has amazing character daily. Nikolai never complains about doing the right thing or what is expected of him. He loves to learn and lead others. He is happy and very sweet. He is a role model to others around him. He is very trustworthy. He is in charge of rewarding the class with candy for good behavior. He also has amazing judgement. I appreciate having Niko in my class and he makes us all so proud. Keep being amazing Niko!

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Student Name: Mason Miguel

School: Burton Middle School,
Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: Aaron Frescas and
Fernando Gonzalez

Statement:

Nominator: Aaron Frescas states: Mason Miguel is a tremendous leader on campus. He is everything that a teacher wants in a student, but also just everything you want a young person in today's society to be. He displays the utmost respect and carries himself with pride. He is one of the most responsible students I have ever had and leads by example.

Nominator: Fernando Gonzalez states: Burton Middle School proudly recognizes Mason Miguel, our Student Body President, for exemplifying the pillar of Responsibility. Mason consistently demonstrates strong leadership by balancing his academic responsibilities with his commitment to serving the entire student body. He leads with integrity, follows through on his promises, and models accountability for his peers. Whether organizing events, supporting classmates, or representing Burton Middle School with pride, Mason shows that responsibility is not just about getting the job done, but about doing it with character, reliability, and care for others. His actions reflect the values we strive to instill in all of our students, and we are proud to nominate him for this honor.

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Student Name: Mariateresa Hernandez

School: Butterfield Charter School,
Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Candace Castillo

Statement:

Mariateresa is an outstanding example of the pillar of Citizenship. She actively participates in school activities through leadership, where she contributes her time and energy to making the school a better place. Beyond her leadership role, Mariateresa volunteered as a counselor at SCICON, demonstrating her commitment to service and responsibility. She also shows care and respect for others by checking in on staff members to see how they are doing, creating a positive and supportive school environment. Mariateresa's actions reflect responsibility, service, and a genuine dedication to her community, making her highly deserving of recognition for the Character Counts award.

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Student Name: Evelyn Campos Isabel

School: Granite Hills High School,
Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: Vanessa Reilly and
Jaqueline Segura-Ibarra

Statement:

Nominator: Vanessa Reilly states: Evelyn Campos is no longer my student. But that doesn't mean she isn't deserving of recognition. She has taken it upon herself to buckle down and so she can pursue electives in high school. She became a leader in the classroom and on the sports field her 8th grade. Evelyn has always been dependable, organized and respectful. She is a great example of a student who always took ownership of her actions, accepted accountability for mistakes, and strove to improve.

Nominator: Jacqueline Segura-Ibarra states: Evelyn is a bright, hardworking student who consistently puts forth her best effort. Evelyn takes responsibility for her learning by completing all assignments on time and keeping her work well-organized. She shows respect by following directions and supporting her classmates, often stepping in to redirect peers and help the class stay focused. Her kindness and willingness to help others make her a true role model. Evelyn's positive attitude and dedication set a strong example for her peers, and she is truly deserving of this recognition.

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Student Name: Perla Sanchez Saucedo

School: Hope School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Samantha Alonzo

Statement:

Perla consistently demonstrates the trait of caring through her actions and words. She goes out of her way to make others feel included, respected, and supported. Whether she is offering encouragement to a classmate, sharing supplies, or helping her teachers in any way she can, Perla shows kindness without needing to be asked. She has a natural ability to empathize with others, noticing when someone is upset or discouraged and taking the time to listen and comfort them. Her thoughtful and gentle approach makes a positive difference in our classroom every day. It never goes unnoticed by me.

Beyond her kindness, Perla extends her joy to everyone around her. She treats all classmates with patience and fairness, celebrates the success of others, and contributes to a welcoming and respectful learning environment. Her actions remind us that caring is shown not only in big gestures, but also in the small, consistent choices she makes to uplift others. Perla's compassion and generosity make her a role model on our campus, and she is truly deserving of recognition for the Character Counts trait of Caring.

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Student Name: Eli Shaffer

School: Jim Maples Academy,
Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Alexandra Serna

Statement:

Eli is a student who really stands out for how caring he is toward others. He notices when classmates need help and is always willing to step in—whether that’s explaining directions, sharing materials, or just being a good friend. Eli goes out of his way to make sure others feel included and supported, which helps our classroom feel like a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

He encourages his classmates and celebrates their successes. If someone is having a hard time, Eli is quick to cheer them up or remind them to keep trying. He is thoughtful and respectful, and his positive words and actions make a big difference in the way our class works together.

Eli’s kindness and compassion make him a role model. He shows us that being caring isn’t just about saying nice things—it’s about showing kindness in everyday actions. That’s why Eli deserves recognition for the caring way he treats everyone around him.

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Student Name: Miriam Vazquez

School: John J. Doyle Elementary
School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Susana Arteaga

Statement:

Miriam Vazquez is an outstanding example of responsibility in our school community. In just one year in the United States, she has worked hard to speak English fluently and shows great commitment to her studies. She is always eager to learn new concepts and remembers new information with ease.

Each morning, Miriam demonstrates dependability by bringing the breakfast wagon, and she kindly helps her peers who struggle with their work. She also works diligently to reach her AR goal, showing perseverance and dedication. Miriam's sense of responsibility extends beyond her own learning—she looks after her younger brother during art class and makes sure he gets safely to his classroom.

Miriam is not only responsible, but also friendly and caring with both peers and adults. She is a role model who truly shows good character every day.

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Student Name: Juan Chavez

School: Los Robles Elementary School,
Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Brandon Wallace

Statement:

Juan exemplifies the meaning of caring. He shares his toys with his classmates and checks in on them when they get injured. He greets each staff member each day with a hug and when he notices that they do not feel well or are not at their best that day, he always checks in. During our social-emotional check ins, he will copy the faces that we are representing and check in on everyone who shows "sad."

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Student Name: Aylin Beltran Hernandez

School: Monache High School,
Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Racheal Chand

Statement:

Aylin, a dedicated sophomore at Monache High School, exemplifies outstanding citizenship and service to her school community. She voluntarily gives up her own lunch period to work with students in need on campus, providing encouragement, praise, and support that help them feel welcomed, valued, and truly part of the school community.

Aylin's actions go far beyond volunteerism; they demonstrate empathy, kindness, and leadership. She models inclusivity for her peers and helps create a more compassionate and unified campus culture. By investing her own time to uplift others, Aylin reflects the highest ideals of community service and student leadership, making her an inspiring example of good citizenship at Monache High School.

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Student Name: Kevin Berry Casillas

School: Monarch River Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Tiffany Trout-Lander

Statement:

Kevin exemplifies great citizenship every day and demonstrates respect, responsibility, and empathy at home and in the community! He contributes to the community and is a Young Marine, where he volunteers his time every weekend in this program. He is a great student and is getting A's in all of his subjects. In addition, Kevin is respectful to others and shows kindness to everyone he encounters, either at home, school, or in the community.

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Student Name: Michelle Corona Rosas

School: Monte Vista Elementary
School, Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Charles Blevins

Statement:

Michelle consistently demonstrates fairness by treating her classmates with equality and respect. She makes sure everyone has a turn during games and classroom activities, and she listens to others' ideas before sharing her own. Michelle is quick to speak up when she sees someone being left out and works to include them. By playing by the rules and encouraging others to do the same, Michelle helps create a positive and welcoming classroom community.

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Student Name: Camilla Contreras

School: Oak Grove Elementary School,
Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Rachel McCusker

Statement:

Camilla shows fairness by including everyone in activities and making sure no one feels left out. She gives everyone a chance to share their ideas and be part of the group. Camilla uses positive words and actions that encourage her classmates to work together. Her fairness helps create a welcoming and respectful classroom environment.

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Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Darlen Orozco

School: Olive Street Elementary
School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Maria Reyes

Statement:

Darlen always remains focused on her tasks. She engages with every activity and participates during conversations. She makes sure to help others and also stays on task and helps her peers when they need support!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Jesus Ortiz

School: Pioneer Middle School,
Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Mayra Ruiz

Statement:

Jesus Ortiz has consistently demonstrated an outstanding level of responsibility, making him the best cross-country team manager I have had in my six years of coaching. What sets Jesus apart is not only his work ethic but also his initiative in creating and implementing effective systems that have greatly improved our program's organization.

He has incorporated technology into his role by developing a parent sign-in/sign-out form, ensuring that every student is properly accounted for. He diligently takes attendance at every practice and maintains an accurate record of who is present. In addition, Jesus manages uniform inventory with precision and care, ensuring nothing is overlooked.

What makes these contributions even more impressive is that Jesus took the initiative to create and refine these systems on his own. His dedication has made my job significantly easier, as I only need to verify that everything is in order—a testament to his reliability and thoroughness.

Jesus is rare. He exemplifies what responsibility looks like in action, and I have no doubt that his skills and initiative will carry him far in the future.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Ma Christina Miranda

School: Porterville High School,
Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Cynthia Martin

Statement:

Ma Christina Miranda exemplifies responsibility through her dedication, accountability, and leadership in academics, extracurriculars, and professional experiences. A student in Porterville High School's Academy of Health Science Pathway, she maintains a 4.2 GPA while excelling in AP and Health Science courses, including Certified Nursing Assistant training. She has earned repeated Honor Roll recognition and serves as a student liaison on the Health Academy Advisory Board.

Christina's leadership is evident as president of HOSA and founder of *The Pulse* newsletter, where she manages projects that benefit her peers. She is also active in the California Scholarship Federation, Red Cross, Zonta Club, and Science Olympiad.

Her professional experiences—as a Medical Assistant Intern at Family HealthCare Network and at Kaweah Delta Medical Center—reflect her reliability, organization, and compassion. Additionally, she mentors others through tutoring and college-prep programs at UCLA and UC Berkeley.

Fluent in English and Tagalog, CPR and HIPAA certified, and a varsity athlete, Christina embodies responsibility through balance, service, and excellence. Her integrity and commitment make her truly deserving of the Responsibility Character Counts Award.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Bryan Miranda

School: Porterville Military Academy,
Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Rudy Cardona

Statement:

It is with great pride that we nominate Cadet Bryan Miranda for recognition under the Pillar of Citizenship. Bryan is an exceptional young leader whose integrity, responsibility, and service exemplify what it means to be an engaged and honorable citizen.

As an upperclassman and cadet officer, Bryan models excellence and consistently leads by example. He demonstrates respect for rules, authority, and the principles of democracy, living by the Cadet Honor Code: *A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.* He actively contributes to his school and community, volunteering his time to make both cleaner, safer, and better.

