

Community invited to nominate Kids of Character for 25th annual celebration



The nomination window for the 25th Annual Kids of Character Awards opened this week. Educators, parents, and community members are encouraged to take a few moments to nominate Tulare County students (grades TK-12) who are exhibiting great character during these challenging times.

“While school may look different this fall, we must continue to recognize good student character in this world of distance learning,” said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. “In fact, it’s more important than ever! Teachers, do you see great character in your students as they engage in learning online? Parents, are your children being faithful in their responsibilities to school while helping around the house? Or have they stepped up to do something extraordinary to help the community? These are just a few of the ways we can spot good character.”



Educators, parents, and community members are invited to submit their nominations through September 24 by visiting tcoe.org/KidsOfCharacter. Nominated Tulare County students will be recognized during National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week, October 19-24.

CHARACTER COUNTS! was introduced in the Tulare County Office of Education's court schools program in 1994. So successful was the program with students on probation that then County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak committed to making the program widely available to school districts, service agencies, and other community organizations.

Tulare County celebrated its first National CHARACTER COUNTS! Week in October 1996 with a rally held in Visalia's Sunkist Stadium (now Mineral King Bowl). The event attracted over 1,100 students with 100 honored as "Kids of Character." During CHARACTER COUNTS! Week in October 1998, longtime partner *Visalia Times-Delta* began to run feature stories on select Kids of Character – one to represent each of the Six Pillars of Character.

Last year during CHARACTER COUNTS! Week, nearly 6,000 youth were recognized – a spectacular demonstration of the community's continued support of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. What started as a celebration of students modeling the Six Pillars of Character in 1996 has turned into a national character recognition model which has honored tens of thousands of Tulare County students over the past 25 years.

For more information on utilizing the CHARACTER COUNTS! program in a distance learning environment, contact Kelley Petty at kelleyp@tcoe.org.

No bones about it, role model wins respect



Respect — Valley Oak student Melograce Flisco, 12, was nominated by science instructor Doug Cardoux for helping in science lab and her good attitude for the Character Counts! Pillar of Respect.

Flisco earns Respect Pillar

By John Holland

Times-Delta Staff Writer

Melograce Flisco has learned that the little conveniences she views through a microscope at school and the little things she can do for her classmates.

"When someone drops something, pick it up for them," said the seventh-grader at Valley Oak Middle School in Visalia. "It's a small thing, but it helps a lot."

That attitude of respect, one of the Six Pillars of Character, earned Melograce an honor as part of Character Counts! Week.

"She's always very polite and respectful," said Valley Oak science teacher Doug Cardoux, who nominated her. "She's willing to do what's asked of her."

He said Melograce, the daughter of Amy and Vin Flisco, shows respect for teachers and other students and takes care of the equipment in the science classroom.

Melograce, 12, said she might become a doctor, although she's not sure she can endure the sight of blood. She does like science in general, which in Cardoux's class includes study of cells, plants, bodily systems and diseases.

"It's hands on," she said. "I get to learn things I didn't know, like about plants."

She likes cheer class too, she admitted, in part because "there's no homework."

Although he teaches the cold, hard facts of science, Cardoux said school also should be a

Coming Friday

The last in a series of articles will profile another young person whose behavior exemplifies one of the Six Pillars of Character.

place where young people practice the tenets of good character. There's no name-calling in his classroom.

"I expect kids to be respectful to others," Cardoux said. "If a student answers a question wrong, rather than ridicule them, come up and help them."

"She is a great role model for other students in our community," he wrote about Melograce.

Photos above:

~ Students attending the first Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! Week celebration in 1996 formed the program's logo on the field at Sunkist Stadium (now Mineral King Bowl).

~ By 1998, Tulare County's CHARACTER COUNTS! Week celebration included daily feature articles in the Visalia Times-Delta – one for each of the Six Pillars of Character.

Registration now open for six-part virtual equity training

Equity leader and author Dr. Paul Gorski is returning to Tulare County this fall to conduct a six-part virtual training series beginning October 7 for educators in Tulare and surrounding counties. Through this series, Dr. Gorski will expand on his presentation delivered at the first annual TCOE Equity Conference in January 2020. He will share a set of equity principles and skills to guide any equity practice toward its central goal: to identify and eliminate inequity within our school communities.

Dr. Gorski is the founder of the Equity Literacy Institute. He has 20 years of experience helping educators strengthen their equity efforts. He has worked with educators in 48 states and 14 countries. Dr. Gorski has also published more than 70 articles and written, co-written, or co-edited 12 books on educational equity.



Participants should plan to commit to the entire series, which includes 90-minute sessions on October 7, 14, and 28, November 4 and 17, and December 2. The equity series is free to Tulare County educators; those outside the county are asked to pay \$25. Visit tcoe.org/EquitySeries to register today. For additional information, please contact Martin Frolli at martinf@tcoe.org.

Dates for 2020-21 student events now online



The Calendar of Student Events for the 2020-21 school year is online at tcoe.org/StudentEvents. The webpage contains dates and information on over 40 TCOE student events and programs. While restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have required changes to many of the student events, very few have been cancelled. Many have moved from live to virtual formats. For participation questions, contact the event coordinator listed in the calendar.

Photo above:

~ Students pictured participated in the first Tech Showdown, held in January 2020. This year, many of the annual student events have been redesigned as online competitions. Dates for the 2020-21 student events are now available online.

Distance Learning Resources

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

Editor: [Robert Herman](#), Public Information Officer

Contributors: Marlene Moreno, Jennifer Fisher, Lorena White, Kelley Petty, Martin Frolli, and Yesenia Tadeo.

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