

news galleryweek

June 9, 2021

Retirees honored this afternoon, over 600 years of combined service

This afternoon, a number of employees who have retired or plan to retire this month attended a meeting of the Tulare County Board of Education where they were congratulated on their years of service to TCOE. The annual reception for retirees traditionally follows the June board meeting and includes hors d'oeuvres and refreshments for family and friends. Instead of cancelling the ceremony as was the case last year, the Human Resources department invited retirees to visit the board meeting to be honored by staff and board members.

This year, 29 teachers, administrators, and support staff retired with over 600 years of service to Tulare County students and school districts. To commemorate their service, John Rodriguez, director, and Ramon Garcia, executive secretary, of Human Resources, collected the following quotes from each retiree's supervisor to share with readers this week.

"Tulare County students and their schools have been greatly enriched by the talents and dedication of these employees," said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. "Whether they served in early childhood education, special education, business services, or one of numerous other programs, this year's retirees exhibited great care and compassion in their work. Their impact on students and their families has been immeasurable. We wish each of them a happy and healthy retirement – it is well-deserved!"

Jennifer Allen, Teacher Assistant, 18 years Early Childhood Education, Clinite Child Development Center

"Jennifer was a grandparent to children in my classroom," stated Judy Williams, center supervisor. "I encouraged her to go back to school to get her degree and substitute for the program, which she did! Jennifer was hired at Clinite Child Development Center (CDC) as a teacher assistant. She then transferred to our Senaida Garcia Center and eventually transferred back to the Clinite CDC. Jennifer loved the children and was very supportive of the teaching staff. She loved her job and we miss her."



Nan Arnold, Program Manager, 27 years School Health Programs

"Nan served the students and families of Tulare County for over 27 years," shared Julie Berk, assistant superintendent of Student Support Services. In 2013, Nan was named the State School Nurse of the Year by the California School Nurses Organization. "Most recently, Nan was an integral part of getting our schools and educators prepared to return to in-person learning," said Berk. "She worked tirelessly to immunize the staff and teachers across the county. We thank Nan for seeing us through the pandemic and wish her a long and happy retirement!"



**Nancy Bruce, Teacher, 21 years
SCICON**

“Nancy Bruce was an intern for SCICON in 1990-1991,” stated Dianne Shew, SCICON administrator. “She became lead teacher for the Circle J-Norris Ranch in May 2000, dedicating the past 21 years to making SCICON and Circle J places for students to experience nature and its importance in their lives.” Currently, Nancy is working closely with UC Merced on programs involving the field station, which was completed in 2019. As part of this collaboration, student interns from eight high schools will participate in the program’s four-day oak mortality research this month. “Nancy’s love and dedication to the SCICON program was never more evident than during the pandemic when she volunteered to work with our Zoom team on the SCICON campus,” Shew said. “Over 8,000 students benefited from her enthusiastic lessons. She is a lover and protector of nature and all that entails. She will be greatly missed.”



**Guadalupe Casas, Teacher Assistant, 20 years
Early Childhood Education, Ivanhoe Child Development Center**

“Teacher Lupe, as she is known, is an exceptional, loving, and kind person,” stated Ramona Arevalo, center supervisor. “Lupe loved working with children and being part of our program. She inspired the parents and developed great relationships with them. She was invited to all their parties, baptisms, and family events. Prior to COVID, she loved attending them to be with the families and their children. Teacher Lupe always came to work with a positive attitude and a warm smile. She is greatly missed.”



**Maria Cerda, Kitchen Supervisor, 27 years
Early Childhood Education, Richgrove Child Development Center**

“Maria, known by most as Rosalina, began with the Head Start program as a parent when her children needed childcare,” shared Virginia Parma Perez, center supervisor. “Rosalina is married and has three adult children. She believes that the Head Start program was the educational foundation for her children – all of whom became successful professionals.” Through the encouragement of Head Start staff, Rosalina was able to attend English classes, obtain a teacher’s aide position, obtain a position as a cook, and eventually become a kitchen manager. Every day, children greet her with a smile and one question, ‘What are we eating today, Teacher Rosalina?’ A former Head Start student, who now serves in the military, still requests arroz con leche. Once a year when he visits, Rosalina will make him a large batch to take back with him. “Rosalina made lifelong friends throughout the program and will be greatly missed by the Richgrove staff. She had a goal she communicated with staff often which was to, ‘retire with honor.’ Congratulations, Rosalina, for accomplishing your goal!”