Bryan's leadership extends beyond the classroom as Commander of the Armed Drill Team, member of the Marksmanship Team and Color Guard, and participant in the school's Aviation Pathway. At the state level, he served as Cadet Commander of California's 10th Brigade Headquarters Company and completed the U.S. Marine Corps Devil Pups Leadership Encampment.

Bryan Miranda is a model of citizenship and character—an inspiring leader dedicated to service, integrity, and the common good.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Alyssa Vasquez
Gutierrez

School: Roche Avenue Elementary
School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Lisa Burns

Statement:

Alyssa is receiving the Character Counts award for Respect because she treats her classmates and teachers with kindness and care. She listens when others are speaking, uses polite words, and shows understanding when someone needs help. Alyssa makes sure that everyone feels included, and she is always ready to lend a hand. Her thoughtful actions and positive attitude make her a role model for respect in our class! We are so proud of Alyssa for showing such great character every day.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Levi Barbera

School: Rockford School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Caron Borba

Statement:

Levi Barbera, a 5th-grade student at Rockford School, exemplifies kindness, empathy, and citizenship beyond his years. In my 28 years as a teacher and administrator, I have rarely met a student like Levi. He has an exceptional ability to recognize when someone needs support and is always the first to offer help. Levi welcomes new students, makes them feel included, and treats everyone with respect and compassion.

His kindness extends to staff as well—he often offers assistance without being asked and consistently shows genuine courtesy to everyone on campus. Academically, Levi is a dedicated scholar who puts great effort into his work and helps classmates with patience and encouragement.

Outside of school, he is active in his church community and participates in track. Levi is a true role model whose actions reflect strong character and citizenship. Rockford School is fortunate to have him as part of its community.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Aislinn Rodriguez

School: Santa Fe Elementary School,
Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Briana Erives

Statement:

I am nominating Aislinn Rodriguez, who is in TK, for Character Counts because she is such a caring and compassionate student. Even at only 4 years old, she understands the importance of making her friends feel better and goes out of her way to comfort them. Whenever she notices a classmate who is upset, she is quick to offer support by rubbing their back, giving them a hug, holding their hand, and reassuring them that everything will be okay. Aislinn's kindness and empathy shine through each day, making her a wonderful role model in our class and a true example of what it means to care for others.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Amiyah Champion

School: Sequoia Middle School,
Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominators: Carla Raya Hernandez
and Blanca Lopez

Statement:

Nominator: Carla Raya states: Amiyah shows caring every day through her kindness and thoughtfulness. She is always willing to help both the teacher and her classmates without hesitation. She often asks how your day is going and shows a genuine interest in others, making those around her feel valued and supported.

Nominator: Blanca Lopez states: Amiyah has a truly remarkable spirit, showing strength and positivity even while navigating a personal loss. She greets me each day with a warm, genuine smile and consistently demonstrates kindness, thoughtfulness, and care for those around her. Amiyah's compassionate nature shines through as she looks out for others, always ready to advocate for and support anyone in need.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Clara Prescott

School: St. Anne's, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominators: Kayla Trueblood and
Sylvia Herrera

Statement:

Nominator: Kayla Trueblood states: Clara has a generous heart and a creative spirit. If you need a job done well, just ask Clara! She is helpful with younger students, is a part of our Student Council, participates in school sports and theater, and loves animals. You might see Clara cheerfully participating in our community through 4-H projects and school community service projects like the canned food drive. In the classroom, Clara is diligent about asking for assignments and help if she has been absent. On top of that, Clara keeps a close eye on her brothers and sister throughout the school day--truly delighting to see them at recess time or while switching classes.

Nominator: Sylvia Herrera states: Clara is a sweet and fun loving young lady. She will go above and beyond to be helpful and kind. She is friends with everyone and tries to include others. She does not follow the easy path; she will defend others even if no one else will. She is liked by everyone because she has good morals and her smile radiates. Clara is all the pillars and works hard to do for others.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Sofia Campos

School: Summit Charter Academy
Mathew Campus, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Lissette Banuelos

Statement:

Sofia is such a responsible first grader. She takes her tasks and school routines very seriously. She is often the first one to have all of her materials out and ready to go for the day, in class. I know that I can count on Sofia to make the right choices and to help remind others of our class expectations. On the carpet, she is a great leader and is oftentimes, the one who does our silent signal to remind the rest of the class to lower the volume. It is great to have such a responsible student like Sofia in class.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Benjamin Torres

School: Summit Charter Collegiate
Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Garrett Thomas

Statement:

Benjamin demonstrates outstanding leadership skills and serves as a role model for his peers both inside and outside the classroom. He actively engages in class discussions, consistently bringing enthusiasm and a genuine passion for learning. His positive energy and strong listening skills make him well-liked and respected among classmates. Beyond the classroom, Benjamin's entrepreneurial spirit sets him apart. He currently operates his own 3D printing business and has shown remarkable financial discipline by saving his earnings to put toward his goal of purchasing an investment property. His goal is to purchase his first property by the age of 18—a truly impressive ambition for a 9th grader.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Brandon S. Goodin

School: Summit Charter Intermediate Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Jason Goodin

Statement:

Brandon is an exceptional student and natural leader whose compassion, integrity, and dedication make him highly deserving of recognition. He consistently goes above and beyond—whether helping peers, excelling in sports, or creating a positive atmosphere at school.

Brandon stands out for his genuine care for others. He is always the first to lend a hand, listen, or encourage those who are struggling. His empathy fosters trust and respect, inspiring those around him to act with the same kindness.

As a team captain, Brandon leads by example, motivating his teammates through his positive attitude, organization, and relentless work ethic. He ensures everyone feels valued, fostering teamwork and unity both on and off the field.

In the classroom, Brandon applies the same level of effort and discipline, demonstrating strong character and responsibility. His honesty, humility, and perseverance reflect true leadership.

Brandon's balance of compassion, commitment, and excellence makes him a role model to his peers and a shining example of good character.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Fatima Nunez Zavala

School: Vandalia Elementary School,
Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Rachel Alves

Statement:

Fatima Nunez Zavala exemplifies the Pillar of Caring through her consistent kindness, generosity, and willingness to help others. She goes above and beyond every day to make our classroom a better place.

Each morning, Fatima arrives early to help set up breakfast tables—something she chooses to do simply because she enjoys serving others. She understands that small acts of kindness can have a big impact, and she performs them with joy.

During class transitions, Fatima is always ready to assist, helping clean up and supporting classmates without being asked. Her caring spirit shines in how she encourages peers, models respect, and treats everyone with warmth and positivity.

Fatima's actions show that caring is not just something she does—it's who she is. Her kindness, helpfulness, and joyful heart make her a true role model and a deserving recipient of the Kids of Character Award.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Angelica Flores

School: West Putnam Elementary
School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Elizabeth Cervantes
Ramirez

Statement:

Angelica is such a wonderful student who truly shows all of the Character Counts pillars. What stands out the most about her is how caring she is. In our dual classroom setting, she is always looking out for others, especially students who need a little extra help. Even if they're not in her group, she uses her independent work time to ask if she can support them.

One moment that really stuck with me was when I heard her tell a classmate, "I know it's difficult, but you got this. You are so smart. But if you need help, I can help you." That small encouragement spoke volumes about the kind of person she is. She really is someone who builds others up and makes them feel capable.

Angelica also comes to school every day prepared and ready to learn. She has such a positive attitude and a real love for learning that is contagious to those around her. She is kind, responsible, and caring, and she makes our classroom a better place just by being in it.

I am so proud to nominate Angelica for Character Counts because she truly lives out what it means to have great character.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Emma Huber

School: Westfield Elementary School,
Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Nancy Duran

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Emma Huber for the Character Counts Pillar of Citizenship. This pillar emphasizes doing your share in your family and community, and Emma consistently lives out this value through her actions, both big and small.

A moment that truly stood out happened at the end of the school day when one of our classmates was hurt and had to go to the nurse's office. While others were getting ready to go home, Emma immediately noticed the student's absence and took it upon herself to help. Without hesitation, she packed up the student's belongings, plugged in their Chromebook, and gathered their water bottle and lunch pail. She then came up to me and asked if she could take the student's backpack to the office so they wouldn't have to worry about coming back for it.

This thoughtful, responsible act was entirely unprompted and showed Emma's natural sense of care, responsibility, and community-mindedness. She didn't do it for praise, she did it because it was the right thing to do. That's what true citizenship looks like.

Emma Huber exemplifies what it means to be a good citizen: she sees a need and steps in with kindness, maturity, and purpose. She is a quiet leader and a role model to her peers, and she truly deserves this recognition.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Abigail M. Fisher

School: William R. Buckley Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Hailey Kavern

Statement:

Abby Fisher is a shining example of what it means to demonstrate respect on a daily basis. She consistently treats her peers, teachers, and the classroom environment with kindness, consideration, and care. No matter who she interacts with, she approaches them with patience, empathy, and a positive attitude. Her respectful nature creates a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where all students feel valued and supported.

She is especially thoughtful when it comes to helping others. Whether a classmate is struggling with an assignment or simply needs a friend, Abby is always willing to step in with a helping hand or encouraging word. Her actions show that she understands the importance of lifting others up and making sure everyone feels included.

In the classroom, Abby leads by example. She is consistently on task, focused, and engaged in her learning. She listens attentively, follows directions the first time, and contributes meaningfully to class discussions. Her dedication to doing her best and staying responsible sets a powerful example for those around her.

Because of her kindness, helpfulness, and unwavering respect for others, Abby is truly a role model among her peers. She embodies the spirit of respect in all she does, and she is highly deserving of this recognition.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Cecilia Aldaco

School: Woodville Union School,
Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Roxana Flores

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Cecilia Alcado for an award exemplifying the pillar of "Citizenship," although it was difficult narrowing it down only to one. Cecilia has an unwavering commitment to the school and community alike. She is an active participant in clubs, band, drumline, choir, band leadership, and afterschool sports. Furthermore, she consistently seeks ways to make a positive impact. She will help those in need without hesitation or even being asked, will volunteer her time, and will do so with a smile on her face. At home she helps her parents with their animals on top of her household responsibilities, all while maintaining high marks at school. She leads by example and kindness. Her actions reflect a true understanding of what it means to be an engaged and responsible citizen greatly deserving for this recognition.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Miah Sanchez

School: Richgrove School, Richgrove

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Adena Joseph

Statement:

Miah Sanchez is a very responsible third grader at Richgrove Elementary School. She attends reading intervention for additional support and tutoring after school on time every day. She is also in a band and participates with that after tutoring. She pays attention in class and asks very good questions about the characters' feelings. Overall, Miah shows compassion and responsibility every day. She wants to be a teacher as well!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Emiliano Katrones

School: Springville Union School,
Springville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Allison Negus

Statement:

Emi is an extraordinary student whose caring heart and leadership shine in everything he does. Always the first to offer help, he consistently puts others before himself. His compassion and reliability earned him a place on the Student Council—nominated by me and elected by his peers who see him as a true leader.

