

Employees honored for service milestones at annual convocation

Yesterday, employees celebrated service milestones at the fourth annual TCOE Convocation. Human Resources honored 144 staff members who marked their 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 years of service to the organization and the children of Tulare County. “As part of our annual convocation, it’s a joy to see how everyone joins in honoring our teachers, administrators, and support staff who this year dedicated nearly 2,600 years to our school districts, staff, and students,” said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire.

Nearly 1,600 employees attended the convocation and celebrated their colleagues who reached the following service milestones. Three employees who reached their 35-year milestones were introduced to the audience by Mr. Hire, who read brief remarks provided by their administrators.



Norma Gomez, Instructional Assistant, Special Services Mild to Moderate Programs

With over 35 years of dedicated service in special education, Norma Gomez has made a profound impact on the lives of countless students, families, and colleagues. Known for her patience, kindness, and commitment to student success, Gomez has supported learners across a wide range of abilities and needs.

Her career started at Columbine and Richgrove schools, but she has spent the past 19 years at Alta Vista School in Porterville. Throughout her career, Gomez has worked closely with colleagues to create supportive learning environments where all students feel valued and empowered. Whether working one-on-one, in small groups, or assisting the entire classroom, Gomez brings compassion, professionalism, and an appreciation of each child's unique strengths and challenges.

Teachers who have worked alongside Gomez have appreciated her attitude, her work ethic and her ability to connect with kids. Students enjoy working with her, and her impact is seen in the progress they make.

Donald Lett, Instructional Assistant, Court/Community Schools

Donald Lett began his career in 1989 as a substitute driver for Educational Resource Services and as an instructional aide at various TCOE school sites across the county. In 1990, he was hired full-time to work at the Superior Community School, where he helped launch a grounds maintenance and landscaping program for students.

In addition to his instructional duties, he supported off-campus initiatives including community service projects, in-home instructional support, and collaboration with Tulare County Probation and truancy programs.

When Superior Community School closed, Lett transitioned to Mid-County Community School, where he provides academic support in English and Math, while also lending his unique talents to enhance student engagement.

A passionate "foodie," Lett is especially known for his baking skills, which have become a valued asset in supporting the student-run MC Café. His culinary contributions have added a meaningful and memorable element to the program.

Linda Rice, Instructional Assistant, Special Services AcCEL Program

Linda Rice shows great care, dedication, and patience in her work with her students. She brings not only her skills but also kindness and understanding to the classroom each day.

Rice began her career with TCOE in 1988 as a substitute instructional assistant. In 1989, she joined the LB Hill Learning Center, where she supported non-ambulatory students and those with behavioral needs. When AcCEL introduced a Community-Based Instruction classroom for adults 18 years ago, Rice transitioned into this role – helping adult students develop independent living and vocational skills.

Rice connects with each student in a personal way, taking time to learn about their unique needs, strengths, and how they learn best. She adjusts her support to fit what each child needs — whether it's helping with schoolwork, offering comfort, or just being a steady and caring

presence. Her calm and gentle nature helps students trust her and feel confident trying new things.



30 Year Honorees

Diana Alford, Court/Community Schools
Elvira Barron, Early Childhood Education Program
Irma Benavente, Early Childhood Education Program
Micaela Chavez, Early Childhood Education Program
Anna Contreras, Early Childhood Education Program
Lorena Davis, Early Childhood Education Program
Illiana Herrera, Early Childhood Education Program
Concepcion Magana, Early Childhood Education Program
Rebecca Ochoa, Mild to Moderate Programs
Connie Romero, Early Childhood Education Program
Joann Soares, AcCEL Program
Maria Trevino, Early Childhood Education Program
Josie Valdez, Early Childhood Education Program
Lucinda Vasquez, Early Childhood Education Program
Susan Wendt, AcCEL Program



25 Year Honorees

Juana Barragan, Early Childhood Education Program
Lupita Benavidez, Bright Start Parent/Infant Program
Lorena Brown, Early Childhood Education Program
Norma Chavarin, Early Childhood Education Program
Blanca Contreras, Early Childhood Education Program
Veronica Florez, Early Childhood Education Program
Jane Gahl, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program
Yesenia Gonzalez-Neri, Early Childhood Education Program
Paul Harrington, Information Systems
Estella Hernandez, Early Childhood Education Program
Richard Hernandez, Maintenance and Operations
Stacey Jared, Bright Start Parent/Infant Program
Kristi Lomonaco, AcCEL Program
Gloria Mariscal, Migrant Education Program
Maria Marquez, Human Resources
Josefa Martin, Early Childhood Education Program
Patty Najera, AcCEL Program
Julia Ponce, Bright Start Parent/Infant Program
Ana Quevedo, Early Childhood Education Program
Sara Romero, Early Childhood Education Program
Caroline Salazar, AcCEL Program
Janelle Smith, Internal Business Services
Maria Isabel Valenzuela, Early Childhood Education Program