**Kathie Chavez, Instructional Assistant, 20 years
Special Services, AcCEL Program**

“Kathie Chavez has worked as a paraprofessional in the county AcCEL program for 20 years,” said Rebecca Hendrickson, program manager. “She started her career at Maple Learning Complex in Tulare and provided support to students with intellectual and physical disabilities through the MOVE program. Kathie also spent time in county satellite classrooms located on general education campuses in Earlimart and Tulare. She has a huge heart and a gentle way of working with students. She always has a positive attitude and is extremely reliable, which proves her dedication and passion for her profession. We are extremely appreciative of her many years of service and will miss her!”

**Norma Erwin, Parent Liaison, 20 years
Special Services**

“Norma Erwin has been a dedicated and valued member of the TCOE family for almost 21 years,” stated Tammy McKean, assistant superintendent of Special Services. “During that time, she spent countless hours, days, evenings, and even weekends at times, supporting Tulare County students with special needs and their families. Throughout the years, Norma has worked alongside families to navigate the ever-winding road of our special education system. As Norma worked with hundreds of parents during her tenure, aiding them in securing appropriate services for their students, she would simultaneously build positive and long-lasting relationships between families and school districts, all for the goal of student success. As Norma leaves to begin the next chapter in her life, we wish her all the best and that life brings to her what she has given so many.”



**Elaine Grande, Family Service Worker, 32 years
School Health Programs**

“Elaine Grande has been employed by TCOE in many different capacities for 32 years,” said Nan Arnold, program manager. Over the last several years, Elaine served as a family service worker for School Health Programs. She has dedicated her career to helping families access resources to improve their lives. Elaine also became an expert at increasing attendance in the districts she served. She will truly be missed because of the help she was able to provide as the result of many years of experience working with Tulare County families and school districts.”

**Patricia Guthrie, Teacher, 8 years
University Preparatory High School**

“Patty Guthrie has been a blessing for UPHS,” shared Eric Thiessen, UPHS principal. “Her infectious smile, high energy, and love for music and our students is something that we at UPHS will never forget. One quality Patty has is her ability to convince students to join a music or choir class even though they have never played an instrument or sang. She tells them she will bring out the musician in them.”



**Catherine Jordan, Secretary, 39 years
Special Services, Bright Start Parent/Infant Program**

“When I started at Bright Start 12 years ago, I was Cathy Jordan’s replacement as she was retiring...she thought,” said co-worker Tammy Taylor. “She unretired and came back! Cathy knew all of the ins and outs of Bright Start, walking me through each task and teaching me so much about Special Services. I will always be indebted to her for sharing her knowledge and teaching me everything she knew and then letting me take the reins.” Co-worker Lori Harding adds, “Cathy genuinely cares about students with developmental disabilities. This was very clear when the ABLE Industries students would come and do her shredding and other small tasks for WorkAbility. She thoroughly enjoyed getting to know them – a true joy for her.”

**Beatrice Humann, Food Service Manager, 42 years
Special Services, Mild to Moderate Programs**

Bea Humann served as the food service manager for SCICON. “Bea has been the heartbeat of the SCICON food service program for 42 years,” stated Dianne Shew, SCICON administrator. “She will always be part of the SCICON family and remembered for her dedication to serving our students wholesome and nutritious meals. She will be missed.” During her time at SCICON, Humann helped provide an estimated 4.5 million meals.



Louise Kenny, Teacher, 13 years
Special Services, Mild to Moderate Programs

"Louise Kenny is an amazing teacher who always adds creativity and fun to her lessons," said Jennifer Reimer, administrator. "She has a varied teaching background which extends beyond her 13 years with TCOE. Louise has taught both general education and special education during her career, from preschoolers to 12th-graders. Her passion for her students is unsurpassed, and her outside-the-box thinking has helped kids grow both academically and socially. Louise is a delight; she is kind, welcoming, and compassionate, and she will be missed by students and staff alike. We wish her nothing but the best in her retirement!"



Nancy Kimura, School Nurse, 6 years
School Health Programs

"Nancy Kimura has worked for TCOE as a credentialed school nurse for almost six years," stated Nan Arnold, program manager. Nancy's experience includes work at the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency and the Kings County Office of Education before joining TCOE in 2015. As the credentialed school nurse who covers six or more school districts, she was able to use her years of experience to become an advocate for students and families. Over the years, Nancy has received several awards, including State School Nurse of the Year from the California School Nurse Organization and a 2015 Nursing Excellence GEM award from Nurse.com. Nancy will be greatly missed by many, but will stay busy in her new position as the president-elect of the Central Valley California School Nurse Organization."



