

CHARACTER COUNTS! founder and new administrator visit Tulare County to discuss partnership



This summer, Michael Josephson, founder of CHARACTER COUNTS! (CC!), gifted the ethics education program to the Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University in Iowa. The center, directed by Scott Raecker, provides character and leadership development strategies to improve civility and develop ethics in people of all ages at home, on athletic teams, in schools, and at workplaces and community organizations.

Last week, Mr. Josephson and Mr. Raecker visited Tulare County to meet with Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire to discuss ways that TCOE can assist the Ray Center in supporting CC! nationwide. The men began with a tour of the Community Based Instruction Classroom 1 in Tulare. Teacher Anne Clifford explained how CC! is the foundation of her instruction as her students demonstrated various lessons. Ms. Clifford has twice presented at national CC! conferences on integrating the program into special education settings.



Following their visit to the Community Based Instruction Classroom, the men traveled to the Tulare County Fair to visit the CC! booth and then to Mooney Grove Park to see the Pillar Square Monument and visit with program supporter Tony Salierno. At the conclusion of their visit, CC! Coordinator Kelley Petty gave the visitors an overview of the program, its trainings, media partnerships with *Visalia Times-Delta*, KSEE24, and *Direct Magazine*, and special events, including the Tulare County CC! Week celebration which honors thousands of students each year. Mr. Raecker was impressed with the breadth and depth of the program's implementation in Tulare County. "We need to share your best practices with schools throughout the nation," he said.

Through the support of the Tulare County Office of Education and its CC! office, CHARACTER COUNTS! has been widely implemented in Tulare County schools for 24 years. "We are proud of the ways that Tulare County schools have made CHARACTER COUNTS! part of their campus cultures," said Tim Hire. "Our success in implementation is one of the many things we're anxious to share with others around the country. We look forward to supporting the Ray Center with training, best practices, and implementation strategies for this foundational program."

Nominations still open for annual Kids of Character Awards

Nominations for the annual Kids of Character recognition program and the Provident-Salierno Family Foundation Awards are being accepted **through September 27**. Teachers, family and community members may recognize a Tulare County K-12 student for their outstanding character by visiting tcoe.org/KidsofCharacter. Featured students will be announced during CHARACTER COUNTS! week, October 20-26. This year, the Provident-Salierno winners and finalists will be honored at the TCOE

Conference Center (6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia) beginning at 6:00 p.m. on October 30.

Photos above:

~ (l-r) Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire welcomed Scott Raecker of the Ray Center at Drake University and Michael Josephson, founder of CHARACTER COUNTS!, to Tulare County for a discussion about how TCOE can support CHARACTER COUNTS! implementation nationwide.

~ Community Based Instruction teacher Anne Clifford and Michael Josephson listen as a student reads a letter thanking Mr. Josephson for creating the CHARACTER COUNTS! program.

StarLab system opens the galaxy to SCICON students



The SCICON astronomy program was recently enhanced by the generous gift of a StarLab projection system and planetarium show entitled *Starry Night*. The new StarLab system was provided by donations from Friends of SCICON and a grant from the Sence Foundation, both valuable partners in supporting the growth of the SCICON program.

Fitting within SCICON's existing planetarium, the new StarLab projector is an enhancement to the previous system in terms of clarity. StarLab's *Starry Night* program shows students the wonders of the universe with curriculum that spans the solar system, galaxies, dark matter, planets, and stars. "Students will be able to study constellations and planets in the planetarium before going outdoors to use telescopes for viewing the night sky and some of the same systems they learned about through our new StarLab program," said Dianne Shew, SCICON administrator. "We appreciate the support of both the Sence Foundation and Friends of SCICON in helping to always improve students' learning experiences."

College Night resources available to parents and high school students



The annual Tulare County College Night was held Tuesday, September 10 in the Heritage Complex at the International Agri-Center in Tulare. Thousands of students, parents, and educators attended to meet with nearly 90 college and university representatives who answered questions about their institutions and degree programs. Each of the attendees received a copy of the 2019-20 College Night Planning Guide, which was printed and donated by Jostens. The guide contains a variety of information – in English and Spanish – on preparation, application, transfers, athletics, and financial aid in college. For students who were unable to attend College Night, a PDF copy of the guide is available at tcoe.org/CollegeNight.

Photo above:

~ For students who were unable to attend College Night on September 10, a copy of the Tulare County College Night Planning Guide is available online at tcoe.org/CollegeNight.

California Friday Night Live Partnership wins national award for underage gambling prevention program

The California Friday Night Live Partnership, housed at the Tulare County Office of Education, manages and supports the statewide Betting On Our Future (BOOF) program to prevent underage gambling. Betting On Our Future was presented with the 2019 Wuelfing Award for Prevention from the National Council on Problem Gambling at their conference in Denver this summer.

The California Department of Public Health Office of Problem Gambling nominated the BOOF program for supporting the work of young people



to create campaigns to reduce the harmful effects of underage gambling and problematic gambling behaviors. The BOOF program is preparing to start its fourteenth project year engaging 30 sites across the state to create healthier communities for young people. More information is available at www.bettingonourfuture.org.

Circle J Family Astronomy Nights continue



Families are invited to enjoy unobstructed views of celestial objects during the **Circle J Family Astronomy Nights** continuing this month. Local amateur astronomers will lead visitors on a tour of the night sky using high-powered telescopes. The next Astronomy Night will be held **September 27**, followed by another event on **October 4** at Circle J-Norris Ranch in Springville. For more information and to reserve a spot for your family, contact Nancy Bruce at circlej@ocsnet.net or call (559) 539-2263.

Coming Up!

- **September 19**
Step Up Youth Challenge Youth Summit
8:30am-1:30pm, Visalia Rawhide Ballpark, 300 N. Giddings St.
For more information, contact Kelley Petty at kelleyp@tcoe.org or (559) 740-4303.

- **September 27**
Circle J Family Astronomy Night
7:00 - 9:00pm, Circle J-Norris Ranch, Springville
To reserve a spot, contact Nancy Bruce at circlej@ocsnet.net or (559) 539-2263.
- **October 4**
Circle J Family Astronomy Night
6:30 - 8:30pm, Circle J-Norris Ranch, Springville
To reserve a spot, contact Nancy Bruce at circlej@ocsnet.net or (559) 539-2263.

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.
