

Tulare County  
Office of Education

*Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools*

news  
galleryweek

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## Final graduation ceremonies for 2021-2022 school year held



This week, TCOE held its final graduation ceremonies for the 2021-2022 school year. On Monday afternoon, four young people graduated from TCOE's Court/Community School Program.

Since 2016, the program has used online PowerSchool coursework to enable seniors placed in the program to complete needed classes in order to graduate rather than return to their home high school or complete their degrees at an adult school program.

At the ceremony, the graduates honored the teachers, social workers, and student transition specialists who helped them along the road to their big day.

On Tuesday morning, dozens of family members, teachers, and administrators gathered at a colorful ceremony at the Claude Meitzenheimer Community Center in Tulare to watch 15 young adults receive their certificates of completion.

The graduates, who are or will be 22 years old this year, were students in Special Services AcCEL Programs in Tulare, including the Community Based Instruction Programs. Many of the graduates are transitioning to community-serving adult programs.

Photos above:

*~ Special Services AcCEL Program held its final graduation for 15 students in its Tulare programs. Four students graduated from the Court/Community Schools this year.*

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## Annual Pursuing Victory with Honor Scholarship awarded to four Tulare County scholar athletes

The CHARACTER COUNTS! program is pleased to announce the names of the four Tulare County scholar athletes chosen to receive the annual Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) Scholarships. The scholarship program, now in its 10th year, awards four Tulare County seniors \$500 each for their academic achievements and for their exemplary character on and off the field.

### Corbett Vander Feer

Corbett Vander Feer is a graduate of Tulare Western High School where he played water polo and swam. Vander Feer will attend Texas Tech University and intends to major in mechanical engineering with a minor in agribusiness. He hopes to one day become a chief engineer at a farm equipment manufacturer such as Kubota, Case, or John Deere. His ag mechanics teacher, Mr. Mederos, had a large impact on his life. He guided Vander Feer through high school and brought out the best in him. Vander Feer, who likes chocolate and historical movies, spends his free time at his grandfather's shop fixing his great-grandfather's motorcycle.



## Ashley Duran

Ashley Duran is a graduate of Woodlake High School where she ran cross country and swam. She will attend the University of California, Berkeley and work towards becoming a land manager specialist who conducts research about the correlation between poor land management on Indigenous reservations and the inaccessibility of nutritious foods. Duran also envisions herself working with low-income communities to restore ecosystems and offer accessible environmental education programs.

Family is truly important to Duran, who sees both her mother and brother as impactful in her life. Her mother is the most selfless and caring person she's ever met. She reminds Duran that love of all things is the meaning and purpose of this life. Her brother Julian is her role model. She loves his writing and curiosity, and that he has taught her to prioritize vulnerability, dedication, and most importantly that her dreams do not have to seem attainable to others. In her free time Duran, enjoys being active through running, yoga, swimming, and dancing. Creativity is important to her, so she also likes to journal, practice cinematography, organize home decor, and much more.



## Rachel Majarian

Rachel Majarian is a graduate of Mt. Whitney High School where she played volleyball. Her family, coaches, and agriculture teachers have made the most impact on her life by pushing her to be the best she could be. In doing so, they taught her how to work hard. Her family is very important to her and her mom is her role model. When she has down time, she likes to hang out with her family and friends. Rachel will be attending California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo where she plans to obtain a degree in agricultural communications and become an agriculture lawyer.



## Adam Martinez

Adam Martinez is a graduate of Visalia Technical Early College High School who trains in the art of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu is a big part of Martinez's life, and even when he has down time, he likes to work out and practice the martial art. He also likes to play games and enjoys all types of movies with the original *Jurassic Park* being his favorite. Martinez's parents have made a significant impact on his life by always being there to support and provide for him. Their support meant everything to him and is something he could never thank them enough for. They are his role models who set examples of what kind of person he should strive to be. His mother's meatloaf is even his favorite meal, although seafood is his favorite food. Martinez's next chapter will be at the University of California, Davis. His career goal is to be heavily involved in caring for animals and hopes to open his own veterinary practice one day.



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## Youth teams forming at new 1852 Visalia Soccer City

1852 Visalia Soccer City is a new footy-style complex of soccer fields scheduled for completion next month in downtown Visalia. The complex, which features three footy fields, will offer leagues for recreational and competitive players. Footy is played on smaller fields, just 80' long by 50' wide and surrounded with dasher boards and fully-enclosed netting.

1852 Soccer City will offer five seasons per year with eight games each season. Youth coaches may now build teams of up to 10 players. The teams play with four field players and a goalkeeper.



For information on membership and team fees, visit [www.1852visalia.com/footy](http://www.1852visalia.com/footy).

Photo above:

~ One of the three fields at the new 1852 Visalia Soccer City is the CHARACTER COUNTS! Field. Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! has partnered with 1852 Visalia to promote its Pursuing Victory With Honor sportsmanship program to players, coaches, and officials.

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## Around the County

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### Springville's Connor Machado wins national writing award

Each year, nearly 70,000 students from around the nation enter the Veterans of Foreign War's (VFW) Patriot's Pen essay contest for a chance to win their share of more than \$1.4 million in state and national awards.

The essay contest encourages students, grades 6-8, to examine America's history, along with their own experiences in modern society, by drafting a 300- to 400-word essay based on a patriotic theme chosen by the VFW Commander-in-Chief. This year's theme was "How Can I Be A Good American?"



Connor Machado from Springville Union School won at the state level and was recognized at nationals along with winners from 53 states and territories. His essay, which appears below, was awarded the \$500 Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Mississippi and Auxiliary Award.