Emi is dedicated to improving our school community. He has proposed ideas such as an Anti-Bullying Kindness Club and a Snack Support Club to ensure that every student feels included and cared for. His empathy turns into action—when the water fountain broke, he brought cold water for classmates, and he often shared snacks with those who had none.

Alongside his kindness, Emi is a hardworking, humble scholar who strives for excellence in all he does. His generosity, leadership, and positivity make him a role model for his peers. Emi truly embodies the Pillar of Caring, leading with compassion and integrity every day.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Angieleen Villanueva

School: Harmony Magnet Academy,
Strathmore

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Suzanne Shearer

Statement:

Angieleen truly demonstrates the Character Counts pillar of Caring. In a classroom with several non-English-speaking students, she quickly stepped up to support them by translating directions and assignments into Spanish. Her willingness to take extra time to explain the work helped her peers understand the science curriculum and find success in the classroom. Angieleen's kindness, patience, and dedication show how much she cares about the success of those around her.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Mikayla Lemus

School: Strathmore Elementary School,
Strathmore

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Joni Medina

Statement:

Mikayla understands that in order for things to be fair, some people need special accommodations and sometimes more patience. When one of our special friends ran in front of her in line, she said, "That's okay. He is still learning. One day, he'll know how to wait his turn." As a teacher, I know how hard it is for students to understand that each person's best may look different than another's best. She gets this already as a 1st grader!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Fabian Lara

School: Strathmore High School,
Strathmore

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: John Lujan

Statement:

Fabian is very involved at our school. He has been in AVID all four years. For the last two years he has been an active member of our school's ASB. Fabian volunteers at the local Boys & Girls Club. Last year he organized a cloth and bedding drive for families that lost everything in the Southern California fires. Fabian has also volunteered at the elementary school to read across America. Fabian goes above and beyond to make everyone on our campus feel included.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Lily K. Nordin

School: Strathmore Middle School,
Strathmore

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominators: Ariana Prado and Janelle
Notturmo

Statement:

Nominator: Ariana Prado states: Lily has demonstrated outstanding citizenship by taking the initiative to go around campus and pick up trash without being asked. When asked about it, she shared that she noticed trash around campus and decided to take action. Not only did she clean up herself, but also encouraged other students to join her and even offered to pay for items they wanted at the book fair as a kind gesture. Lily is consistently respectful, always considerate of others, and takes the time to clean up, even in the classroom. Her actions reflect a strong sense of responsibility and care for her school community.

Nominator: Janelle Notturmo states: Lily is a very caring student. She is always helping her peers who struggle in class with their work. It doesn't matter who they are, she is the first to volunteer to help. Lily includes others in her group engagement activities to make sure no one feels left out. I enjoy watching her show compassion to those around her. She is a joy to have in class.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
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Student Name: Guillermina Avalos

School: Sunnyside Union School,
Strathmore

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Alicia Franco

Statement:

I have had the privilege of teaching this student for three years, and she has consistently demonstrated exceptional responsibility. She is the kind of student who follows through on every commitment without being reminded. Her strong sense of duty is evident in her role as a bus buddy for kindergarten students—she has never once forgotten this responsibility and even reminds others to stay on track.

Her dependability extends to all areas of her life. Academically, she completes every assignment with care and diligence, and her teachers consistently praise her reliability. Her responsibility also shines through in the band, where she was recognized by her teacher for always helping set up and clean up for performances.

She is a true role model for her peers, exemplifying the meaning of responsibility through her actions, consistency, and leadership. For these reasons, I am proud to nominate her for the Character Counts Pillar of Responsibility.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Gael Gonzalez

School: Monson-Sultana Joint Union
School, Sultana

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Kristyn Wagenleitner

Statement:

Gael is one of those rare students who leaves a lasting impression long after the school day ends. He is the first to offer a helping hand, the one who notices when someone feels left out, and the student I can always count on to set the best example for others. His kindness is genuine, he goes out of his way to make every classmate feel valued and included.

What makes Gael so special is that his character shines not only in school, but also at home. His family shares how he eagerly helps his father all day, showing the same responsibility, respect, and compassion that we see in the classroom. He doesn't just follow directions, he listens deeply, learns with purpose, and gives his very best in everything he does. Gael never settles for "good enough." He pushes himself to dream big, to reach higher, and to inspire others to do the same.

Students like Gael are unforgettable. He is the kind of young person who reminds you why teaching matters, because you know he will carry these qualities of integrity, kindness, and perseverance with him wherever he goes. Gael doesn't just represent the six pillars of character, he lives them. He is truly deserving of this recognition.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
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Student Name: Alexa Valadez

School: Carl F. Smith Middle School,
Terra Bella

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Susana Ochoa

Statement:

Alexa Valadez represents all pillars of character. I chose caring as my first choice because Alexa has surpassed her determination to help anyone who needs help. She will not hesitate to help in any manner shape or form. She sincerely helps out without any questions asked and she just instinctively does it because she is a very caring person. Whenever I need her help she helps right away and completes any tasks given to her. She also has a way to connect students who hang out by themselves to friend groups so they don't feel left out or alone.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Victoria Vargas

School: Saucelito School, Terra Bella

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Becky Borges

Statement:

Victoria has consistently demonstrated a level of responsibility that sets her apart from her peers. She is a mature, dedicated, and organized individual who takes initiative and ownership of her work and actions.

Victoria has not once missed an assignment this school year. She not only gets all her work done, but she puts a great deal of effort into everything she sets out to accomplish. From her organization of work to her penmanship she puts her best effort into every detail. Her personality, kindness, and work ethic is a positive influence to all those around her. I am confident that Victoria's responsible nature will serve her well for years to come.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Adeline Thiel

School: Three Rivers Union School,
Three Rivers

Pillar: Caring

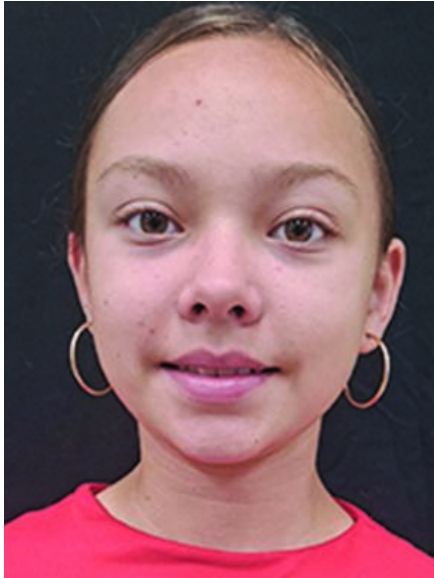
Nominator: Mrs. Beck

Statement:

It is difficult to choose just one trait for Adeline “Addie”, as she truly demonstrates them all. However, I am nominating her for Caring. Addie is an exceptional student who consistently excels in everything she does, yet she never focuses only on herself. She is a quiet leader in the classroom, modeling kindness and compassion through her daily actions.

Addie goes out of her way to support classmates, especially those who may struggle. She sits beside one student every day, offering encouragement and patiently guiding her through assignments. When that student feels upset or overwhelmed, Addie takes the time to comfort her and help her regain confidence. Addie’s actions show that she deeply values the well-being of others. She doesn’t just care about her own success—she cares about lifting up those around her. I am honored to nominate Addie for this Character Counts Award.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Ariana Marquez

School: Tipton School, Tipton

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Gina Manfredi

Statement:

Ariana was placed in a class with a student that needed help with translating. Her 7th grade teachers said to sit her next to the student and that she would help her fellow student. I often hesitate to do this at the beginning of a new school year as it can be a burden and cause the student more stress for their 8th grade year. I was so impressed how on day one I did not have to say anything to Ariana, she just sat down next to her fellow student and started translating everything I was saying. She made sure she understood the directions and then helped her classmate. She did not hesitate, act stressed, or ever complain. She is such a responsible student that the worries I had were quickly no worries at all. She even translated on our recent field trip and made sure her friend understood all that was going on and had a positive experience.

Students like Ariana are such a pleasure to have in class, she is a positive student that always has a smile on her face. I am so proud of her and enjoy having her in class.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
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Student Name: Christian Lopez

School: Traver Joint School, Traver

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Elizabeth Rodriguez

Statement:

Christian has displayed a caring heart at Traver School. He's consistently coming into class with a smile, and gives a compliment to not only his teacher but to his peers as well. He's always willing to lend a helping hand to his classmates and helps them with their math work and offers support in any way possible. Before he walks out of my classroom he makes sure to say, "Have a great day!" On campus Christian is often seen "doing the right thing". If Christian sees something that isn't quite right, he speaks up and tells an adult. He is a great young man who displays all of the pillars, but has definitely shown everyone he cares about his peers, teachers and Traver School.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Akalya Gonzales
Negrete

School: Accelerated Charter High
School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Sara Zakarian

Statement:

Akayla is an extremely responsible and respectful young lady. She truly embodies what it means to be a Titan HERO. Akayla represents ACHS with the TJUHSD Board of Trustees and always presents herself in a professional manner. She is mature and has the utmost integrity. She is the type of student you love to have on campus. Akayla has overcome obstacles in her life and academic journey. She came to ACHS to accelerate her credits and is now on track to graduate early from ACHS and even received a 3.68 GPA last semester! This year, she is serving as co-editor of the ACHS Yearbook. She is a gentle, effective and strong student leader. Akayla is an AMAZING young lady and I am proud to know her.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Alize Medina-Rosales

School: Alice G. Mulcahy Middle
School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Colton Watson

Statement:

Alize demonstrates the Caring pillar every day through kindness, empathy, and action. She checks on classmates who are absent and offers to share notes so they don't fall behind. In group work, Alize notices when someone is left out and invites them in; she encourages others, celebrates their progress, and gives helpful feedback without judgment. She regularly volunteers to help tidy our space, shares supplies without being asked, and offers quiet support to peers who are having a tough day. When conflicts arise, Alize listens first, uses respectful language, and looks for solutions that consider everyone's feelings. Her consistent compassion strengthens our classroom community, and I am proud to nominate Alize for the Character Counts Caring pillar.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Hudson Costa

School: Alpine Vista School 5-8, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominators: Melinda DeCoito, Kaela Coday, and Jaime Crook

Statement:

Nominator: Melinda DeCoito states: Hudson is such a great human! He is a model leader at school and pushes himself to be better everyday. He is also involved in Encore Theatre outside of school as well. He makes others better just by being around them!

