

**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!

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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.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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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.

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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!

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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:

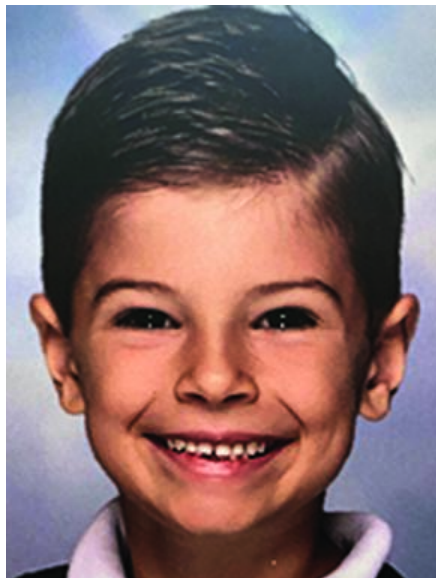
It is a pleasure to introduce Ashgan Ahmed, a remarkable young scholar and role model from Pixley, a small town that greatly benefits from her example. Ashgan, originally from Yemen, embraces her cultural roots while pursuing ambitious academic goals. As the first daughter in her family aiming for college, 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: 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.

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Student Name: Luella S. Richmond

School: Sundale Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Makena Kapigian

Statement:

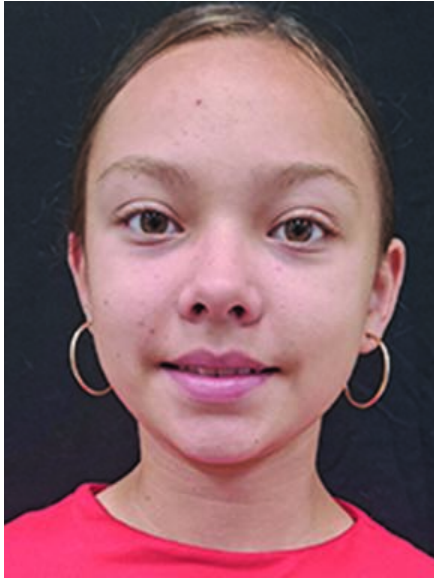
Luella Richmond is an exceptional student whose quiet strength, dedication, and leadership have made a lasting impact on our school community. Over the past three years in Leadership, she has proven that true leaders inspire through action, reliability, and compassion rather than volume.

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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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!

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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!

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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
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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.

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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!

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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.

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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.

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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!

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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.

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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.

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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!

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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!

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.