

## Bright Start Parent Infant Program begins evaluating children in partnership with Central Valley Regional Center

Special Services' Bright Start Parent Infant Program recently received a contract to assist the Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC) in evaluating infants and young children for a variety of services. Bright Start – one of the largest early childhood service providers in the state – currently serves 1,100 children, ages 0-3, with occupational therapy and physical therapy, behavior therapy, speech therapy, and deaf and hard-of-hearing services.



This fall, CVRC began providing referrals to the Bright Start evaluation team, which includes a credentialed early childhood special education teacher, a registered nurse with a School Nurse Services Credential, and a speech and language pathologist. Other Bright Start specialist staff, such as an occupational therapist or physical therapist, may be utilized to evaluate children as needed. Evaluation team members include staff who are bilingual in both English and Spanish to conduct the evaluation in the parents' preferred language.

Each evaluation includes an assessment of five developmental areas, a vision and hearing screening, and a health review. The Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP), an evaluation instrument for children ages 0-3, is the primary tool used to determine developmental levels (cognition, language, gross and fine motor abilities, social-emotional development, and adaptive skills).

Visual screening includes a blink response to light, the ability to look at and follow a target, and observing movement and alignment of the eyes when focusing on an object. Hearing screening will consist of behavioral audiometry – watching the child’s behavior in response to certain sounds utilizing items from the Music 2 My Ears Hearing Kit.

Once the evaluation is complete, a written report is provided to CVRC, which makes a determination of eligibility based on delays noted in the five developmental areas. The Bright Start Parent Infant Program supports most of the children approved for services.

For more information on Bright Start, visit [tcoe.org/SpecialEducation/BrightStart](http://tcoe.org/SpecialEducation/BrightStart).

Photo above:

~ (l-r) The Bright Start evaluation team includes Julie Howison, school nurse; Michelle Branco, early childhood special education teacher; Alondra Navarro, speech/language pathologist; and Ron Pekarek, program manager.

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## QUAIL Project partners with Porterville Historical Museum to create art exhibition for south county students



Students from Porterville area small school districts will soon have their own local art show. Museum Masterpieces is a new partnership between the Tulare County Office of

Education (TCOE) and the Porterville Historical Museum. This event will give young artists the opportunity to have their work displayed in the main exhibit hall of the Porterville Historical Museum throughout Arts Education Month in March. The Museum Masterpieces Youth Art Show is open to students in TK-8 at the following districts: Alta Vista, Ducor, Hope, Hot Springs, Pleasant View, Rockford, Saucelito, Springville, Strathmore, Sunnyside, Terra Bella, and Woodville.

The collaboration is part of the QUAIL Project (Quality Arts Instruction and Learning), TCOE's federally funded arts program. One of the main goals of QUAIL is the development of new arts-related community partnerships and events.

"We are thrilled to have the Porterville Historical Museum join our arts coalition, and we are looking forward to bringing more arts opportunities across the county," said QUAIL Program Director and TCOE Arts Consultant Kate Stover.

To register for the Museum Masterpieces Youth Arts Show, visit <https://bit.ly/PortervilleYAS>. For more information, contact Kate Stover at [kate.stover@tcoe.org](mailto:kate.stover@tcoe.org).

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## Tulare fall student-athletes recognized for Pursuing Victory with Honor



In partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Greater Tulare, TCOE's CHARACTER COUNTS! Program recognized this fall's Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) student-athletes at a breakfast on Tuesday. The Kiwanis Club of Greater Tulare recognizes student-athletes, nominated by their coaches, each season for their sportsmanship. The awards

included a certificate, a PVWH pin, a PVWH shirt, and a lawn sign that read "An Athlete of Character Lives Here."

Below is a list of the Pursuing Victory with Honor award winners along with statements from their coaches.

### Mission Oak High School

#### **Aileen Alba Tello – girls cross country:**

Aileen is an extremely hardworking athlete. Her focus and determination are exceptional. She's a multitalented athlete who displays several elements of character on a daily basis. This was Aileen's first season of cross country. Even though she's a senior, I know it won't be her last, as college coaches have expressed interest in recruiting her. She was our No. 2 runner all season and placed 21st at the divisional meet. Aileen leads by example and sets the bar high for her teammates. Having Aileen for her first season of cross country was truly a blessing. I know that she will be successful in whatever she chooses to do in life.



**Milo Mendoza – boys water polo:** Milo is a great example of leadership, accountability, and responsibility. He is anything you could really ask for in a leader on the team. Every single bit of success that we had this season, really started with him – in the water and in the classroom. He kept all of his teammates accountable and kept himself accountable. He set a high standard for the team and he's only a junior. We get him back next year, so I'm excited to see the culture he's created continue as a team captain.