Nominator: Kaela Coday states: Hudson demonstrates the pillar of caring on a daily basis. He demonstrates that he cares about his classmates by asking them how they are. He always has a friendly smile on his face and is happy to be in class. He demonstrates that he cares about his work by the effort he puts into every assignment. Hudson cares about his grades because he is always quick to do any work when he is not in class. Being around Hudson you can see how big his heart is and how much he cares for everyone, not just his friends.

Nominator: Jaime Crook states: Hudson exemplifies caring in all that he does inside and outside the classroom!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Ariel Barragan

School: Alpine Vista School K-4, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Courtney Dodson

Statement:

Ariel is such a caring young girl. Since the moment I met her she was so excited to be in my class and wanted to give me a gift so bad. She always tells me about her weekend or afternoon and asks about my daughter's and my life. She is so helpful in the classroom and outside of the classroom. We got a new student and the new student's desk was next to hers. Ariel took it upon herself to help the new student by holding her hand and showing her where and how we line up. She showed her where the restroom was and the playground. She took time out of her recess to help the new student feel welcome. She is so kind and so generous at age 6! She comes from an amazing family and Ariel is truly the most caring little girl!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Kamira Stephens

School: Buena Vista School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Colleen Perira

Statement:

Kamira is a caring kindergartner who is usually the first to help a friend. When a friend fell at recess, she called the teacher and helped take her friend to the office. She stayed with her friend until she felt better and held her hand to walk her back to class! She helps make our classroom a warm and caring place!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Josiah Covarrubias

School: Cherry Avenue Middle School,
Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Ryan Turner

Statement:

Josiah is one of the kindest young men you could meet. It's not just that he's outgoing and has a wonderful personality. He has a heart that is sensitive towards others and somehow easily accesses empathy. All personalities are a gift, and something we really don't get to pick. But character is something that we get to choose by choices we make every day. Josiah consistently acts out of his good character rather than impulsivity or selfishness. We had a new student come to school and the office called me to show him around, but I was unavailable. I suggested that they call Josiah to show him around. Later that day, the secretary said, "Who was that student, he was amazing! He came right in, introduced himself, asked the student about himself, and then joyfully led him around campus, making sure he knew where all his classes were, where the bathroom was, and all the necessary info that a new student would need to feel comfortable." And the truth is, Josiah is like that all the time! He is kind and caring towards everyone consistently. He doesn't discriminate or hold back good things from people. He freely gives all he is to everyone. He is a joy and his parents should be extremely proud of him.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Hannah Oliveira

School: Countryside High School,
Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Elizabeth Castaneda

Statement:

Hannah is an amazing young woman. She has worked very hard to make up any missing assignments from when she is absent. She is a hard worker and it shows.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Fischer Gomes

School: Cypress Elementary School,
Tulare

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Daniela Chavez

Statement:

It is with genuine pleasure that I nominate Fischer Gomes for the Character Pillar of Fairness. In the TK classroom, Fischer consistently models what it means to be fair. He is a true expert at sharing toys and materials, even when he really wants a turn! Fischer reliably uses our classroom tools for handling disagreements, such as waiting his turn with the play dough or allowing another student the last spot at a table. His ability to respect the needs and desires of his peers makes him an exceptional example of fairness in action.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Ryder Lockwood

School: Frank Kohn Elementary
School, Tulare

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Mrs. Heller

Statement:

Ryder Lockwood is a student who shines with fairness, even when life presents him with challenges. Recently, my class earned some free time as a reward. Students had the choice to take the full 30 minutes for themselves or give the whole class 15 minutes so everyone could enjoy the reward. When the class decided to share the time, Ryder went above and beyond. He came to me and said, “Mrs. Heller, you should give the students who chose to let everyone have a reward a PBIS point for giving up their extra time.”

This thoughtful suggestion shows Ryder’s big heart and his ability to think of others. He is full of energy, yet he always plays by the rules and uses his energy to lift others up. Ryder knows that life can be challenging, but he never takes advantage of others to get ahead. Instead, he consistently shows us what it means to make a difference. Fairness is just one of the many ways Ryder stands out every day!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
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Student Name: Zyra
Gaytan-Hernandez

School: Garden Elementary School,
Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Melissa Johnson

Statement:

Zyra has demonstrated Caring in her kindergarten class to her fellow classmates. She is always kind and respectful to all her classmates. She includes others that she sees don't have a partner to talk to or someone to play with. She will kindly ask them "do you want to play with me?" When a classmate was upset and sad, Zyra went and got her a tissue, helped her wipe her tears away, threw the tissue away and asked her if she needed another one. She proceeded to try to cheer her up by asking her to go and sit with her and watch what she was doing and help her finish it. She steps up when she sees someone is sad or alone and right away tries to help them out. She really does care about others.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Angelissa Martinez

School: Heartland Charter School,
Tulare

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Melissa Martinez

Statement:

Angelissa Martinez continues to grow and demonstrate outstanding character in every aspect of her life. As both her mother and homeschool learning coach, I am incredibly proud of the young woman she is becoming. While she truly shines in all six pillars of character, the one that stands out most is Trustworthiness.

Angelissa is honest, dependable, and true to herself. She stands up for what she believes in, even when her opinions differ from others. I can always count on her to tell the truth, no matter the circumstances. Her faith and integrity guide her actions, and she consistently treats others with respect and sincerity.

She is also deeply reliable—when she makes a commitment, she follows through, whether it's supporting a friend or spending time with family. Trustworthiness is not new to her; it has been a defining part of her character for years. I am honored to nominate my daughter, Angelissa, for this well-deserved recognition.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Jonathan Sanchez

School: Heritage Elementary School,
Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Deanna Garcia

Statement:

Jonathan is an exceptional citizen at our school. He always goes above and beyond for our school campus. He had a plan and he accomplished it. He has created Habitat Hawks. This includes students volunteering and cleaning up our campus. Jonathan makes sure to tell everyone what they are doing. He has one group of students picking up trash, and another group picking up jackets and taking them to the lost and found. He also makes sure that all lost equipment is returned to their owner. Thank you, Jonathan, for being such an inspiring citizen, and thank you for all you do for Heritage Elementary.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Mariana Campos

School: Kings Valley Academy II,
Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Corina Hernandez

Statement:

Mariana Campos is a student here at KVA II Tulare, and it has been such a joy to witness her growth and maturity over time. When she first started with us, she faced some challenges adjusting, but through hard work and perseverance, she has truly come into her own. Over the past year, Mariana Campos has stepped out of her comfort zone by participating in school trips and even joining our Student Leadership team. Once a quiet student who kept to herself, she has shown incredible courage in opening up and becoming more involved in our school community. Mariana Campos consistently shows respect to all staff and peers and demonstrates responsibility in everything she does. We are so proud of the young woman she is becoming. Keep up the amazing work, Mariana, your dedication and growth inspire us all!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Karlan Reid

School: Liberty School, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Brittany Dye

Statement:

Karlan is respectful to his peers, his teachers, his friends, and all the staff who make up Liberty School. He demonstrates respect both in and outside of the classroom. Karlan is involved in Leadership and participates in many sports. He shows respect to his teammates and coaches. After each practice, he shakes his coaches' hands and thanks them for what he learned that day. He cheers on his teammates and never talks down to anyone. He is also not a poor sport. In Leadership, he participates in respectful group conversations and never discredits someone's ideas. Teachers look forward to his daily greetings of "Good morning." Karlan is a role model for all students at Liberty, and his daily actions reflect the true meaning of respect.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Liam Alvarez Madrigal

School: Lincoln Elementary School,
Tulare

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Richard Sotelo

Statement:

Liam is an excellent candidate for the pillar of Trustworthiness. He is honest and sincere when interacting with his fellow classmates and teachers on campus. Liam does the right thing and reports problems. He doesn't expect rewards or positive recognition, he just does the right thing because that's what a good citizen does. His peers and I are very proud of him for being a trustworthy student. Excellent job Liam!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Ella Crook

School: Live Oak Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Melissa Gonzalez

Statement:

Ella is a quiet leader, someone who shows her strength not through loud gestures or recognition, but through steady reliability. She is the kind of person who notices what needs to be done, even when no one else is paying attention, and she steps in without hesitation. Whether it's cleaning up after an event, organizing materials, or taking care of the small but important details others overlook, this student takes responsibility seriously. She never needs to be asked twice, and often she has already completed the task before anyone else realizes it was needed. An example, as a leadership class, we face paint on Fridays. All the students want to be involved in the face painting activity, and at the end of the event Ella often has completely cleaned all the brushes and supplies before I even get a chance to ask.

What makes this student stand out is not just her willingness to help, but the way she does it—with no expectation of praise or reward. Ella does not look for credit, applause, or recognition. Instead, she quietly goes about her work, motivated by a genuine sense of duty and care for her community. She understands that every job, no matter how small or undesirable, contributes to the success of the group. This maturity and humility sets her apart from her peers.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Nichole Sepeda

School: Los Tules Middle School,
Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Kindra Stephens

Statement:

There is no job that Nichole does not give her best effort and you can always rely on her to get the job done. She is always willing to help others and stands up for what is right, even when it can be hard. She is a great example for her peers.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Isaiah O. Perry

School: Maple Elementary School,
Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Gina Tenhet

Statement:

Isaiah is a very caring student. He shows kindness by being polite and using kind words towards peers and staff. Isaiah is also very helpful. He is knowledgeable on his chromebook and is always willing to help everyone out when there is an issue. Isaiah brings positive energy to our group, and comes in ready to work to improve his skills. Not only is Isaiah caring towards others, but he cares about his own growth, and has improved academically due to his dedication and hard work. We truly appreciate having Isaiah in our group!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Ariel Aguilar

School: Maple Learning Center, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Denise Lozano

Statement:

Ariel is a kind and caring student who treats everyone with respect. She is always ready with a warm smile, she lifts the spirits of those around her. Her friendly nature makes her approachable, and she consistently shows compassion and kindness to peers and teachers alike.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Braelyn Serpa

School: Mission Oak High School,
Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: Dave Caetano and Carrie
Linder

Statement:

Nominator: Dave Caetano states: Braelyn has proven herself year after year to be an exceptionally responsible person. Since her freshman year she has been responsible to her family, friends, teammates, coaches and teachers. I have always been impressed with as much as she does that she maintains all her commitments. She plays three sports in school and is on a travel team, involved in a variety of school groups, her church, Tulare County Office of Ed Sportsmanship Action Team, and yet she seems to make every commitment. What impresses me most is that she considers them all important. Important enough to make sure to not let them down when needed. I work with a tremendous number of young people each year and Braelyn surfaces each year as maybe they are most responsible. I highly recommend her as she is without question very deserving of the recognition.

