

Tulare County
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

news
galleryweek
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Slick Rock Student Film Festival set for Friday, May 12

The 2023 Slick Rock Student Film Festival – Central California’s largest student film competition – returns to the Visalia Fox Theatre this year. The festival is scheduled for Friday, May 12 beginning at 9:00 a.m. This year, the festival received 442 film entries from 38 Central Valley middle schools and high schools.



Nearly 200 middle and high school films receiving a “Premiere Cut” designation will be screened at the Fox Theatre beginning at 9:00 a.m. Friday, continuing until about 3:30 p.m. A screening schedule will be available before the event at tcoe.org/SlickRock.

“The quality of films in this year’s festival is quite remarkable,” said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. “Through this competition, Central Valley students are gaining many of the skills they’ll need as adults working in jobs that demand creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication.”

At 5:00 p.m., students who played a central role in producing Slick Rock “Premiere Cut” films will walk the red carpet into the theater. The awards ceremony will begin at 6:00 p.m. The public is welcome to attend the screenings and the awards ceremony at no cost.

Middle and high school students in the six south Central Valley counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, and Tulare were eligible to compete in the festival. Middle school students (grades 6-8) could enter films in seven categories, while high school students (grades 9-12) had a choice of 17 categories. For a list of competition categories, visit tcoe.org/SlickRock.

Slick Rock is generously supported by the Tulare County Suicide Prevention Task Force, ABC30, Kaweah Health, EECU, and Tulare County HHS Programs (Operation Prevention; Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services; Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention; and Public Health).

For more information, visit tcoe.org/SlickRock or call Kathleen Green-Martins at (559) 737-6350.

Brooke Doherty announced as College Night Scholarship Award recipient

The College Night Scholarship Committee is honored to congratulate Brooke Doherty, a senior at Mission Oak High School in Tulare, for being selected as the 2023 College Night Scholarship Award recipient.

Doherty is being awarded with a \$1,000 scholarship renewable for up to four years — totaling \$4,000 — while she is in college. She is the 18th recipient of the College Night Scholarship Award.

Doherty will be attending Pepperdine University in the fall and will be majoring in English language and literature. Doherty aspires to enter the field of teaching and return to the Central Valley to have an impact on local students. Doherty has a desire to serve others and cares deeply about the success of students in the community, as was made evident in her application and interview. Doherty is passionate about networking and building relationships with others and plans to use these connections to help her be successful in college and career. Doherty credits College Night for access to information and encouragement to be the best version of herself. She says that College Night pushes the importance of academic and personal success.

Doherty is an outstanding scholar and community activist with many distinctions awarded for not only academics, but service, and her involvement in soccer, ASB, Tulare County Youth Council, and various other community organizations.

In Doherty's interview, she shared about her passion for education and learning. Doherty helped to start a club at her high school called College Network that brings Mission Oak alumni to students to share about their college experiences. The club is a great way to encourage and empower others to explore post-secondary options.



Tulare County Young People's Concerts return for 2024

The long-running Young People's Concerts (YPC), a partnership with the Sequoia Symphony Orchestra, return for Tulare County students next May. Since 1959, the program has served to introduce elementary students to symphonic music and musical performance opportunities available to them in middle and high school. YPC has not been offered since the pandemic.



For 2024, the event returns to Tulare County with an exciting new addition. Event coordinators have partnered with Link Up, a program of Carnegie Hall/Weill Music Institute.

Carnegie Hall's Link Up program introduces elementary students (grades 3-5) to the orchestra through an interactive music curriculum in which they will learn to sing and play the recorder in the classroom before performing live with the Sequoia Symphony Orchestra in May of next year.

Educators of students in grades 3-5 who are interested in obtaining more information about YPC and the new Link Up program are encouraged to attend a virtual information webinar May 17 from 9:30 until 10:30 a.m. Registration is available at bit.ly/Link-Up-Info. The program will be recorded for those who are unable to attend. For additional information, contact Kate Stover at kate.stover@tcoe.org.

Visalia student-athletes recognized for Pursuing Victory with Honor

In partnership with the Downtown Visalia Kiwanis, TCOE's CHARACTER COUNTS! Program celebrated this spring's Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) student-athletes at a lunch on Tuesday. The Downtown Visalia Kiwanis recognizes student-athletes, nominated by their coaches, each season for their sportsmanship. The awards



included a certificate, a PVWH shirt and pin, and a lawn sign that reads "An Athlete of Character Lives Here." Miss Central Valley, Olivia Harden, also spoke at the lunch. She is a former collegiate volleyball player and an advocate for athletes' mental health.

Below is a list of the Pursuing Victory with Honor award winners along with a quote, edited for brevity, from their coaches.