#### **How Can I Be a Good American?**

By Connor Machado

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction." Ronald Reagan gave this quote on January 5th, 1967 during his inaugural address. Although this quote is over 50 years old, it makes you realize how fragile freedom could be in the United States of America. When asked what the qualities of a good American are, what would you say? Some obvious things you could think of are to follow the laws, vote, support

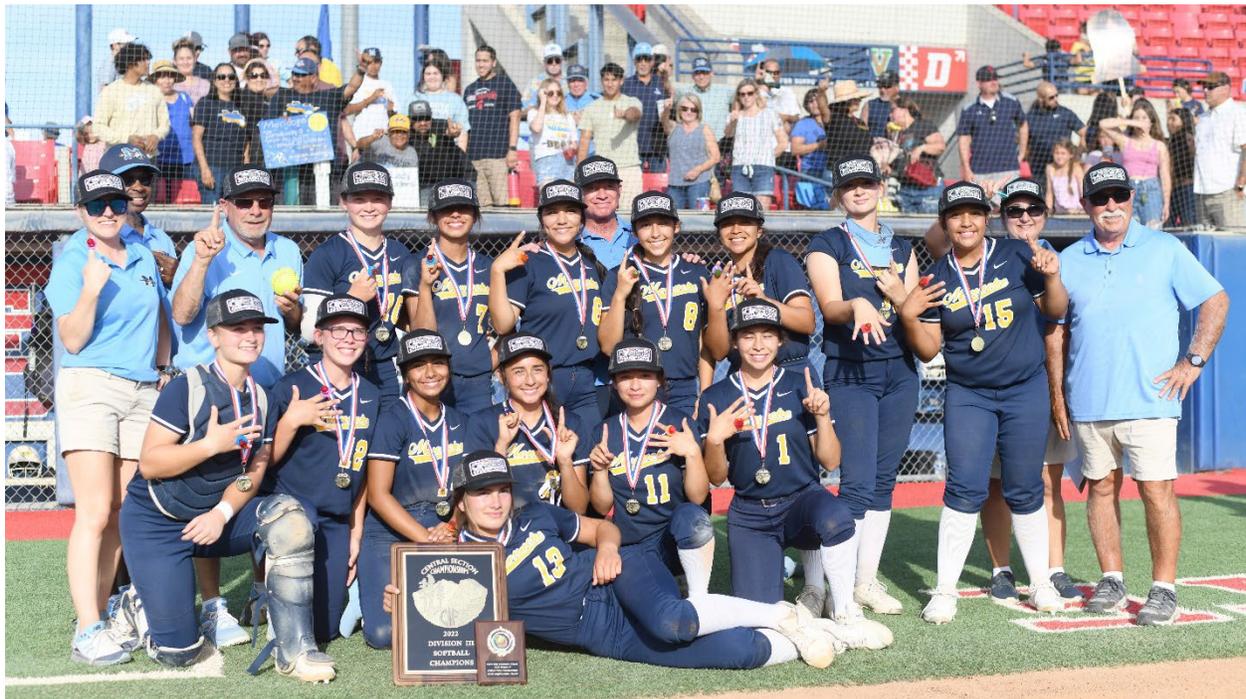
the military, maybe just fly an American Flag at your house. I believe that the most important quality of a true American is to just love your country. From the beginning, the United States was formed as an independent nation, and the citizens adapted to an independent lifestyle; for what I know about my country, that is something you can never take away.

I remember going to sports game, with thousands of different people in the stadium, coming from different places, and going for different teams to win. When it was time for the National Anthem, however, everyone united together to acknowledge our amazing country. The United States of America is the only nation on Earth where every citizen has the opportunity to succeed. Geniuses such as Elon Musk were among those who did amazing things because of the opportunity given to them by the United States. It's obvious why the United States is call, "the land of opportunity."

So, how can I be a good American? There are many ways, from serving in our Nation's military to simply standing for the National Anthem, maybe even going out and sending your email to a congress representative on what you would like to see done. The possibilities to be a great American are endless. What are the best ways to show your love for America? That's something for you to decide.

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## Monache becomes county's first-ever softball state finalist



On Saturday, Monache High School became the first-ever Tulare County softball team to play for a CIF Regional Championship. Monache (24-8-1) was also the county's lone CIF Central Section softball champion.

No. 5 Monache defeated No. 2 Wasco (28-4) 2-0 in the CIF Central Section Division III Championships on May 27 to earn a spot in only the second-ever state championship tournaments. The team earned a first-round bye then an 11-3 semifinal-win over No. 5 Elsinore (22-9) from Wildomar, advanced them to the CIF Southern California Division IV Championship game. No. 1 Monache lost the championship game 8-6 to No. 2 Orange Cove (29-6). Orange Cove was also the CIF Central Section Division IV champions.

Unlike many of the state's championship tournaments, softball and baseball do not have overall state champions. The tournament ends with north and south regional championships.

Photo above:

~ Monache High School softball poses for photos after winning the CIF Central Section Division III Championship at Margie Wright Diamond in Fresno.

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## PUSD students and educators honored by Rep. Kevin McCarthy

In late May, five Porterville Unified School District students were announced as 23rd Congressional District of California Merit Award winners by Rep. Kevin McCarthy.

Those students were: Sofia Biagio - Granite Hills High School, Gabriel Bower - Harmony Magnet Academy, Darlene Navarro - Monache High School, Anahi Ramos Silva - Porterville High School, and Maria Cervantes Romero - Strathmore High School.

Five PUSD educators were also recognized with the Inspirational High School Educator Award. Those educators were Richard Lambie - Granite Hills High School, Zachary Gonzalez - Harmony Magnet Academy, Miozoty Briceno - Monache High School, Michelle Patrick - Porterville High School, and Kristina Meza - Strathmore High School.

Photo above:

~ Granite Hills High School's Richard Lambie, center, and Sofia Biagio, right, pose for a photo with Rep. Kevin McCarthy.



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