

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



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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CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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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CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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.

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



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.

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



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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CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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.

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CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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!

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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.

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



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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.

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



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."

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



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.

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



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.

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



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2025
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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
Weekend Feature Representatives**



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: 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.