Rhonda Marlow, Planetarium & Science Center Technician, 37 years
School Health Programs

"Rhonda served generations of Tulare County students, facilitating field trips for over a quarter million visitors in 37 years," said Conan Palmer, coordinator. "She strived to make positive, personal connection with students, educators, and the visiting public, and has been a significant part of creating a stellar environment for learning. I join the past and present Planetarium staff in wishing Rhonda a wonderful retirement."

Doug Martin, Audiologist, 6 years
Special Services, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program

"Dr. Doug Martin is a very skilled and knowledgeable audiologist who worked at our TCOE Hearing Center for six years," stated Rachel Weaver, administrator. "He has been a tremendous asset to families and school districts throughout Tulare County, elevating the level of service and supports for students with hearing needs. He has gone above and beyond by creating a detailed database to track referrals and equipment, streamlining the information we share with districts, nurses, and other agencies. We will greatly miss Dr. Martin's presence and personality at the Hearing Center!"

Eloise Martinez-Raya, Instructional Consultant Support Technician, 25 years
Educational Resource Services

"Eloise was a quiet force, a source of witty humor, a knowledgeable veteran, and a valued and unassuming member of the Humanities team," said Jennifer Francone, ERS administrator. "Her work ethic and years of commitment to ERS made her a trusted colleague and a key contributor to the 'Terrific Trio' of support. While Elo's dedication to her team was visible in her daily work, her love for her family, including her husband, brother, children, and grandchildren, is most admirable. A strength that Eloise had was that she was flexible and adaptable. She worked with several different supervisors and was able use her knowledge and past experiences to assist all of us with planning workshops, conferences, and our daily work routines. Her wisdom was appreciated when we took on new projects. Eloise was a welcoming face for our Humanities team and always had a hug when we needed one!"



**Helen Padilla, Business Services Technician, 13 years
Internal Business Services**

"Helen Padilla has worked as a business services technician at TCOE for the last 13 years," shared Jody Arriaga, director. "Helen worked diligently on every task assigned to her and took great pride in her work. We all hope you are spending lots of time with your 'little guy!' Congratulations, Helen!"

**Diann Parobek Dowling, Physical Therapist, 10 years
Special Services, Related Services**

"Diann is a physical therapist who successfully works in a wide variety of settings including the Bright Start Parent/Infant Program, South County school districts, and TCOE AcCEL Program. Diann is a kind and compassionate therapist," stated Rachel Weaver, administrator. "She is child-centered and keeps her focus on the success of the students. Diann responded to every referral with a smile. She is very knowledgeable about physical therapy equipment and even carries a tool bag in her truck just in case a piece of equipment needs an adjustment. We wish Diann all the best as she moves closer to her family. She will be greatly missed!"



**Linda Patino, Employment Development Coordinator, 27 years
SEE & Co.**

"Linda held many roles at TCOE and when she retired, she was leading the SEE (Services for Education and Employment) team," shared Joy Soares, director. "Linda was very interested in helping people of all ages gain job skills and employment. Her ultimate goal was to support as many as possible to be employed in jobs that they liked, earning a living wage for their families. She was very people driven and kept that goal in the forefront, always."



**Ame Quinonez, Instructional Consultant Support Technician, 28 years
Educational Resource Services**

"Ame might best be known for her role as Humanities Team 'den mom'," shared Jennifer Francone, ERS administrator. "She serves with enthusiasm, ensuring her team is always performance-ready for any possible scenario to benefit Tulare County students and schools. Ame's generous spirit also leads her to anticipate team needs and operate with care. Her initiative and innovative energy allow her colleagues to work with confidence knowing that she's got their backs. Ame's level of passion for both the team and the work has been huge asset for the team over the years and she will be very sorely missed. While Ame's departure will leave us longing, we rest assured in knowing the sandy beach and ocean breeze will bring her much joy and satisfaction."



**Judy Ramseier, Business Services Technician, 4 years
Internal Business Services**

"Judy worked as Business Services Technician in Internal Business for the last four years," shared Jody Arriaga, director. "Judy always brought a great attitude and a beautiful smile to work every day. Those of us in the department hope Judy is pursuing adventures on the open road. Congratulations!"