20 Year Honorees

Lisa Boss, Early Childhood Education Program
 Jaime Burnitzki, Office of the County Superintendent
 Pamela Castillo, AcCEL Program
 Leticia Cervantes, Early Childhood Education Program
 Graciela Cid, Early Childhood Education Program
 Claudia Contreras, Early Childhood Education Program
 Glenda Couch, AcCEL Program
 Maria E. Garcia, Early Childhood Education Program
 Erica Gomez, AcCEL Program
 Michael Holguin, AcCEL Program
 Loretta Jones, Early Childhood Education Program
 Erminia Martinez, Early Childhood Education Program
 Hulda Mendoza, Early Childhood Education Program
 Monica Navarro, Early Childhood Education Program
 Fedila Olivares, Early Childhood Education Program
 Maria Ortiz, Educational Resorce Services
 Ronald Pekarek, Bright Start Parent/Infant Program
 Lilia Perez, Early Childhood Education Program
 Barbara Renteria, Early Childhood Education Program
 Maria Reynoso, Early Childhood Education Program
 Faviola Rodriguez, AcCEL Program
 Marisol Rodriguez, AcCEL Program
 Rosa Sanchez, Early Childhood Education Program
 Stephanie Sanchez, Early Childhood Education Program
 Claudia Silva, AcCEL Program
 Dacia Silva, AcCEL Program
 Toby Soto, AcCEL Program
 Guadalupe Venegas, Early Childhood Education Program

Marisa Wright, Special Services - Preschool Program
Sally Ybarra, Bright Start Parent/Infant Program



15 Year Honorees

Saul Altamirano, Educational Resource Services
Therese Arnold, College & Career Readiness
Tracy Boling, Mild to Moderate Programs
Josephine Brazil, AcCEL Program
Catalina Cardenas, Behavioral Health Services
Roberta Cline, Early Childhood Education Program
Raeanna Dean, AcCEL Program
Josephine Espinoza, Special Services - Related Services
Hilary Evans, SCICON
David Giltner, AcCEL Program
Elva Gomez, Mild to Moderate Programs
Allie Gutierrez, Bright Future Program
Renee Handley, Intervention Resource Classrooms
Stephanie Hayes, AcCEL Program
Kyra Hoehn, Special Services - Related Services
Stephanie Mendoza-Sanchez Human Resources
Elisabet Nunez, Early Childhood Education Program
Grecia Nunez, Early Childhood Education Program
Martha Nunez De Valero, AcCEL Program
Xochitl Ramirez De Gonzalez, Early Childhood Education Program
Tiffany Randle, Early Childhood Education Program
Maria Saiz, AcCEL Program
Amy Scazighini, AcCEL Program
Elvia Serrano De Padron, Early Childhood Education Program
Kate Stover, Educational Resource Services
Yadira Torres-Baca, Behavioral Health Services



10 Year Honorees

Julia Aguilar, AcCEL Program
 Julie Berk, Student Support Services
 Amber Block, University Preparatory High School
 Matthew Campos, Maintenance and Operations
 Alejandrina Castillo, AcCEL Program
 Olga Cervantes, AcCEL Program
 Diana Delgado Lunar, Early Childhood Education Program
 Crystal Depue, AcCEL Program
 Glenda Dominguez De Oneal, Early Childhood Education Program
 Jake Fletcher, Special Services - Adapted Physical Education
 Katia Gamez, AcCEL Program
 Clarissa Garcia, CHOICES Programs
 Lupe Garcia, Early Childhood Education Program
 Ruth Ann Garcia, Behavioral Health Services
 Stephanie Garcia, Early Childhood Education Program
 Natalie Gomez, AcCEL Program
 Senaida Gonzales, Human Resources
 Carmen Gonzalez, AcCEL Program
 Deserie Guerra, AcCEL Program
 Elvira Gutierrez, Early Childhood Education Program
 Jaune Harris, Maintenance and Operations
 Victor Herrera, Early Childhood Education Program
 Jessica Hignojoz, AcCEL Program
 Chanel James, AcCEL Program
 Kellee Lamb, SCICON
 Yanet Ledesma, School Health Programs
 Maria Madrigal, Early Childhood Education Program
 Maria Magana Celedon, Early Childhood Education Program
 Dora Marroquin, AcCEL Program

