

Students in CHOICES After School Program help with popular Earlimart Farmers Market events



Last week, the nutrition ambassadors at Alila School in Earlimart were ready for their big moment. As crowds of students and parents gathered, the fourth- and fifth-grade students donned their aprons and reviewed their nutrition facts – ready to assist their customers in learning about the fresh fruits and vegetables they were distributing courtesy of FoodLink of Tulare County. The students stood by large bins of persimmons, pomegranates, oranges, potatoes, and sweet potatoes, educating visitors to the monthly farmers market at the school about the fresh produce. They engaged their audience with questions, such as “Did you know that one cooked sweet potato has 384% of your daily vitamin A?” or “Did you know that a half-cup serving of orange has 80% of your daily vitamin C?”

The students are members of the CHOICES After School Program at Alila School. Maria Solis, site supervisor, reports that the students apply to be nutrition ambassadors. If they are chosen, they commit to study nutrition facts and work with the public and younger students at events such as the monthly farmers market.



The Earlimart farmers market is a three-year partnership between the school district, University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), FoodLink of Tulare County, and the CHOICES After School Program. This year, representatives from Earlimart’s United Health Center attended to provide information about their health and dental services and the transportation services they provide.



Representatives from UCCE’s CalFresh nutrition education program conducted a taste-testing at the event. Students were given a brief lesson on the nutritional value of Fuyu persimmons and then invited to taste them. Following the taste test, students were asked to vote with their taste buds – putting their fruit sample cup in one of three baskets – love it, hate it, or pass. The majority of the cups ended up in the “love it” basket, although expressions on some children’s faces clearly indicated that they felt otherwise.

“We appreciate our partners for coming together to support the Earlimart community,” said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. “The added benefit is the experience our

students gain in learning about the importance of good nutrition, how to speak in public, and serving others in need."

Photos above:

~ Students from the CHOICES After School Program chosen to be ambassadors share nutrition facts with visitors to the monthly Earlimart Farmers Market.

~ Staff from the University of California Cooperative Extension share a nutrition lesson with students followed by a taste test of Fuyu persimmons.

~ Tony Ramos with FoodLink of Tulare County distributes hams to community members at the farmers market last week. FoodLink is a partner in the program, providing frozen meats, fresh fruits and vegetables each month.

First Annual TCOE Equity Conference taking shape, breakout sessions set



Progress on the first annual Tulare County Office of Education Equity Conference has been steady as organizers report 24 breakout sessions have been created since registration opened to Tulare County educators in October. The conference, scheduled for January 27 in the Redwood Conference Center, was created to address the importance of student and staff equity. The event will feature keynote presentations by Dr. Paul Gorski, founder and lead equity specialist for the Equity Literacy Institute, and Dr. Victor Rios, dean of Social Sciences and professor of Sociology at University of California, Santa Barbara.



The conference, which runs from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., will also feature three breakout sessions organized into five strands: Academics, Culture & Climate, Family & Community Engagement, Leadership, and Mental Health & Wellness. Among the breakout sessions is a panel discussion entitled *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Action*. The session will be facilitated by Dr. Scott Pierce, learning director for TCOE's Education Options Program, plus Tom Rooney from Lindsay Unified School District, Rick Rodriguez from Woodlake Unified School District, Michael Paul Mondoza from Tulare Joint Union High School District, and Roberto Vaca from Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District. Speakers in other breakout sessions will address a variety of topics, including social/emotional well-being, equity in student discipline, staff hiring practices, and chronic absenteeism.

Tulare County educators are encouraged to register before December 1 when registration will open to attendees from other counties. Registration for Tulare County educators is just \$15 per person. Educators outside Tulare County may register beginning December 1 for a cost of \$25 per person. To register to attend, visit www.eventsquid.com/event/8119.

Photo above:

~ The First Annual Tulare County Office of Education Equity Conference, planned for January 27, will feature keynote addresses by (left) Dr. Paul Gorski of the Equity Literacy Institute and (right) Dr. Victor Rios of University of California, Santa Barbara.

Community Advisory Committee publishes annual calendar focusing on how Project-Based Learning is helping students with special needs

Last week, the Special Services Division bundled up thousands of copies of the annual Community Advisory Committee (CAC) calendar to distribute to schools, community organizations, and clinics. For more than 25 years, the CAC, a countywide special education advocacy group, has produced beautiful color calendars that focus on the unique abilities of children with special needs and the various services available to them.

Entitled “Meeting Challenges through Project-Based Learning,” the 2020 calendar features monthly profiles of students with special needs learning through the Project-Based Learning (PBL) methodology of identifying a real-world problem and working through a process to find solutions.

Each month, the calendar highlights a different Tulare County classroom that is utilizing PBL. The calendar also describes the projects the students have developed and the successes they have found. “Through the Tulare County CAC’s annual calendar, we see students with special needs achieving great things,” said Tulare County Superintendent of School Tim Hire. “While each calendar has a different focus area, each gives us a beautiful picture of the challenges and the victories we are realizing as a team – students, parents, and educators.”

State education code established the creation of CACs. In Tulare County, this 16-member committee is made up of parents of students with special needs, parents of general education students, general and special education teachers, representatives from community agencies, and a student or adult with special needs.

Copies of the 2020 CAC calendar are available while supplies last in the lobby of the TCOE Administration Building.

Photo above:

~ Students at Summit Charter Academy, Lombardi in the Burton School District demonstrate how they used Project-Based Learning to create a research project entitled “Improving the Health of Individuals with Disabilities.”



Tulare County Farm Bureau invites students to illustrate farming through the ages



The Tulare County Farm Bureau has announced “Tulare County Agriculture: Farming Through the Ages” as the theme of its annual Student Calendar Art Contest. Students have until February 14 to complete and deliver their artwork for the 2020-21 calendar. Details of the competition are posted on the Bulletin Board section of www.tulcofb.org. The contest is annually sponsored by the Tulare County Farm Bureau and the Tulare County Office of Education.

Photo above:

~ Entries for the Tulare County Farm Bureau’s annual Student Art Calendar are due February 14. This year’s theme is “Farming through the Ages.”

Coming Up!

- **November 4 - December 23**
A Holiday in the City
(annual exhibition of holiday porcelain buildings and figurines)
TCOE Administration Building Lobby, 6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia

- **November 12 - December 30**
Student Art Exhibition
TCOE Administration Building Lobby, 6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia
[More information.](#)
- **December 12**
University Preparatory High School Information Night
6:00 - 7:00pm, COS Visalia campus, Yokut Room 9, 915 S. Mooney Blvd.
[More information.](#)

View more events at tcoe.org/CalendarofEvents.

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To receive *News Gallery Week*, visit tcoe.org/GetTheGallery, or contact Jennifer Fisher at jenniferf@tcoe.org or (559) 733-6172.