Sherri Rocha, Accountant, 31 years
External Business Services

Sherri was hired in May of 1989, working as an accountant for both Internal Business Services and External Business Services. “On paper, Sherri has served primarily in a role of fiscal oversight and compliance for our 43 districts,” said Sarah Smigiera, External Business Services director. “However, if you talk to administrators and business officers in our 43 districts, they will tell you that Sherri had an unparalleled technical knowledge of school finances, a heart for service, and a compassion for what our districts do every day for our students. Sherri is a mentor to the department and 43 districts she serves in Tulare County, listening, guiding, and encouraging. More important than just the act of transferring knowledge from one generation to the next, is the confidence that has been gained from those who have been recipients of Sherri’s guidance – that really is her lasting legacy.”



Vicki Sequeira, Lead Credentials/Retirement Technician, 14 years
Human Resources

Victoria “Vicki” Sequeira dedicated 14 years of her life to TCOE. She started her professional career with TCOE in 2007 as a receptionist/credentials assistant. After years of showcasing her knowledge and skills, she was ultimately promoted to lead credentials/retirement technician in 2015. “Her laugh was contagious and Vicki had a boisterous energy that was felt by those around her,” said John Rodriguez, Human Resources director. “The credentials department could always count on her knowledge to guide them. Vicki is most looking forward to spending quality time with her grandchildren and enjoying endless days on a sandy beach. We wish her a happy and healthy retirement spent enjoying time with her family.”

Rebecca Ann Smith, Rehabilitation Case Manager Specialist, 6 years
Special Services, Behavioral Health Services

“Rebecca Ann, or Becca as we fondly called her, loved her job and was extremely passionate about her role as a rehabilitation case manager specialist,” shared supervisor Christina Agda. “She enjoyed working with students in all age groups and had a heart for those who were at risk. She was an advocate for her students, families and her colleagues.”



Charlene Stringham, Assistant Superintendent, District Support Services, 13 years
Instructional Services

Charlene Stringham, assistant superintendent of District Support Services within the Instructional Services Division, retired earlier this year. For 13 years at TCOE, she served as an instructional consultant at Educational Resource Services (ERS), the administrator for ERS, and, since 2014, an assistant superintendent of Instructional Services. “Fortunately for the administrators and teachers in Tulare and surrounding counties, Charlene’s tenure with TCOE coincided with the state’s move to implement the Common Core State Standards,” said County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. “Her broad vision for supports to implement the standards were admired and utilized by educators throughout the state and beyond.” In 2014 the California School Boards Association recognized the ERS Common Core System of Implementation and Support with its prestigious Golden Bell Award. In 2016, Charlene’s work in assisting educators to implement the standards caught the attention of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, resulting in several grants. In 2017, she chaired of the Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee (CISC) for the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association. In 2018, Charlene was selected as the Outstanding Instructional Leader for the California ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development). Her additional accomplishments include the development of TCOE’s annual Equity Conference, launched in 2020.

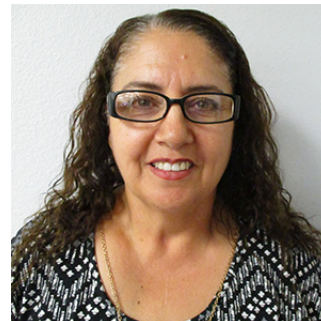


Louie Thomas, Truancy Intervention Officer, 13 years
Court/Community Schools

“Louie Thomas was an exceptional employee,” stated Nicole Rocha, administrator. “He served as a truancy intervention officer, located primarily at Superior Community School in Tulare. He always went out of his way to get students to school, making numerous home visits to support students and their parents. If he noticed that the attendance rate at his site was declining, he made every effort to find out the cause of it. He was dedicated to the students at our alternative sites and always worked to support all staff.”

Elodia Uribe, Teacher Assistant, 22 years
Early Childhood Education, I Dinuba Child Development Center

“Elodia fits the word extraordinary!” said Alice Sanders, regional supervisor. “She worked for the program for 22 years, joining our team in 1999 as a teacher assistant. Elodia enjoyed working with center-based children and their families throughout her career in childcare and encouraged staff to become teachers at the center. Her coworkers greatly miss Elodia; she was kind, caring, supportive, and a great friend to all. Students loved teacher “Lola” because she made learning fun and she made sure all students participated in a way that it was exciting for them. “



Lorena White, Web Developer, 40 years
Information Systems

“With over 40 years of service, it is hard to imagine a day at TCOE without Lorena,” stated Wayne Lacy, Information Systems director. “She single-handedly brought TCOE to the world via the TCOE website and served the students of Tulare County every day. Personally, I admire her passion for, and dedication to, ensuring every TCOE and student event with which she was affiliated was meticulously planned and executed. On behalf of the Information Systems team, Lorena, congratulations on a hard-earned and well-deserved retirement! From my family to you and yours, we wish you fair winds and following seas.”