Central Valley Christian High School

Adam Gutierrez – boys track track and field: Adam Gutierrez is a great athlete, student, and person who personifies all six of the Pillars of Character. Adam competes in the 100-meter, 200-meter, 4x100-meter relay, and 4x400-meter relay for our track team. He holds two school records as a member of the 4x100 and 4x400 relays, and is top three in school history in the 100 and 200. He is a team captain and puts in the extra time to be the best that he can be even when others aren't watching. Adam is not only an accomplished athlete but also a person of character. He always seeks to compete fairly and follow all of the rules of the event. He is the first to congratulate a teammate or opponent on a great race, and also the first to encourage someone who had a disappointing race or is struggling with a workout. He doesn't take shortcuts and is a great leader who encourages others to follow his example. I can count on Adam to complete the workout as designed and keep his teammates accountable. Adam also is quick to volunteer to help clean up from track meets and accomplishes all his tasks with excellence. The CVC track and field program will miss Adam's positive attitude, work ethic, and responsibility next year as he moves on to college.

Mia Edwards – softball: We have coached Mia for four years. Her desire to learn, work hard, and lead her team has been unmatched. Through the ups and downs, she has remained uplifting, positive and thankful for everything that is poured into the program. Any coach would be lucky to have a team full of "Mias." We know her future is bright and pray God continues to remain first in everything she does. Thank you, Mia, for all of your hard work and passion the last four years.

El Diamante High School

Thomas Rosa – boys tennis: Thomas Rosa is a student-athlete of the highest character. He models all aspects of responsibility to teachers, coaches, teammates, and his opponents. Thomas demonstrates good sportsmanship on and off the court. He is a leader on the tennis team as well as our local and state FFA chapters. Thomas maintains a healthy balance between his school, extracurricular, and social life. He proactively discusses schedule conflicts and models the mature behavior of a young adult. On the court, Thomas competes fairly. Thomas Rosa wins with grace and loses with dignity.

Kambria Prado – girls swimming: I am nominating Kambria because she represents everything that a student-athlete should be. She is an outstanding student who is at the top of the senior class. As an athlete she is exceptional. She never misses practice

and gives her all, every single minute. Her season this year was frustrating at times, but she never pouted, complained, or stopped trying to get better every single day. She has raised up the level of our entire team by being a role model of commitment and work ethic. Her leadership will be felt throughout our program for years to come.

Golden West High School

Javier Bonilla – baseball: Javier Bonilla is student-athlete that exemplifies the definition of character and sportsmanship. Javier is very caring and respectful to his teammates as well as the game of baseball. Javier is a catcher, and I have had many umpires say they appreciate and respect his attitude and character behind the plate. He carries on friendly conversations with the umpires and opponents in between innings, and between hitters. When a foul tip contacts an umpire, Javier is the first to check on the umpire's condition. Javier is a leader and role model on and off the field, as he understands that wearing a uniform for a school not only represents that school, but also their program. He carries that into the classroom with his teachers and keeps up with time management of school and sports, playing both football and baseball. He is the one who encourages players who are struggling and helps motivate his teammates in games by being the vocal leader. This season we had a young freshman transfer in this year from Mexico who wanted to play baseball. Javier took him under his wing and worked with this young player on the side, improving his skills. He also made this new freshman feel like a part of the school by showing him around campus and introducing him to teachers and students while showing him where his classes are located. Javier is a caring, respectful, and responsible leader who always carries a friendly smile on his face. I am so grateful and honored to have Javier Bonilla on my team.

Sara Vega – softball: Sara Vega is an exceptional student-athlete who has dedicated herself to sports, academics, and community involvement throughout her four years in high school. She has excelled as a three-sport athlete, participating in volleyball, basketball, and softball. Despite her busy athletic schedule, Sara has maintained an impressive above 4.0 GPA, earning honor roll recognition every year of high school. She is also a member of the Key Club and a lifetime member of the California Scholarship Federation (CSF). Sara's sportsmanship and composure during tough games have earned her recognition several times from volleyball referees, who awarded her the "Pursuing Victory with Honor" pin. She has also received the softball "Pursuing Victory with Honor" pin from umpires. As a committed teammate and coachable player, Sara is incredibly reliable both on and off the field. Her dedication and hard work have earned her numerous awards, including the MVP JV volleyball award, the Golden West Varsity Volleyball Sportsmanship award, and EYL honorable mentions. Sara is also an active member of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and has placed in two central section competitions. She is fluent in Spanish and has been recognized with the Seal of Biliteracy. Sara's hard work and dedication have paid off, as she has been accepted to the University of Oregon, where she plans to major in chemistry.

Mt. Whitney High School

Michael Servillo – boys track and field: Mike is a senior track and field athlete. He has been on the team for three of his four years in high school. Mike has been selected today because of his level of respect. Each day before practice, Mike comes up to the coaches and checks in to practice with a fist bump. At the end of practice, he does the same. When it comes to competition, Mike is seen shaking the hands of his opponents, wishing them good luck, and at the end of each race, he will shake their hands again and tell them good job. Mike is known to go around at track meets and tell all the officials who have volunteered their time, "Thank you." He is continually seen helping with tasks at track meets and practices...helping with hurdles, raking the long jump pit, or helping to clean up after a meet. Mike also shows a great deal of respect to his teammates. He keeps them in line when they get too rowdy and picks them up when they are down. Mike is a model athlete and we are proud to have him as a part of the track program.