Nominator: Carrie Linder states: Braelyn Serpa, along with another classmate created and presented one of the workshops for the TCOE student athlete conference on 9/24/25. They both did an excellent job and are leaders among their peers.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Emily Semoes

School: Mission Valley Elementary
School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Victoria Parreira

Statement:

Emily Semoes is an exceptional student who consistently embodies the six pillars of Character Counts! I am so proud to honor her with this award. She is a shining example of a young leader, and her dedication and kindness are an inspiration to all of us.

In class, we've been learning about government and what it means to be a good citizen. It's clear that Emily has a wonderful role model in her own family, as her grandpa is a former mayor of Tulare. She understands the importance of public service and giving back to the community. Emily has also shared that she wants to be a teacher like her dad when she grows up. Her compassionate spirit and commitment to helping others will no doubt make her a fantastic educator. I can't wait to see all the wonderful things she accomplishes.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Daleysa Montenegro

School: Oak Valley Union School,
Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Terri Dominguez

Statement:

Daleysa is a very caring person. This year was her first year in school and she came to us without knowing any English. She seemed to understand more English than she could speak. Whenever she would see that one of her classmates needed help with something she would try to help even though they didn't understand her. The thought is what counted. Then our class had another new student begin a few weeks after school began. This student also spoke Spanish and she was very shy. Daleysa jumped right in to be her friend. She showed her around the classroom and playground and told her the rules that she had learned. This made me so proud of her and how she welcomed our new student so quickly. Now they are always together. Daleysa shows character in her kindness she shows all of her classmates each day.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Armando "Mitchell" Trujillo

School: Palo Verde Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominators: Anthony Nguyen and Jackie Robinson

Statement:

Nominator: Anthony Nguyen states: Mitchell demonstrates such extraordinary kindness that even I took notice of this compassionate second grader. Every week my sixth graders work with second graders in a Buddy tutoring program and we provide a snack for our little buddies. Mitchell without fail saves his snack for his younger sister. He is often seen walking her to the cafeteria for breakfast in the morning, carrying her backpack and his own. His love for his sister is truly stirring!

Nominator Jackie Robinson states: Armando "Mitchell" as we like to call him, is a great candidate for the pillar of caring. He is kind and compassionate to everyone around him. He often is found spreading words of encouragement and demonstrates a growth mindset when things are hard. He is always inclusive and treats others how he would want to be treated. His caring nature really shines when he is taking care of his little sister. He walks her to class every day and ensures she is with him when he gets on the bus to go home. Mitchell is driven and works hard in the class to earn dojo points where he can spend his points on toys and treats in the classroom store. Without fail Mitchell always chooses his rewards to take home to his little sister. His compassion for his sister, as well as for all students, is such a rare and beautiful trait.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Adan Valdez

School: Pleasant Elementary School,
Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Esperanza Covarrubias

Statement:

Adan, you have a beautiful heart and a smile that can truly light up a room. You have been chosen for the CARING award because of your unwavering willingness to help your classmates, adults, and anyone in need of support.

Your patience, kindness, and selflessness never go unnoticed. You consistently give up your own time to lift others, always stepping in to help without being asked. Whether inside or outside the classroom, you take initiative to solve problems and make things better for everyone around you. Thank you for always going above and beyond. You are a shining example of what it means to be a positive role model and a true friend. I am so proud of the person you are.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Princess Diana
Cruz-Calderon

School: Roosevelt Elementary School,
Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Rebecca Mexicano

Statement:

One day in class, Princess Diana found a \$5 bill on the floor. Instead of putting it in her pocket she brought it right up to me. The student who dropped it later came up to me and told me they lost their money. They were very happy to know that Princess Diana turned it in.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Jaslene Lopez

School: Sierra Vista Charter High School, Tulare

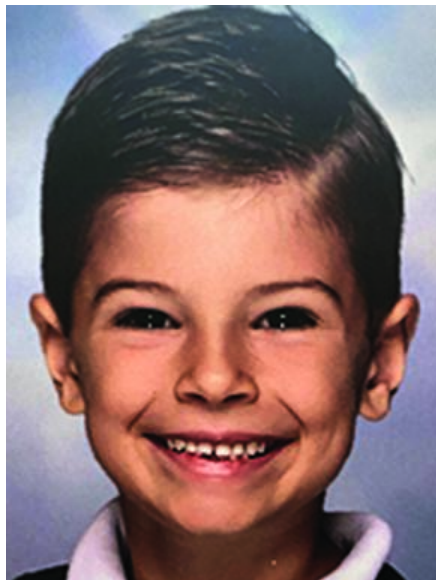
Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Sydney Armstrong

Statement:

Jaslene is an 11th grade student at Sierra Vista who will be graduating her Junior year. Last year she made a goal to graduate early despite a very challenging academic schedule. She is excelling at reaching her academic goals which is quite a feat in a program like ours where your progress is largely dependent on self motivation and responsibility. She not only took on an advanced class load but also voluntarily joined a college prep CTE program thus further showing her responsible nature and resilience.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Oliver DeMelo

School: St. Aloysius School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Michael Sozinho

Statement:

Oliver is a kind and helpful young man and plays well with others.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Luella S. Richmond

School: Sundale Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Makena Kapigian

Statement:

Luella Richmond is an exceptional student whose quiet strength, dedication, and leadership have made a lasting impact on our school community. Over the past three years in Leadership, she has proven that true leaders inspire through action, reliability, and compassion rather than volume.

Luella has been a key member of several committees—including Dance, Community Service, Awareness, Rally, and Spirit—always going above and beyond to ensure every project's success. Her organizational skills and initiative were evident when she led the planning and setup of a school dance, ensuring every detail ran smoothly.

She also created and delivered an engaging drug-free activity for 4th and 5th graders, demonstrating initiative, creativity, and care for younger students. As our current Health and Wellness representative and former student site representative, she confidently shares the student voice and promotes teamwork and inclusion.

Luella truly embodies Responsibility, Citizenship, and Caring. Her dependability, empathy, and quiet leadership continue to uplift those around her, making her deeply deserving of this recognition.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Jovanna Coronel

School: Tulare Tech Prep High School,
Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: Silvia Saucedo and
Rachel Saucedo

Statement:

Nominator: Silvia Saucedo states: Jovanna is a truly exceptional student who exemplifies responsibility. She consistently completes all her work to the highest standard, which is reflected in her grades. She currently has straight A's. She approaches every task in the classroom with focus and maturity, ensuring she always meets and exceeds expectations.

Nominator: Rachel Saucedo states: Jovanna has done an outstanding job this school year. She currently has straight A's and always does her best in all of her assignments. She goes beyond and is always asking if there is anything else that she needs to get done. It has been a pleasure having her in my class this year.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Benjamin W. Crook

School: Tulare Union High School,
Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: Amy Pohl, Mark Hatton,
and India Leal

Statement:

Nominator: Amy Pohl states: Benjamin Crook is a model student known for his preparedness and willingness to help others. As an Eagle Scout candidate since freshman year, he has shown resilience and positivity, even after not being elected ASB president twice. Now serving as ASB community service chair and senior sound technician, Benjamin is a dedicated leader.

He works as a peer tutor in the art academy, assisting classmates with projects and classroom management while offering support and encouragement. Organized and compassionate, Benjamin keeps a calendar of events and helps guide students through their busy schedules. He's sure to make school activities memorable and deserves recognition for Responsibility.

Nominator: Mark Hatton states: Ben is the most trustworthy student I have seen in my 35 years of education. Tremendous kid!

Nominator: India Leal states: I enthusiastically nominate Ben Crook for the Character Counts Award for Citizenship. Throughout high school, Ben has been a dedicated and responsible member of both our school and local community, consistently showing commitment to the common good.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Ben respects laws and school rules, promoting a positive and orderly environment through his mature behavior. For four years, he has actively contributed to ASB events, serving quietly but consistently out of a genuine sense of civic duty.

As a student leader, Ben takes responsibility for group success and encourages democratic participation, always working to improve our school. His reliability, engagement, and strong sense of community make him an outstanding candidate for this award.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Hesner Sosa

School: Tulare Western High School,
Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Katherine Nunes

Statement:

Over the course of the last two years, Hesner has been working to make a little extra money. He works in the school cafeteria, for a local catering company, and for a local convenience store. This year, he also started doing paid math tutoring in one of our algebra classes. Among his rigorous courses and clubs, he felt the desire to lighten the burden on his parents and contribute to meeting the family's financial obligations. This selflessness and ambition are definitely a huge part of who Hesner is and the driving force behind his continued perseverance.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Issac Nunez

School: Waukena Joint Union School,
Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Cecilia Moreno

Statement:

Issac is a caring young man dedicated to his own success and the well-being of those around him, especially his brothers. He works hard academically and takes his role as a big brother seriously, offering guidance and support. Having been my student before, he helps his sibling currently in my class by regularly checking in, encouraging, and assisting with schoolwork.

Issac also models respectful behavior at school and in the community, showing responsibility, dependability, and leadership. His thoughtful nature and commitment to family and community make him a positive role model who truly embodies strong citizenship.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Gabriel Minjarez

School: Wilson Elementary School,
Tulare

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Darian Warford

Statement:

Gabriel is an enforcer of rules and a keeper of peace. When playing out on the yard or engaging in a friendly classroom competition, I can always count on Gabriel to play the right way and to be honest. Gabriel is the type of student to have a single candy bar and find a way to split it with his 27 other classmates. Other teachers tend to notice how fair and helpful he is with younger kids as well. Just the other day, Gabriel walked 2 lost preschoolers to where they needed to go. Keep up the good work Gabriel!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Logan E. Miller

School: Adult Special Education, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Samantha Babb

Statement:

Logan is a responsible and proud student in the Adult Transition Program. Each morning, he takes initiative by sharing the daily weather report and student absences and helps his teacher stay organized with a “To Do” list. He’s a dedicated member of the school recycling crew, reliably helping keep campus clean and raising funds for ATP activities.