Cheryl Wiseman, Instructional Assistant, 22 years
Special Services, AcCEL Program

“Cheryl was a valued member of our AcCEL Special Services team,” said Sarah Hamilton, AcCEL administrator. “She was a great model of active stewardship in the classrooms. Her ability to lead small and whole group activities, while keeping students engaged in learning and making things fun for them, seemed effortless. She was a natural! She understood the importance of knowing students’ specific needs and was able to provide for them, whether it was a visual, a break, or simply a hug. She utilized music, dance, and bubbles often to her advantage to motivate students. Thank you Cheryl for your dedication and hard work. Your contribution was valuable to all those whom worked alongside you. We wish you the best of life in your retirement. May it be filled with joy, health, and happiness.”

Graduation season ends with La Sierra, Tulare AcCEL



TCOE capped off the graduation season with the celebrations of La Sierra Charter School and Tulare AcCEL graduates.

La Sierra had 30 graduates from its Military Academy and Independent Study programs. The in-person graduation ceremony was held last Friday on the school's Patriot Field in Visalia. Students were presented with numerous scholarships and awards. Michaela Betbeder was the class valedictorian.

Among the 53 students from the Special Services AcCEL Programs and Community Based Instruction Classrooms (CBICs), Tulare AcCEL graduated eight students during an in-person, red-carpet ceremony on Tuesday.



Photos above:

~ La Sierra Charter School held an in-person graduation ceremony, Friday, June 4, at Patriot Field in Visalia.

~ Tulare AcCEL held an in-person graduation ceremony, Tuesday, June 8, at the Tulare Community Center.

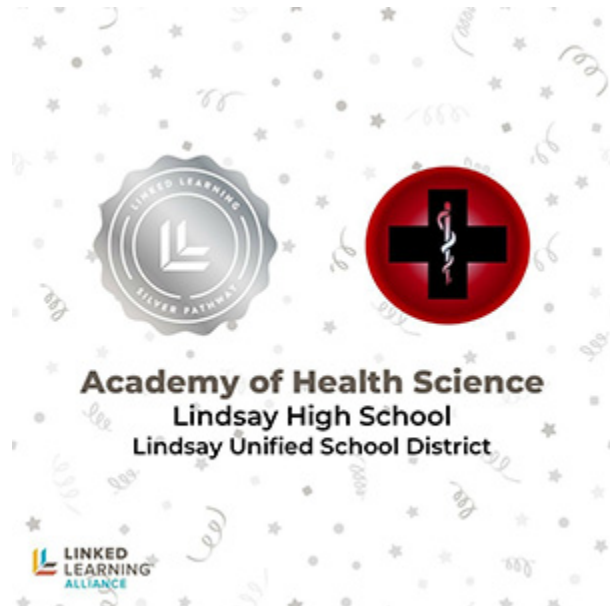
Around the County

Lindsay High earns Silver Certification of Educational Pathwa

On June 1, Linked Learning announced Lindsay High School's Academy of Health Sciences as one of its new Silver Certified pathways. The academy promotes health and wellness through the study of medicine, human anatomy, disease/injury prevention, and nutrition.

"Linked Learning pathways integrate rigorous academics with technical coursework that is relevant to the needs of local employers, offer students work-based learning experiences aligned with their classes, and provide support services to help students graduate ready for entry into college and career," Linked Learning stated in a press release. "Certified Linked Learning pathways demonstrate their fidelity to the approach and commitment to the quality implementation associated with improved student outcomes."

"Certification is based on a series of standards identified by leaders in the Linked Learning field as crucial for improving student outcomes and preparing all students for college and career," Linked Learning also stated. "Districts seek certification from the Linked Learning Alliance to validate the quality of their college and career pathways. Pathways gain Silver Certification when they establish the core components of Linked Learning and achieve Gold Certification when they demonstrate high-quality implementation of these components and equitable opportunities for all students."



Around the County is a regular feature of TCOE's *News Gallery Week*. To be considered for this section, Tulare County districts are encouraged to share major student, school, and district achievements and high-resolution photography with Rob Herman, communications director, at robh@tcoe.org.

Distance Learning Resources

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