

Special Services teacher selected as KSEE24 Educator of the Week



Last week, Julie Westbrook, an education specialist who works at Strathmore Elementary, was named Educator of the Week as part of KSEE24’s valley-wide recognition program. Ms. Westbrook, who was surprised by a reporter from the station, was presented with a \$124 gift certificate from GW School Supply. Ms. Westbrook was nominated by Brenda Leyva, a parent of a Strathmore Elementary student.

“I’m not surprised that a parent nominated her for Educator of the Week,” said Jennifer Reimer, administrator for Special Services’ Mild to Moderate Program. “Julie consistently goes above and beyond to ensure the needs of her students are met, and works with students, staff, and families with ease. She meets every situation with a positive attitude and does not shy away from even the most challenging tasks.”

Julie Westbrook has been working at Strathmore Elementary since joining TCOE’s Special Services Division in 2016. She works with students who have mild to moderate disabilities, either pulling students out of class to work on academic skills or entering classrooms to provide support within the general education setting.

Ms. Westbrook's story will be featured on KSEE24 News on December 18. She will also be honored at a reception for all 2019-2020 KSEE24 Educators of the Week on May 21 at Fresno State University. An engraved brick with her name will be installed on the Teachers and Friends of Education Honor Wall at Fresno State's Kremen School of Education.

Photo above:

~ Julie Westbrook, an education specialist with Special Services' Mild to Moderate Program, was honored last year by KSEE24 as Educator of the Week. Ms. Westbrook, who works at Strathmore Elementary, will be featured on a news segment on the station December 18.

Planetarium to host double feature of popular holiday shows



On Friday, TCOE's Planetarium & Science Center will show a double feature of its popular holiday shows *Mystery of the Christmas Star* and *Christmas Traditions Around the World*.

At 6:00 p.m., visitors to the planetarium can enjoy a showing of *Mystery of the Christmas Star*. This show investigates the possible dates for the birth of Christ by looking at the historical sightings of major astronomical events during that period. Following the planetarium show, visitors will move into the theater where *Christmas Traditions Around the World* will be shown. This popular program explores different winter season traditions people across the globe celebrate at this time of the year.

The double feature will be held at 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. on Friday, December 13. Tickets may be purchased after 5:00 p.m. on the day of the shows at the planetarium box office at 11535 Avenue 264 in Visalia. Both shows can be seen for the single ticket price of \$4 for adults and \$3 for children 11 and under. For more information, call (559) 733-6433.

ABC30 special on vaping to air on Sunday



ABC30's *Children First: Vaping Crisis* is scheduled to air Sunday, December 15 at 6:30 p.m. The special will examine the alarming increase in the use of vaping products among children and teens, and the harmful side effects of the practice.

Included in the special is a segment featuring students from Buena Vista School in Tulare. Buena Vista is among several Tulare County schools receiving vape and tobacco education through the Proposition 56 grant received by the CHOICES Program last year. The CHOICES Program presents curriculum on the short- and long-term effects of vape and tobacco use and how tobacco companies target youth to buy and use their products. The curriculum also helps students develop the communication, assertiveness, and conflict resolution skills to say “no” in high pressure situations.

The *Children First* special will also include an interview with Dr. Geetanjali Srivastava, medical director of Emergency Medicine with Valley Children’s Hospital, speaking on various potentially-fatal lung conditions seen in patients who vape. For more information on *Children First*, visit abc30.com/tag/children-first.

Photo above:

~ KC Pearce, a prevention/intervention education specialist with the CHOICES Program, conducts a vaping education lesson for students at Buena Vista School in Tulare. The lesson will be featured on an ABC30 Children First special on vaping airing Sunday, December 15 at 6:30 p.m.

Bright Start holds annual holiday gathering



Hundreds of preschool children and their parents visited the annual Bright Start Parent/Infant Program holiday gathering on Friday, December 6. Little visitors to the event were able to engage in a variety of fun, hands-on activities with the Bright Start staff who visit their homes to deliver services, often on a weekly basis. The children danced, made reindeer ornaments, created Christmas tree paintings featuring their tiny footprints, and even braved sometimes tearful pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Officers from the California Highway Patrol also attended the event to provide parents with proper car seat and booster seat information. The Bright Start Program serves more than 1,000 children, ages 0-3, with home-based services, including physical, occupational, and speech therapies, behavior and feeding therapies, and parent training. For more information about Bright Start, visit tcoe.org/Special/BrightStart.

Photos above:

~ Santa and Mrs. Claus invited children attending the Bright Start Holiday Gathering to join them for a picture. Mrs. Claus was played by Shannon Akers-Cox; Santa was played by Steven Leos.

~ Children were engaged in a variety of hands-on activities, including a station which created Christmas trees out of their footprints.

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.](#)

- **December 14**
SCICON and Circle J Christmas Bird Count
8:00am - 12:00pm @ SCICON; 1:00 - 4:30pm @ Circle J-Norris Ranch, Springville
[More information.](#)
- **December 19**
Holiday Tea and Toy Drive
2:00 - 4:00pm, TCOE Redwood Conference Center, 6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia
For more information, contact Danika Curlee at danikac@tcoe.org (559) 737-4237.

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.