In the community, Logan shines as an active participant in Special Olympics, bowling, and Adapted Athlete programs, showing teamwork, perseverance, and positivity. At home, he responsibly cares for his two younger sisters, demonstrating his strong sense of duty.

Logan’s commitment to school, family, and community makes him an inspiring example of citizenship and a deserving candidate for this recognition.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Brooklyn Kennard

School: Annie R. Mitchell Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Perry Inthalangsy

Statement:

I nominate Brooklyn Kennard for recognition for her outstanding citizenship. She consistently demonstrates responsibility, honesty, and a strong sense of community in everything she does. Brooklyn actively contributes to making our school a better place by helping others, participating in class and school activities, and showing respect and care for her peers. Her positive attitude and commitment to doing what is right make her a role model for others. I believe Brooklyn truly embodies the qualities of good citizenship and would be a deserving recipient of this award.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Amélie Varpness

School: Blue Oak Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Tina Weeaks

Statement:

Amélie is respectful to staff and students, always responding appropriately, no matter the circumstance or situation. She has a pleasant demeanor, a good sense of humor, and a kind heart. She models for us what it means to be a friend. She's cooperative, empathetic, and accountable. Amélie is a much-loved part of our classroom community.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Leon Aguilar

School: Charter Home School
Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Sarah Gibson

Statement:

Leon shows tremendous responsibility and independence. He is on time for classes, keeps a scholarly routine, turns in his work, and maintains a very positive attitude.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Eziah Rangel

School: Conyer Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Lyndsay Gentert

Statement:

I am delighted to nominate Eziah for the Character Counts Award in the category of Fairness for consistently demonstrating integrity and respect by playing by the rules.

Eziah understands the importance of fairness in all situations—whether in the classroom, on the playground, or during group activities. He always follows the rules and encourages others to do the same, creating an environment where everyone has an equal chance to participate and succeed. His commitment to fairness ensures that games, discussions, and teamwork are respectful and balanced. Eziah's dedication to playing by the rules and treating others fairly sets a positive example for his classmates and contributes to a supportive and just community. I wholeheartedly recommend Eziah for this award in recognition of his outstanding character.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Mia Gonzalez

School: Cottonwood Creek Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Mariah Botello

Statement:

Mia is one of the most dependable friends that another student can have. She is responsible in all aspects of her life. I see it through her interactions as she speaks to and supports her friends. I see it academically through her work and the extra effort that she takes to make sure she understands something, challenges herself further, and the quality of work she turns in. I see it when she speaks about her faith and family. This girl is absolutely deserving and I only wish I could give her a character counts award in every category! This is someone who will be responsible for a positive change in the world.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Dom Simmons

School: Crescent Valley Public Charter
School II, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Brett McGinnis

Statement:

Dom could easily be considered for Respect as well as Caring given her actions on a daily basis. Dom makes a point of regularly showing warmth and kindness to anyone and everyone around her when she is at school. Dom makes it a point of complimenting and saying kind words to strangers, both other students and staff members, almost every day that she is at school. Dom also regularly treats everyone she talks to with complete respect and kindness, even people who may not agree with her personal viewpoints or interests. If someone needs help, Dom is always willing to jump in and do so. She is very thoughtful and will take mental note of things and interests that are important to people and will often make drawings or bring little gifts or make an effort to get to know more about those things in an effort to make people happy and to feel seen and cared about. I am officially nominating Dom for the Caring Pillar for this character award, but in my 6 years as a teacher, I can easily say that Dom is one of the most caring, respectful, responsible, and trustworthy students I have ever worked with.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Matthew Hernandez

School: Crestwood Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Ms. Dominguez

Statement:

Matthew is an exceptional student here at Crestwood Elementary School. Throughout the day he shows exemplary behavior and persistence to perform his best in all academic areas. He consistently proves that he cares and holds value in his learning by making connections across subjects being taught. One example is when Matthew learned about a particular event that happened in history during his music class. He then proceeded to check out a non-fiction book from our school library about the event and has made many insightful connections by using diverse thinking codes in response to his reading homework. Matthew is a student who thinks carefully before acting, considers the effects of his choices, and shows immense self-control, which makes him a true role model for other students.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Amari Alvarez- Sedillo

School: Crowley Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Ricardo Gil-Aguilar

Statement:

Amari shows respect every day by listening carefully to others, using kind words, and treating classmates and teachers the way he would want to be treated. He shows respect for our classroom by taking care of materials and helping keep our space clean. Amari also respects differences by including others and encouraging everyone to do their best. He is always willing to help his fellow classmates and they appreciate him for it. You can always count on him to be smiling and making everyone's day brighter.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Rhys Manning

School: Denton Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Haley Rodriguez

Statement:

Rhys is a shining example of Trustworthiness. His teachers and classmates know they can rely on him because he always speaks the truth, follows through on what he says he will do, and demonstrates a strong sense of integrity. Whether he is working with a partner, completing a task, or helping out in the classroom, Rhys consistently shows honesty, reliability, and care. His dependability and strong character set him apart, and we celebrate him today as an inspiring example of what it means to be trustworthy.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Bryan Baez

School: El Diamante High School,
Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Jennifer Kirkman

Statement:

I am honored to nominate Bryan Baez for the Character Counts Responsibility Pillar. Bryan started at El Diamante High School, transferred to Sequoia High School, then returned to El Diamante to finish his diploma. From the start, he showed motivation and dedication, actively seeking support and taking responsibility for his academic success.

Bryan faces challenges with maturity beyond his years. He balanced a full course load, home/family responsibilities, and job searching, all while maintaining passing grades. His grit, determination, and sense of responsibility make him a remarkable young man deserving of this recognition. Bryan knows about this nomination, and I appreciate your consideration.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Lily Gonzalez

School: Elbow Creek Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Hannah Rufert

Statement:

It is my pleasure to nominate Lily Gonzalez for recognition under the Character Counts Pillar of Caring. Lily consistently demonstrates what it means to have a caring heart, both inside and outside of the classroom.

In class, Lily works hard to complete her assignments and is always willing to lend a helping hand to her classmates. She shows empathy, kindness, and respect to everyone she interacts with. Her positive attitude helps create a supportive and welcoming environment in our 3rd-grade classroom.

Lily is also very involved in her school community and displays excellent leadership skills that her peers look up to. She sets a wonderful example for others. Outside of school, Lily is actively involved in dance and sports and participates as a young actor in local plays. Through these activities, she continues to model teamwork, dedication, and compassion while inspiring others with her creativity and leadership. For these reasons, I am proud to nominate Lily for recognition in the Character Counts Pillar of Caring. She truly exemplifies the caring qualities we value and encourage in our students.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Jackson Cairns

School: Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Ellen Brown

Statement:

In the classroom, Jackson stands out as a student with strong character. He has exhibited responsibility in class by always doing what he is supposed to do. Whether the assignment requires writing, sharing out, research, or creativity, Jackson is the first one to begin, always exceeds the expectations, and stays focused. Recently, the class has been working on research and poster projects. Jackson thoroughly researched his chosen topic, asked questions about credible sources, and was focused while creatively organizing his poster. Not only is he always on task, but he is kind and caring towards the people around him. Jackson is helpful, mature, and respectful in the learning environment to both his teachers and classmates. He is clearly invested in learning and I look forward to seeing him grow over the course of this school year!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Caeli Rivera

School: Four Creeks Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Roberta Cox

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Caeli Rivera for recognition in the pillar of Responsibility. This student consistently demonstrates accountability by completing assignments on time, coming to class prepared, and putting forth her best effort in all tasks. She takes ownership of her learning, makes thoughtful choices, and can always be relied upon to follow through with commitments. Her maturity and reliability set a positive example for peers and reflect the true meaning of responsibility.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Emerald Arriola

School: Golden Oak Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Sal Campos

Statement:

Emerald is one of the more caring and reliable students I have seen as a 4th grader. She is a friend to all of her classmates and always shows caring behaviors in the classroom, cafeteria and the playground. Her behavior is always pleasant to recognize because she serves as a model for the others in class. She is our student representative to the school council and always finds a way to include everyone in her decisions to take back to the council.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Gerardo Guerra

School: Golden West High School,
Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Joy Rubio

Statement:

This young man has served as our school's Key Club president for the past two years, but even before he held this position, he engaged in volunteer service simply because he wanted to help his school and local community. He has volunteered over 100 hours and he holds himself to the highest standard while representing his Key Club chapter along with his high school. His demeanor allows his peers to approach him about anything, which allows him to encourage them to do their part in bettering our school and Visalia at large. He is constantly arranging and organizing new service events so that his peers can experience the joys of service he has experienced, and so that students can have the opportunity to qualify for honor societies such as NHS. Not only does he have a servant's heart in the areas of community service and volunteerism, he spends many afternoons tutoring students and participating in a variety of clubs and organizations to be as well-rounded as he can be. Gerardo is as selfless as they come and will always put others before himself. When I think of Citizenship, Gerardo is the definition and prime example everyone should think of for this category.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Cara Xaivong

School: Goshen Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Ana Bagley

Statement:

Cara is a student that I can always trust to be doing the right thing even when no one is looking. When I am scanning the room after giving directions, she never has to be told more than once. In her group she is the first one to be ready with a task and then she checks with others to gently remind them or see if they need help. I can always trust that she will be on task and on topic. So if she is talking to another classmate it is related to academics or classwork. Cara is a great model student to her peers when it comes to many pillars but especially trustworthiness.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Preston Mendoza

School: Grace Christian School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Sharine Neipp

Statement:

I would like to nominate Preston for the Trustworthiness Award. When I looked at this definition, I immediately thought of him. Preston is honest with others, but he is also honest with himself. He is willing to take a good look at himself and reflect on who he is, where he came from, and who he strives to be. Whenever I need a student to deliver "truth" to a situation, I can count on Preston. Truth is not just facts. It is a deeper level of knowing and understanding the human dynamics and emotions behind the truths that lie on the surface. Preston is a person of integrity, and so if he has a goal or a plan or a thoughtful idea to make the world, or his community of friends, a better place, it becomes a promise to himself that he doesn't easily give up on. These are the things that make Preston trustworthy - someone that can be counted on.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Rayliana F. Jacovo