Taylor Heine – girls track and field: Taylor is a senior and four-year member of the varsity girls track team. Beside track and field, Taylor is very involved with school as a tutor in the mornings before school, as well as FFA. Taylor plans to attend College of the Sequoias in the fall and continue on with track and field. Taylor has been selected for this award today because of her level of responsibility. Taylor is involved in many school activities and still manages to handle getting good grades, being competitive in FFA, as well as her tutoring responsibilities. Taylor is a role model to her teammates. She continually shows them how to gracefully handle a variety of tasks. Taylor is always willing to help with extra tasks at practice and at track meets. She continually makes sure that she has all her required equipment and that her teammates have their equipment as well. Taylor is being honored today because she responsibly handles school, sports, and other activities. She is a model student and Mt. Whitney is very proud of her.

Redwood High School

Jacob Yang – boys tennis: Virtually all high school tennis matches are played without umpires or referees. Line calls are made by the players, and this requires all six of the character traits listed for PVWH. Jacob Yang, a junior, demonstrates all six with distinction. In his three years on varsity, Jacob has developed a demeanor and reputation among opponents beyond reproach. I sometimes remind him after matches that he is actually playing balls that are out. His work ethic and on-court leadership make him someone my other players want to emulate. His maturity and previously mentioned qualities make him an excellent doubles partner where he makes adjustments between points with his partner. He is like a coach on the court. All of this, and his talented play has led him to be this year's EYL singles champion. I am thankful that I will have one more year with Jacob Yang.

Michaela Brown – softball: Michaela is a student-athlete who shows integrity on and off the field. She possesses every characteristic a coach wants to see in a player. She is a leader on and off the field and carries herself with poise. Michaela is deserving of this award.

Numerous programs partner to host first SEL Summit



Four of the Tulare County Office of Education's (TCOE) programs and the California Friday Night Live Partnership teamed up to host the first Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Summit on Saturday at SCICON. The TCOE programs included Behavioral Health Services, Educational Resource Services, Leadership Support Services, and Mid-State Collaborative.

The summit was designed as an intergenerational conference where both students and educators from throughout the county shared how they were increasing SEL opportunities at their school sites.

Orosi High School students, trained in the Youth Equity Stewardship (YES) program, led much of the morning session. Prior to the summit, YES founders Benjie Howard and Wade Antonio Colwell worked with Orosi students over the course of the school year, empowering them to be positive change agents on their campus.

After the opening presentations, students and educators were free to choose an outdoor adventure, each designed to promote mindfulness. Attendees participated in

yoga, took time to draw the SCICON landscape, went on hikes, or visited the mindfulness room.



Following lunch, school teams shared what they are doing to promote social emotional learning on their campuses.

Farmersville Middle School has created homerooms for their students – places where social emotional learning can take place. In the future, the district will create homerooms in which students will be a part of all four years of high school.

Burton School District empowers students to create their own clubs and to lead assemblies. Throughout the district, college and career concepts are introduced starting in elementary school.

Oak Valley Union School shared how their student advisory group meets with Superintendent Heather Pilgrim to discuss their needs on campus and the school's new grants.



Lisa Lemus, the SEL Summit coordinator, reports that the committee will announce a date for the 2024 summit on its webpage (tcoe.org/SELSummit) by June 1, 2023. Schools interested in participating in a future

SEL Summit, the YES program, or other youth empowerment work are encouraged to contact Lisa Lemus at lisa.lemus@tcoe.org.

Photos above:

~ Students from Orosi High School helped lead the opening session of the SEL Summit. The students prepared for their role as part of the empowerment work of the Youth Equity Stewardship program, led by co-founder Wade Antonio Colwell (right).

~ Following the opening session, participants embarked on a variety of outdoor adventures designed to promote mindfulness.

~ Heather Pilgrim, superintendent of Oak Valley Union School, leads an advisory council meeting with students from her school.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Promoting mental health awareness on your campus is a proactive and positive way to start a conversation and show support for students and their families. Throughout the month of May, we will share information from [this](#) handout that includes strategies to create a positive mental wellness culture at your school and at home, as well as resources to support mental health and wellness.

Taking Care of Your Own Mental Health

In order to be in the best position to support others, it is crucial to ensure that you are practicing healthy behaviors as well. Here are some ideas of how to focus on improving mental health as part of your daily routine:

- Do something to unwind every day (this may be done alone)
- Dedicate time during the day for reflection and meditation in a quiet space
- Exercise with friends, family, or pets (e.g., yoga, hiking)
- Eat nutrient-rich foods and drink plenty of water
- Consistently get an adequate amount of sleep



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