

# news galleryweek

September 1, 2021

---

## Step Up Youth Challenge resumes next week with advisor training



Since the 2012-2013 school year, the Step Up Youth Challenge has been a vehicle for students to create impactful projects at their schools and in their communities. Often working alongside community agencies, dozens of middle and high school teams have participated over the years to develop projects that address a wide range of issues – from hunger, bullying, and depression to literacy, fitness, and community beautification.

Through the yearlong process of developing their projects, students learn how to identify community needs, develop a project plan, and implement it in partnership with others. Along the way, they gain real insight into the process of community change.

During the 2019-2020 Youth Challenge, students at Traver School identified the need for a community library where students could check out books, access the internet, and study. Working with a Traver community service organization known as TCAPS, the students began the process of securing space for the library, acquiring a library collection and equipment, and partnering with other service organizations and agencies for support. For their efforts, the Traver team won the Best Overall Award in the middle school category and a \$2,500 grant provided by the County of Tulare.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Youth Challenge was suspended last year. This didn't stop the Traver students from continuing their work. With great perseverance, the students built out a colorful library space complete with computers and workstations in the TCAPS center, developed their library collection, and held a grand opening this summer.

"The Traver library is just one of dozens of projects completed through the Step Up program that are making real differences in Tulare County communities," said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. "This program has so many great learning elements, such as civic and project-based learning, social/emotional development, and character education. I highly encourage teachers and after school leaders to take advantage of this unique learning opportunity."

The Step Up Youth Challenge returns this fall for the 2021-2022 school year. The program is open to teams of both middle and high school students. Teams will work throughout the school year to develop and implement their project, turning in a progress report in the spring. A panel of judges will review all completed reports to determine the top projects eligible for grants totaling \$13,000.

An in-person kick-off advisor training is planned for September 9 at 4:00 p.m. at TCOE's Mooney Administration Building in Visalia. In order to participate in the challenge, advisors must attend the training. To register, visit [tulare.k12oms.org/1530-204401](http://tulare.k12oms.org/1530-204401).

The Youth Challenge is one of several programs in the County of Tulare's Step Up initiative. The Tulare County Office of Education coordinates the Youth Challenge on behalf of the county in partnership with the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency. For more information, contact Kelley Petty at [kelleyp@tcoe.org](mailto:kelleyp@tcoe.org).



*Photo above:*

*~ In 2019-2020, students from Traver School developed a project for a new community library. Their project won the Best Overall Award in the annual Step Up Youth Challenge. This summer, the students' vision became a reality when the library opened.*

*~ Children enjoy a collection of books donated to the library thanks to the work of the students involved in the Step Up Youth Challenge.*

---

## Registration now open for regional Best Results for Multilingual Learners Virtual Conference

For years, Education Resource Services has coordinated large regional conferences focused on best practices for English learners. The conferences have typically been a collaboration between the California Department of Education and the county offices of education in Region VII (Fresno, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced and Tulare).

This year, the full-day conference is entitled Best Results for Multilingual Learners and it will be held virtually October 27.



Dr. José Medina will be the keynote speaker. Medina is the founder of an educational consulting firm, and former research scientist and director of Dual Language and ESL Education at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington, DC. In his role as an education consultant, Medina provides technical assistance, professional development, and support to schools and districts across the United States and globally. He is a former school principal and district leader, and co-author of the third edition of the widely-used *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education*.

The conference will also feature breakout sessions on a variety of topics, including newcomer ELs, long-term English learners, EL policy, and reclassification. A question-and-answer panel discussion will also be included.

The cost to register for the conference is \$99 per person. Registration information and a conference agenda is available at [www.eventsquid.com/event/14362](http://www.eventsquid.com/event/14362).

---

## Nominations are open for Kids of Character Awards

TCOE's CHARACTER COUNTS! Program is now accepting nominations for its "Kids of Character" Awards.

Nominations will be accepted through September 24 for Tulare County students (grades TK - 12) who are exhibiting great character during these challenging times. Teachers, parents, and family members are encouraged to nominate Kids of Character as part of the 26th Annual CHARACTER COUNTS! Week Celebration (October 18 - 23). Nomination forms can be found at [tcoe.org/KidsOfCharacter](http://tcoe.org/KidsOfCharacter).



The **Six Pillars of Character** that students can be nominated for are:  
TRUSTWORTHINESS - Being honest, telling the truth and keeping promises  
RESPECT - Treating others the way you would like to be treated  
RESPONSIBILITY - Doing what you are supposed to do  
FAIRNESS - Playing by the rules  
CARING - Being helpful, kind and generous  
CITIZENSHIP - Doing your share in your family and community

Last year during CHARACTER COUNTS! Week, over 4,600 students from 143 schools in Tulare County 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 26 years.

For more information about the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, contact Kelley Petty at [kelleyp@tcoe.org](mailto:kelleyp@tcoe.org).

---

## Coming Up!

- **September 7**  
**Pursuing Victory With Honor Sportsmanship Training**  
9:00am-2:00pm, TCOE Cedar Room  
[More information](#)

- **September 9**  
**Step Up Youth Challenge Advisor Training**  
4:30-6:00pm, TCOE Conference Center  
[Registration information](#)
  - **September 9**  
**Tulare County College Night**  
5:00-7:00pm, Virtual  
[Registration information](#)
  - **September 10**  
**Circle J Family Astronomy Night**  
7:30-9:30pm, Circle J-Norris Ranch, Springville  
[More information](#)
- 

## Distance Learning Resources

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

Editor: [Robert Herman](#), Communications Director

Contributors: Nayirah Dosu, Marlene Moreno, Jennifer Fisher, Kelley Petty, Gene Mendes, and Gerald Arellano.

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