School: Highland Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Sarah Butler

Statement:

Rayliana is a model student who starts each day with a positive attitude, warm smile, and caring heart. Rayliana shows respect to her peers by offering to help with challenging classwork, and reminding others to have a growth mindset. Each and every day Rayliana is a caring, sweet, smart student who makes everyone's day better by simply being herself. She is a great writer and shows respect to her teacher by trying her best during class, especially when it comes to writing! Rayliana follows directions from her teacher and school staff quickly and reminds others to do the same. She sets a wonderful example of how to treat others, and we are so very lucky to have such a scholar at our school!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Estrella Escareno

School: Houston Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Marsela Diaz

Statement:

I would like to nominate Estrella Escareno for being Caring because she shows kindness in many ways. She goes out of her way to include others, offers to help classmates who are struggling, and treats everyone with respect. She is thoughtful, compassionate, and makes our classroom a better place.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Cora Miller

School: Hurley Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Mrs. Martin

Statement:

Cora is a wonderful example of responsibility. She is dependable and can always be counted on to complete her work on time and with great effort. As a leader in the classroom, Cora sets a positive example for others by making good choices, staying prepared, and encouraging classmates to do their best. She takes ownership of her actions, shows respect for others, and always puts forth her greatest effort. Cora truly demonstrates what it means to be a responsible student and role model.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Richard Martinez

School: Linwood Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Isabel Beltran

Statement:

Richard has been serving on our Eagle Academy Leadership Club for three years now! He has been actively involved in both before and after-school meetings and activities, putting in lots of volunteer time, all to promote and nurture a positive school climate and culture at Linwood Elementary! Our school-wide campaigns such as Unity Day, Red Ribbon Week, Kindness Week, and Spirit Rally Fridays would not be possible without his willingness to get involved. As his club advisor, I have watched how his visual and performing talents, along with his overall enthusiasm, have helped turn up school spirit at our assemblies and our end-of-year Lip Sync show! We are so grateful to Richard for his positive contributions to our school. We know he will continue to SOAR strong in all the years to come!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Oliver Madrigal

School: Manuel F. Hernandez
Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Delmy Mota

Statement:

Oliver Madrigal is a caring and empathetic student. He easily notices when his friends are feeling sad or when something is bothering them, and he is always the first to ask if they are okay. Recently, a classmate was upset because he didn't have any friends to play with during recess. Before I could even respond, Oliver kindly invited the boy to sit with him and share his snack with his friends. He assured the boy that his friends are nice and that he would introduce him to them. Oliver is always willing to include others and makes it a priority to ensure that the people around him are happy.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Juliet Bender

School: Mineral King Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Kaitlyn Miller

Statement:

Juliet is always prepared when she arrives at school, exhibits school spirit, and the essence of responsibility. She is always on time, and exemplifies the qualities of a leader. She tries her best to focus on her school work, complete tasks, and follow what it means to be a BRUIN at Mineral King Elementary School. Not only does Juliet care deeply about her peers, and always chooses to do the right thing helping others who are in need, but she also cares for her teachers. She does this every single day and never fails to have a positive attitude when doing so. For this reason Juliet is deserving of the character counts award for RESPONSIBILITY.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Robert Johnson

School: Mountain View Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Erika Chan

Statement:

Robert Johnson is not just a responsible student; he is also respectful, reliable, and a kind human. Robert works quietly with purpose, yet is thoughtfully engaging with his peers when it's time for group work. 6th grade can be a year of social pressures, but Robert stays true to his moral compass. He's a great role model for the other students in our class for many reasons. I am honored to have Robert as a student this year, and this nomination for the Kid of Character Award and the pillar of responsibility is well-deserved.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Savinah R. Diaz

School: Mt. Whitney High School,
Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Tim Perrotta

Statement:

Savinah is a great example of what citizenship is about. She has been a member of the Academy of Health Sciences while at Mt. Whitney High School and has volunteered for numerous activities in and outside of school. Savinah recently completed an internship at Caldwell Veterinary Hospital where she volunteered for many hours over the summer to learn more about veterinary science. She has also participated in the county-wide disaster drill, playing the role of a victim, and has shared an anti-vaping presentation at our local elementary schools for 4th and 5th grade students. She is dedicated to becoming a health professional and serving the citizens of the central valley, be they two or four legged. Savinah has always shown kindness and willingness to help out in her community, both at school and work (which she also, somehow, finds time to do). Savinah Diaz is a true exemplar of good citizenship.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Adil Al Kudsi

School: Oak Grove Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Rachael Ray

Statement:

Adil is the most polite and caring child I think I have ever taught. He greets me every day, makes sure I have a good break and a good lunch period, and is sure to say goodbye to me before he leaves for the day. Adil cheers on other students, celebrating them and sharing his pride in their accomplishments. I often see him walk over to his friends and high five them after they get a compliment. Adil is also very appreciative of receiving help. He thanks any student or adult who supports him with his learning. His smile is infectious and his positive and caring attitude has made a world of difference in our class.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Maurice Cruz

School: Pinkham Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Marleen Martinez

Statement:

It is with great joy that I nominate Maurice Cruz for Character Counts. Maurice is an extraordinary student whose heart and actions truly set him apart. He is loving, caring, and always looking out for others. Maurice forgives endlessly, never seeking attention for himself, but instead uplifting those around him. Through words and actions, Maurice teaches us all students and adults alike how we should be treating each other. His kindness and generosity are constant reminders of the power of compassion. He is always smiling, bringing warmth and encouragement wherever he goes. Maurice doesn't just need us, we truly need him. He shows us every day what it means to live with character, to be selfless, and to spread joy. Maurice Cruz is a shining example of how one person can make a difference in the lives of many. Here at Pinkham Afterschool, our motto is BE THE CHANGE !!! and Maurice is the perfect candidate who lives out that message each and every day.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Pierce D. Ramos

School: Redwood High School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Travis Roebuck

Statement:

Pierce exemplifies the pillar of Responsibility by consistently demonstrating the courage to model proper weightroom technique in front of his peers. His quiet leadership sets a strong example for others, showing that doing things the right way is more important than simply going through the motions. He takes initiative, goes above and beyond expectations, and leads not with words but through his actions, encouraging others to follow his example. His dedication and reliability make him a role model both inside and outside the classroom.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Joaquin Espinoza

School: Ridgeview Middle School,
Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Clara Espinoza

Statement:

Joaquin is an eighth grader who excels academically, earning straight A's in both middle school and college courses at College of the Sequoias—a rare achievement for his age. His maturity, discipline, and focus show in how seriously he takes his education and future goals.

He actively participates in AVID, band, and leadership, managing these commitments alongside his challenging coursework. Joaquin takes full ownership of his learning—checking in with teachers, completing assignments on time, and asking questions when needed.

He consistently shows responsibility by arriving prepared, managing his schedule, and putting in effort without complaints. Beyond academics, Joaquin is a respectful leader and role model who contributes positively to his school community. His hard work and dedication make him a deserving Kid of Character.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Everly Seechan

School: Riverway Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Victoria Ortega

Statement:

Everly was new to our school this year and was not only brave but also responsible. She always tries her best, works hard, and is a good influence to those around her.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Halle Wood

School: Royal Oaks Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: David Garza

Statement:

I would like to recommend Halle Wood for recognition under the pillar of Respect. This student consistently treats classmates, teachers, and staff with courtesy. She listens to others, uses kind words, and shows empathy in her interactions. She has a respectful attitude and creates a positive and welcoming environment for everyone. Halle treats everyone equally, plays by the rules, and encourages others to have a voice. She is honest, keeps her promises, and can always be counted on to do the right thing even when no one is watching. She has strong family moral values and always wants to do what is best and the right thing to do.

Tulare County Office of Education CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025 Weekend Feature Representatives



Student Name: Kevin Rubio

School: Sequoia High School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Salud Cobarruvias

Statement:

Sequoia High School is proud to nominate Kevin Rubio for exemplifying the values of trustworthiness, respect, caring, and responsibility. Kevin, a 16-year-old student, has earned the trust and admiration of both his peers and staff through his actions and character.

Kevin's dedication and sense of responsibility have earned him the honor of serving as ASB's representative. He was formally sworn in by the Visalia Unified School District Board Members as Sequoia's student body representative—a role in which he demonstrates leadership, reliability, and school pride.

Beyond his leadership, Kevin is a self-taught musician with the remarkable talent of playing the guitar. During lunch and breaks, he shares his gift by serenading his peers, creating a positive and welcoming school environment. Kevin is also a committed team player, actively participating in school sports where his encouraging words motivate and inspire his teammates to stay determined.

Kevin fulfills important responsibilities in the ASB on-site store, managing stocking duties and cash register operations with care and accountability. His willingness to step up and serve in multiple capacities demonstrates his maturity and commitment to the school community.

Kevin embodies the spirit of Sequoia Strong through his leadership, kindness, and responsibility. His actions and character make him an outstanding nominee.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Haydin Priest

School: Shannon Ranch Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Adrienne Terry

Statement:

I first met Hayden Priest when she was just ten years old, and even then, it was clear she carried herself with a unique sense of kindness and determination. Now, as a sixth grader at Shannon Ranch Elementary, Hayden has embraced her role as a leader with grace and confidence. After spending the past two years watching and learning from the student leaders before her, she has stepped into this year with a clear intention to serve and to inspire. Hayden is the type of student who quietly yet powerfully makes a difference everywhere she goes. In the cafeteria, the classroom, the play yard, the front office, and the library, she is quick to offer help and sets an example of responsibility and respect. She is not only a talented student-athlete and performer in the arts, but also a diligent scholar and, perhaps most importantly, a loyal and compassionate friend. Hayden consistently reflects fairness, caring, and integrity in her actions, making her a true role model for her peers. From the very first day I met her, Hayden captured my heart with her warmth and her spirit. To see her now, growing into a young woman who uplifts others and leaves a positive impact wherever she goes, is an absolute blessing. I am deeply proud of her and confident that as she continues to grow, Hayden will be an asset not only to her school but to her community as well.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Sapphire Sanchez

School: Sierra View Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Jordan Mitchell

Statement:

Sapphire is a bright, shining star on our campus. She always recognizes when others need help or a friend. Sapphire is the first person to be ready to lend a hand. She leads by example with her kind heart and keen awareness of others, lighting a clear path toward community and inclusion. She is always willing to be a partner or teammate to any and all of her peers, and loves to share strategies and encouragements as a strong, compassionate classmate. Not only is she a member of our school student council of leaders, she is also deeply involved in helping with the afterschool program as well. Sapphire is kind to all, humans and animals alike, as she will even go out of her way to gently catch a bug when it is in our classroom and release it to the safety of outside. I truly believe that her heart is made of pure gold.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Ronny Westbrook

School: St. Paul's School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Deborah Petty

Statement:

Ronny sees a need and steps in to help without being asked. When a classmate arrived late one day, Ronny noticed that the student looked unsure about what to do. Ronny moved to sit next to his classmate, explained the assignment and helped him get started. When his classmate made an error, Ronny encouraged his classmate. He said, "That's a tricky one. Let me show you how." Ronny models perseverance and encourages others to keep trying as well.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Jimena Trejo

School: Stone Corral School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Diana Ward

Statement:

It is my honor and pleasure to nominate Jimena Trejo in second grade for the character trait of Caring. Jimena shows a caring heart everyday by making sure her Spanish speaking classmate who is new to this country and learning English, is not left behind. She simultaneously translates what the teacher is teaching. This caring act is admirable. Jimena also spreads her kindness by helping other classmates in need; offering a helping hand, a smile, and giving these students positive words of encouragement. Her compassion and thoughtfulness makes her classroom a more welcoming and happy place for everyone. Jimena is the ideal role model for the Caring Character Pillar. Thank you Jimena for reminding me how powerful caring can be!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Jackson Cole

School: Sycamore Valley Academy,
Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Natalie Gonzalez

Statement:

Jackson Cole is always doing his part in my classroom. I have had him for two years and he is always the first to clean his area and others. He never thinks twice to take responsibility for the classroom's state. He is always working hard in the classroom and takes responsibility for his assignments. He is a kind soul who treats others with respect and kindness.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Rylie Byrd

School: University Preparatory High School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Jeff Fritz

Statement:

This student is known around our school as being a tremendously kind young woman whose smile brightens everyone's day. She is a friend to everyone, even if she has never met them before. She knows what needs to be done without ever being told, and is an excellent example for her younger classmates as to what it means to take the initiative. I have had the joy of watching her grow into an even more amazing person over these last four years, and she was the first one that came to mind when I decided to nominate a student.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Lucca Thompson

School: Valley Life Charter School,
Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Amanda Germaine, Cory
Vasqueros, and Megan Carlton

Statement:

Nominator: Amanda Germaine states: Lucca is a dedicated student who consistently works independently, manages her assignments with care, and always meets expectations. Her kindness and ever-present smile make her a positive influence in our classroom. Lucca's commitment to her work and her ability to stay on task set a wonderful example for her peers.

Nominator: Cory Vasqueros states: Lucca consistently shows kindness and compassion, making others feel valued and supported every day.

She balances personal growth with uplifting those around her, celebrating their strengths and encouraging their success. Lucca notices when others struggle and reaches out with empathy, ensuring no one feels alone.

Her caring nature is genuine and constant, treating everyone with respect—whether friend or stranger—without seeking praise. Lucca creates a safe, supportive space for her peers, inspiring kindness and connection.

Through her selflessness and unwavering compassion, Lucca embodies the true spirit of caring, making her an inspiring role model and deserving recipient of this award.

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Nominator: Megan Carlton states: Honestly, Lucca is like a real-life princess. Not because of a crown or a fancy title, but because she is just so kind and graceful to everyone she meets. Lucca's caring nature is clear in everything she does.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Wyatt Hopper

School: Valley Oak Middle School,
Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Shay Williams

Statement:

Wyatt Hopper is willing to go out of his way to help his school in every aspect. He is a member of the Leadership Class and WEB, and when activities happen, he is quick to volunteer his time and efforts to make sure every event goes off as a success. He arrives early and leaves last. Also, he is willing to accept accountability for his actions.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Olivia Hunyady

School: Veva Blunt Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Maria Edholm

Statement:

I am nominating Olivia for the Responsibility award because she consistently demonstrates reliability and accountability both at school and at home. She always completes her tasks on time, follows through on her commitments, and takes ownership of her learning. Olivia sets a positive example for her peers by showing maturity, staying organized, and demonstrating a strong sense of duty. Her responsible behavior makes her a role model in our classroom community.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Danica A. Roberts

School: Visalia Technical Early College
High School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Scott Braun

Statement:

I proudly nominate Danica Roberts for the Citizenship pillar of the Kid of Character award. As President of the VTEC FFA Chapter, Danica has led with integrity and vision, helping her team earn National Chapter recognition two years in a row. She exemplifies citizenship by lifting her community and inspiring collective success.

Beyond leadership, Danica positively influenced her younger brother, encouraging him to stay in school and become a leader himself—showing the powerful impact of caring citizenship. Academically, she excels with a 4.08 weighted GPA, IGETC certification, and numerous honors. She also completed a unique internship with the VMTRC Milk Quality Program, gaining valuable experience toward her goal of becoming a veterinarian at UC Davis.

Danica's commitment to service, leadership, and academic excellence makes her a true model of citizenship—someone who uplifts others, strengthens her community, and leads by example. She is a deserving nominee whose impact will inspire many.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Felisa Martinez-Garcia

School: Washington Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Diana Martinez

Statement:

Felisa is a shining example of what it truly means to be caring. Every day, during her own free time at recess, she chooses to come into the library to lend a helping hand. Instead of using that time for herself, she willingly gives it to others. She takes pride in straightening shelves and putting away books, making sure the library is neat, organized, and welcoming for everyone.

Even when there isn't much to do, Felisa continues to show kindness and thoughtfulness. She doesn't sit idly by; instead she spends time with the other students, offering to help them pick out books that match their interest or sitting beside them to color and chat about their day. Her presence brings warmth and comfort, and her willingness to listen shows others how much she values them.

Felisa's actions remind us that caring is not just about chores or helping with tasks - it's about giving your time, attention, and heart to others. She has made the library not just a place for books, but a place for friendship, encouragement, and kindness.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



Student Name: Daniel A. Gonzalez

School: Willow Glen Elementary
School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Wendy Rivas

Statement:

Danny is a first grade student who demonstrates respect in all areas of school life. He takes pride in being a Willow Glen Warrior by working hard, staying organized, and always trying his best, even when faced with challenges. Whether it's completing classwork neatly or taking responsibility for his own actions, Danny shows that he values himself and his learning. He is also a kind and thoughtful friend. Danny listens when others are speaking, takes turns, and includes others in group activities. He helps his classmates when they need it and his respectful attitude helps others feel valued and heard. When interacting with teachers and school staff, Danny consistently uses good manners and follows directions the first time they are given. He makes eye contact, uses polite language, and responds with kindness and cooperation. Teachers and staff appreciate his respectful demeanor and know they can count on him to be a positive role model for his peers. Danny is the perfect candidate to be awarded the Kids of Character honor as he exemplifies all pillars of character, but especially demonstrates respect in all areas of his life.

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Student Name: Henley Montano

School: Castle Rock Elementary
School, Woodlake

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Leanna Rodriguez

Statement:

Henley is a 5th grade student who always shows trustworthiness in class. She is honest with her teacher and classmates, even when she makes a mistake. Henley tells the truth, takes responsibility for her actions, and works hard to do the right thing. She also keeps her promises — if she says she will help a classmate or finish a group project, she always follows through. Because of her honesty and reliability, everyone in class knows they can count on her.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Lexi Rubio

School: Francis J. White Learning
Center, Woodlake

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Edward Vidal and Daniel
Salazar

Statement:

Nominator: Edward Vidal states: Lexi is one of the most respectful students on campus. She treats all students with fairness and you can depend on her to be there to help others when in need. She has been a wonderful help at the playground, classrooms, and with many of our students with special needs. You can always depend on Lexi to include others, help them when in need, and treat everyone as if they are family.

Nominator: Daniel Salazar states: Lexi was a student in my first-grade class last year, and she consistently demonstrated what it means to be a person of strong character. I am honored to nominate her as a Kid of Character for the trait of respect.

Lexi treated everyone—classmates and adults alike—with kindness and consideration. She consistently used polite and respectful language and spoke with a calm, peaceful tone. She showed respect not only through her words but also through her actions, setting a positive example for others to follow.

Lexi demonstrated respect by valuing her peers, listening to others, and following classroom rules. She truly embodied what it means to treat others the way you would like to be treated.

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I am confident that Lexi will continue to be a model of respect and an inspiration to her peers.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Kevin Hart Martinez

School: Woodlake AcCEL Program,
Woodlake

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Denise Gomez

Statement:

Kevin Hart Martinez is a great example of a Character Counts student. Not only is he an outstanding responsible student but also has all of the qualities of the six pillars. In the classroom, Kevin goes straight to working on his work. Kevin knows the classroom schedule and is ready to transition to the next activity. When it is time to clean up a preferred activity, Kevin immediately starts to clean up and will help his classmates clean up. Kevin always arrives with a smile off the bus and greets his teachers.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Aldo Rodriguez

School: Woodlake High School,
Woodlake

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Manuel Martinez

Statement:

Aldo is respected throughout his school, community, and other schools/teams. Aldo works hard for what he has accomplished in his young life. He knows that it takes hard work and dedication to get what he wants, and that things don't come easy and are not handed to him. Aldo is a three sport athlete and is the greatest example to others because of his great attitude and great work ethic in all that he does. He is one that understands the rules and regulations and abides by them, and also encourages others to help them succeed. Aldo is a leader on and off the field and always makes sure that those around him are also succeeding.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Tathiana Tovar

School: Woodlake Valley Middle School, Woodlake

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Jenn Gowett

Statement:

Tathiana is always modeling outstanding citizenship. She shows up ready to go with a smile on her face, and she is always offering to help other students and myself. She is the first to volunteer to meet a need and she is always ready to help support a friend. She gives her best and brings a positive vibe to the classroom. She also is willing to put herself out there and try new things. She recently joined color guard and I'm so excited to go watch her energy light up the field! The spaces she is in are made better when she is in them.

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Student Name: David Meraz

School: AcCel Yettem Learning Center,
Yettem

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Debbie Michaelian

Statement:

David Meraz is an exceptional young man who is determined to achieve his personal best. He demonstrates the Character Counts Pillar of Responsibility by taking ownership in his academics. He demonstrates perseverance and has diligently worked to exercise self-discipline when asked to complete non-preferred tasks. David responsibly engages in all activities with a cheerful demeanor and willingness to learn!