

news galleryweek

November 18, 2020

Monache High School graduate becomes Circle J-Norris Ranch's first artist-in-residence



Surrounded by the natural beauty of the Circle J-Norris Ranch, Dalia Gonzalez unpacks her watercolors, brushes, paper, and supplies to begin work on four large pieces that will be teaching tools for future visitors. Dalia is the first ever artist-in-residence at Circle J-Norris Ranch. Beginning this month and continuing through June working one to two days each week, she is beginning to create artwork that tells the story of how students and community members restored the streamside habitat at Circle J-Norris Ranch. Her artwork will be featured on four large permanent signs depicting the restoration project.

Dalia Gonzalez is a 2020 graduate of Monache High School's Environmental Sciences Academy. She attends Porterville College and works for FoodLink Tulare County, an Exeter-based organization that distributes healthy food and meals to food pantries, schools, and community organizations. In 2018 and 2019, she volunteered for the Circle J Habitat Restoration Days, experiencing firsthand the process of installing native plants such as willow trees, California grape vines, tules, and milkweeds along the streamside.



The restoration project that will be the subject of Dalia's paintings was the work of volunteers from *Allianza Ecologista*, a Porterville-based community group, and Monache High School's Environmental Sciences Academy and AVID students. The project was developed to correct some of the damage of year-round cattle grazing which had reduced the variety of plants in the area. The students and adults installed hundreds of native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers, surrounded by mesh barriers to protect them from gophers.

"The importance of this story is that students, community members, and families have restored a habitat used by birds and other wildlife," said Nancy Bruce, lead teacher for Circle J-Norris Ranch. "In the restored habitat, birds and animals can hide from predators and find safe places for nesting and burrows, well hidden by the messy chaos of plants."

The interpretive signs telling the story of the wildlife restoration are part of a grant awarded to Circle J-Norris Ranch by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish & Wildlife.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The public is invited to enjoy the beauty of the Circle J-Norris Ranch and SCICON on December 19 as part of the annual National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count (CBC). For over 120 years, the National Audubon Society has conducted CBCs involving thousands of volunteers across the United States, Canada, and several other countries in the Western Hemisphere. CBCs are early-winter bird censuses conducted between December 14 and January 5 each year and led by community science organizations.

Employees and community members who want to participate in the CBC being held at SCICON and Circle J must make a reservation with Nancy Bruce at joyfulbirding@gmail.com. The Christmas Bird Count will begin at SCICON from 8:00 a.m. until 12:15 p.m., followed by a count at Circle J-Norris Ranch from 1:00 until 4:30 p.m.

Photos above:

~ Dalia Gonzalez (top photo) is the Circle J-Norris Ranch's first artist-in-residence. She is

working on four large watercolor pieces that will be featured on permanent signs telling the story of a streamside habitat restoration project (lower photo) completed by students and adult volunteers.

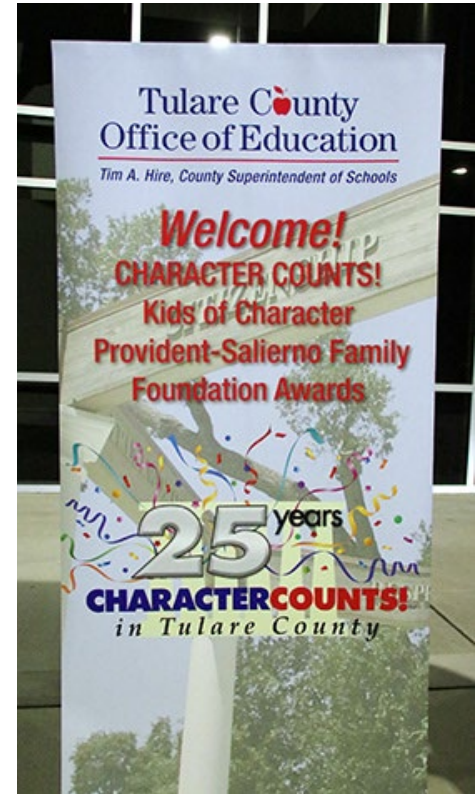
Provident-Salierno Family Foundation Awards held to celebrate top Kids of Character



Yesterday evening, cars carrying some special Kids of Character pulled up to the Mooney Boulevard administration building to participate in the 2020 Kids of Character Provident-Salierno Family Foundation Awards. Traditionally, the event is held as a dinner to honor the six top students and 24 finalists featured during the Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! Week Celebration, which was held October 19-24. This year, the dinner was reimagined as a drive-through awards presentation. Each family pulled up so that their student could receive a certificate, t-shirt, a yard sign that read, “A Kid of Character Lives Here!,” and a scholarship provided by long-time character education supporters Tony and Mary Salierno. As families moved on to the “step and repeat” photo area, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire and staff members applauded the students.

Since 2012, the Saliernos have partnered with the CHARACTER COUNTS! Program to provide annual scholarships for the top students and finalists representing each of the Pillars of Character – Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. The honorees and finalists were chosen from more than 4,600 Kids of Character nominees received from 143 schools. “This was a special year for us as we commemorated our 25th annual celebration of National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week,” said Mr. Hire. “Thanks to the support of our friends Tony and Mary Salierno and the *Visalia Times-Delta/Tulare Advance-Register*, which runs feature stories on the top honorees and finalists, we have one of the most comprehensive CHARACTER COUNTS! Week celebrations in the nation.”

A video highlighting the 30 students honored last night during the 2020 Kids of Character Awards program is being developed for release on TCOE’s social media and website (tcoe.org/KidsOfCharacter) on November 23.



Photos above:

- ~ Abigail Munyon is pictured with her family. A student at University Preparatory High School, Abigail was honored as the top student for the Pillar of Caring.
- ~ Thirty students were honored at the 2020 Kids of Character Provident-Salierno Family Foundation Awards.

Migrant parents gain digital literacy through Fresno State program



Over 100 migrant parents are expected to receive training in computer basics this school year thanks to a partnership between the Migrant Education Program and Fresno State University. The program in digital literacy helps parents better support their children as they continue to learn remotely this fall.

Six cohorts of 20 parents each will meet this fall and into the spring over four-week periods. Parents attend two virtual classes each week through Fresno State's Parent University e-Learning Program. Parents who need additional assistance are welcomed to login early or remain logged in after class is over.

The digital literacy course covers topics that include computer basics, typing, how to create an email account and correspond with their school's staff, and how to access student records via parent portals. Parents are also learning about the many different Google applications, how to use videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom, Google Meets, and Microsoft Teams, and about cyber security, online predators, social media, Google video, and YouTube.

Photo above:

~ Professor Eduardo Gonzalez, director of Fresno State's Parent University, welcomes migrant parents to the four-week digital literacy series. Through the series, parents will gain new technology and communication skills to support their children during this period of distance learning.

Distance Learning Resources

- [Arts All Around Us](#)
- [TCOE Learning at Home](#)
- [TCOE's Educational Resource Services Library](#)

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