

# news galleryweek

October 16, 2024

## CHARACTER COUNTS! Week kicks off Monday, largest number of participating schools to date

Next week is CHARACTER COUNTS! Week! Kelley Petty, the Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! coordinator, reports that over 4,700 students from a record 167 schools will be honored next week. Teachers, parents, and other community members nominated the students to be recognized in the program's 29th annual celebration.



“Over the years, the number of schools participating has grown and we are thankful that so many more students of character are being recognized,” Petty said. “What was once a two-page ad of participating schools is now a four-page ad! And this year we have more schools than ever – 167.”

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Program reviewed nominations and selected a top honoree and four finalists for each of the Pillars of Character to be profiled in the Visalia Times-Delta/Tulare Advance-Register next week. A story about the students who best represent the Pillars of Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship will appear in the newspaper each day next week.

These top honorees and finalists will also be celebrated at the annual Provident/Salierno Family Foundation Awards ceremony on November 6.

For ideas on how to celebrate CHARACTER COUNTS! Week (October 20-26), visit [charactercounts.org/character-counts-week](https://charactercounts.org/character-counts-week).

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## Foster & Homeless Youth Education Services' annual Education Summit set for November 21

Registration is now open for Foster & Homeless Youth Education Services' annual Education Summit. The event will be held on November 21 from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. in the Redwood Conference Center at 6200 S. Mooney Blvd. in Visalia. This year, the summit will feature Dr. John "Push" Gaines and engaging breakout sessions. Participants will learn about the significance of strong relationships and a supportive community environment as foundational elements in empowering foster and homeless children and youth within Tulare County.



This year's keynote speaker is Dr. John "Push" Gaines. *Dr. Gaines is a former at-risk kid turned CEO/founder of the nonprofit PUSH for Dreams, a best-selling author, renowned speaker, leadership consultant, and mentorship advocate. His message of pushing through adversity and defying the odds has transformed classrooms, school districts, and businesses across the nation. Dr. Gaines has heartfelt enthusiasm for his audience and embraces crucial subject matters with a highly organic, kind-hearted approach, fueled by positivity and the intrinsic desire to unite communities. Dr. Gaines is celebrated for nurturing youth and professionals through his own trauma, life experience, and unique challenges that ultimately became the driving force behind his mission. Dr. Gaines was named one of the "Top 10 Most Influential People of 2020" by Yahoo News. Dr. Gaines' ability to relate to his audiences and help them imagine greater possibilities makes him so unique.*

To register for the free 2024 Education Summit, visit: <https://forms.gle/eDuhL4Ekwsj5ngZ46>.

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## California Friday Night Live Partnership orchestrates annual statewide Roadwatch Snapshot



Earlier this month, youth leaders from Friday Night Live (FNL) chapters across the state conducted the Roadwatch Snapshot to record instances of distracted driving. The annual event is coordinated by the California Friday Night Live Partnership, housed with the Tulare County Office of Education.

Fueled by the desire to improve traffic safety in their neighborhoods, FNL youth monitored 30 intersections near high schools across the state, observing over 4,000 instances of distracted driving in a one-hour timeframe – an average of nearly 70 occurrences of distracted driving every minute. Distracted driving includes anything that takes your eyes, hands, or mind away from the task of driving.

No surprise, students reported that the top distractions were cellphone use, passenger-related distractions, and eating and drinking. Some of the extraordinary distractions observed included dropping off children at school while in traffic and running red lights.

More than just cellphone use, distracted driving is categorized by California Highway Patrol (CHP) as a range of activities that impact a driver's visual, auditory, physical, or cognitive abilities when driving.

“The CHP encourages drivers to make the conscious decision to drive distraction free every time they get behind the wheel of a vehicle,” CHP Commissioner Sean Duryee said. “Every distraction, even for just a few seconds, increases your chances of being involved in a crash...”

Among those administering the Roadwatch survey were students from a new Friday Night Live chapter at Redwood High School in Visalia. Educators interested in starting a FNL chapter at their high school or a Club Live chapter at their middle school are encouraged to contact Brittany Quinonez, staff development and prevention coordinator with the CHOICES Programs, at [Brittaney.Quinonez@tcoe.org](mailto:Brittaney.Quinonez@tcoe.org).

Active in 53 counties statewide, FNL is a statewide youth development program that provides young people with the opportunity to serve as active leaders and resources in their communities.

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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.