Jennifer Masters, SCICON
Robert McCall, Early Childhood Education Program
Nathan McDonald, AcCEL Program
Adriana Mejia, AcCEL Program
Jaime Molina, Maintenance and Operations
Rosa Montemayor Leos, AcCEL Program
Martha Mota, Early Childhood Education Program
Kyra Muhs, University Preparatory High School
Maria Ochoa, Human Resources
Christina Ogas, AcCEL Program
Dora Quezada, Early Childhood Education Program
David Rasner, University Preparatory High School
Alexandra Rogers, Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention Program
Tamara Sanchez, Bright Start Parent/Infant Program
Jennifer Sandoval, AcCEL Program
Janet Saucedo, AcCEL Program
Rene Solis, CHOICES Programs
Kaylee Tillery, AcCEL Program
Lynsi Watson, Psychological Services

Megan Hatherley promoted to AcCEL program director

Special Services has created a new position to assist all of the behavior support personnel who work in the AcCEL Program. Megan Hatherley was chosen to serve as program director for AcCEL Behavior Services.

In this capacity, Hatherley will oversee behavior support personnel assigned to AcCEL classrooms and collaborate closely with teachers and staff to implement positive behavior interventions within a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Her work is dedicated to promoting inclusive, supportive learning environments that foster student success.

Hatherley is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) with over 20 years of experience in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Her background includes clinical, in-home, and educational settings, supporting individuals from 18 months to 22 years of age.

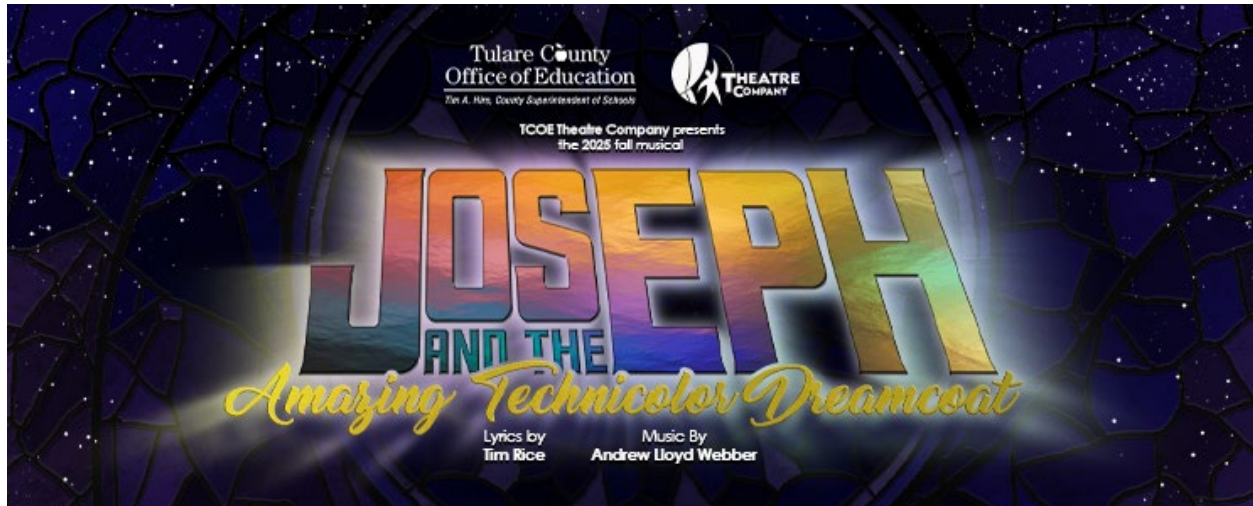
She holds a master's degree in organizational behavior management, a Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Credential in school psychology, a BCBA certification, and a preliminary administrative credential.

AcCEL provides instruction and support to students up to 22 years of age who have profound needs. Elementary, middle, and high school students are supported in dozens of special day



classes throughout the county. Young adults (ages 18-22) learn life skills and gain work experience in 13 Community Based Instruction Classrooms.

Theatre Company holding auditions August 12-14 for Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat



Auditions for the TCOE Theatre Company's fall production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* begin on August 12 with invitation only callbacks on August 16.

Auditions are open to Tulare County students who will be entering 1st-12th grade this fall. Students in 1st-6th grade are a part of the Youth Cast and will audition on August 14 at 4:00 p.m. Students in 7th-12th grade are a part of the Teen Cast and have the option of auditioning at 4:00 p.m. on August 12 or August 13. All auditions will take place at TCOE's Planetarium & Science Center at 11535 Avenue 264 in Visalia.

For more information about auditions, visit tcoe.org/TheatreCo/callboard.

A synopsis of the play by Concord Theatricals describes it as, "One of the most enduring shows of all time, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* is a reimagining of the Biblical story of Joseph, his father Jacob, 11 brothers and the coat of many colors."

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

Contributors: Nayirah Dosu, Jennifer Fisher, Jaime Burnitzki, Megan Hatherley, Bethany Rader

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