### Tulare Union High School

**Alexis Santos – girls water polo:** Alexis is a senior and I have coached her since her freshman year. I've seen her learn and improve – year in, year out. She was our team captain this year and she did a really good job making sure all of the other players around her were taking care of. She gave 110% every practice, every game. As a coach, this is the kind of player you want. Water polo is a very physical sport and there's always a little accidental contact. Alexis was known for going to the other team and saying, "Hey are you OK? Sorry I accidentally elbowed you." She was the runner-up for the Jim Coiner CIF Sportsmanship Award. She also plays soccer and does swim. She is very dedicated to helping her community. As soon as our game was over, she runs over

to set up film for the boys team so they could have film to study. She gave a lot to the sport and to the team.

**Andrew Mora – football:** Andrew's a kid that, when we went out for football the first day, he wasn't a name on our radar. He was a kid that ran out there and he looked athletic, and before you knew it – he played defensive line for us. He played linebacker. He was our kicker. He was our punter. Whatever we needed, he did it. And he did it with enthusiasm. He took the time to refine the details of whatever it was he was going to do...He does it in the weight room. He does it on the practice field. Most importantly, he does it in the classroom, earning a 4.1 GPA. The Six Pillars of Character, this kid checks them all off. Unfortunately, he's a senior...but it is kids like him that are why I got into education to teach and coach.

### **Tulare Western High School**

**Katelynn Enriquez – girls cross country:** She has been on our team since her freshman year and we've watched her grow and develop into the incredible student-athlete that she is today. She is such a quiet force on the team. She was our team captain this year, never had to raise her voice to any of the girls. She is a big part of why our team is the way that it is. She's just overall an amazing student and an amazing athlete. I'm really sad that she's a senior...because we know that it's going to be a really big loss for our team. But I think everything she's instilled in these girls will stay with them throughout their time in high school and even after that. Even though she's not one to be loud and upfront, the athletes know to look up to her and respect her. She doesn't have to say a thing. They just kind of follow her just because she's such a great example of what we ask for as coaches. We've had an amazing year thanks to Katelynn. We've made such big improvements and I really think that it's because of everything she does – on the sidelines quietly without being loud.

**Joseph Flores – boys cross country:** Joseph started on the boys squad as a freshman, so we've kind of grown together – me as a coach and him as an athlete. We had a big, very talented group of freshman when he came in. But everyone wants to be the No. 1 guy, and Joseph was no different. He's an extreme competitor...Putting the team before himself, Joseph has probably done that better than anyone else...There have been a couple of times where I've seen Joseph do something for his teammate – where he could have ran a better time, but he stayed back to help a teammate along. That just shows his selfless character by putting someone before himself for the betterment of the program.

Photos above:

*~ Tulare high school students recognized for Pursuing Victory with Honor pose for a photo. From left to right, Joseph Flores, Katelynn Enriquez, Andrew Mora, Milo Mendoza, and Alexis Santos.*

~ Mission Oak High School's Aileen Alba Tello was one of the high school students recognized for Pursuing Victory with Honor.

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## Around the County

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### Tulare County Farm Bureau awards grants to schools



Yesterday, the Tulare County Farm Bureau (TCFB) held its annual Superintendents' Breakfast, this year at Lindsay High School, awarding \$3,250 in grants to local schools that are launching or continuing a school garden program. Schools with existing gardens that received grants included Hurley Elementary (Visalia), Kennedy Elementary (Dinuba), Linwood Elementary (Visalia), St. Paul's School (Visalia), Strathmore Elementary, and Three Rivers Union School. Elbow Creek Elementary (Visalia) received a grant to start a new garden. Randy Wallace, a member of the TCFB Education Committee, explained that the Farm Bureau has broadened its grant program beyond traditional school gardens to include all agriculture literacy projects.

The breakfast, jointly hosted by Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire, gathered superintendents, administrators, and principals to hear about Tulare County Farm Bureau's education programs and to receive a tour of Lindsay High School's agriculture program. Four officers from the school's Future Farmers of America (FFA) club led the tour of the agriculture building, which includes animal and plant science laboratories. The students also led administrators to the school's new greenhouses.

Along the way, they explained the plans for future phases of the program, which include areas for animals and crops.



TCFB's School Garden Grant program is one of the Education Committee's many efforts to support agriculture literacy in the community. To learn more about Farm Bureau's education and outreach programs visit [www.tulcofb.org](http://www.tulcofb.org) or call the TCFB office at (559) 732-8301.

Photos above:

~ (right) Desi Molyneux, member of the Tulare County Farm Bureau Education Committee, and Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire pose with recipients of the annual garden grants.

~ Members of the Lindsay High School FFA club gave attendees at the Superintendents' Breakfast a tour of the school's agriculture buildings, including one of three greenhouses.

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To receive the News Gallery Week, sign up [here](#), or contact Jennifer Fisher at [jenniferf@tcoe.org](mailto:jenniferf@tcoe.org) or (559) 733-6172.