CHARACTER COUNTS! is a nationwide initiative which embraces six core ethical values common to democratic societies that allow teachers, parents and community members to build and evaluate character in youth. The six core ethical values are: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. CHARACTER COUNTS! and the six core values are religiously and politically neutral and transcend cultural, socioeconomic and religious values. In a democratic society, they are for everyone.

The six core ethical values and their observable behaviors provide the framework for society to build and evaluate character in the future leaders of our communities. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: ‘What are you doing for others?”’ For the sake of our children, the answer must be — building character!

CHARACTER COUNTS! was introduced in the Tulare County Office of Education’s court schools program in 1994. The program was so successful with students on probation that County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak committed his office to making the program available to school districts, service agencies and other facets of the community. To ensure the program reached all of the county’s 45 school districts, Superintendent Vidak hired a full-time coordinator for the program in 1996. CHARACTER COUNTS! is now the main source for character education in Tulare County. Today, over 4,000 teachers, parents and community members have been trained in the program.

For more information on CHARACTER COUNTS! in Tulare County, contact coordinator Kelley Petty at (559) 740-4303, or kelleyp@tcoe.org.
It has been nearly 20 years since CHARACTER COUNTS! was introduced in Tulare County. In that time, symbols of community support for the program have blossomed in our cities and towns. While many may be familiar with the Pillar Square monument in Mooney Grove Park, less known are the numerous murals and monuments that adorn public school campuses across the county. This little booklet of murals, created by teachers, students, artists and parents, is a celebration of Tulare County’s commitment to character education.

Since this booklet was first published in 2005, the number of CHARACTER COUNTS! murals in Tulare County has nearly tripled, and continues to grow! We are pleased to share this collection of mural ideas which were developed using a wide range of styles, talents and budgets. Our hope is that you will be inspired to create a new CHARACTER COUNTS! mural for your school.

Special thanks to Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! Coordinator Kelley Petty, past coordinator John Forenti (1996-2005), and Public Information Officer Rob Herman for their help in compiling and designing this booklet. We also appreciate the schools represented in this booklet for creative tributes to the Six Pillars of Character. They are a lasting reminder for every student and every campus visitor that CHARACTER COUNTS! in Tulare County.

Jim Vidak
Tulare County Superintendent of Schools
August 2012
Alta Vista School
Porterville, California
Burton Elementary School
Burton School District, Porterville, California
Burton Elementary School
Burton School District, Porterville, California
Cutler Elementary School
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, Cutler, California
Cutler Elementary School
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, Cutler, California
Dinuba High School, Dinuba
Dinuba Unified School District, Dinuba, California
Elbow Creek Elementary School
Visalia Unified School District, Visalia, California
Francis J. White Learning Center
Woodlake Union School District, Woodlake, California
Golden Valley Elementary
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, Cutler, California
Goshen Elementary School
Visalia Unified School District, Visalia, California
Granite Hills High School
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
Green Acres Middle School
Visalia Unified School District, Visalia, California
Green Acres Middle School
Visalia Unified School District, Visalia, California
Houston Elementary School
Visalia Unified School District, Visalia, California
John J. Doyle Elementary
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
Kaweah Continuation High School
Exeter Union High School District, Exeter, California
Kaweah Delta Hospital
Visalia, California
Kings River Union School
Kingsburg, California
Lovell Continuation High School
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, Cutler, California
Lovell Continuation High School
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, Cutler, California
Map of Tulare County School Districts
Mid-County Community School
Tulare County Office of Education, Visalia, California
Mid-County Community School
Tulare County Office of Education, Visalia, California
Monache High School Gymnasium
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
Monson-Sultana Joint Union School District
Sultana, California
Monte Vista Elementary School
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
Mooney Grove Park North Mural
Visalia, California
Mooney Grove Park South Mural
Visalia, California
Oak Grove Elementary School
Burton School District, Porterville, California
Palm Elementary School
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, Orosi, California
Palm Elementary School
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, Orosi, California
Pixley Union School
Pixley, California
Porterville High School
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
Porterville High School
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
Porterville High School
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
Porterville High School
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
Springville Union School
Springville, California
Superior Community School
Tulare County Office of Education, Tulare, California
Tipton School
Tipton, California

The Six Pillars of Character

Shinrai (Japanese for "TRUST") is the camel who always keeps her promises, always does what she says she'll do and is loyal, honest and punctual.

Austus (Estonian for "RESPECT") is the lion who knows respect is one of the best qualities one can have - for nature, for others and for oneself.

Ansvor (Norwegian for "RESPONSIBLE") is the elephant with colorful ribbons tied around his trunk and tail to help him remember his responsibilities.

Guisto (Italian for "FAIR") is the giraffe who always tries to do what's right. Guisto uses his long neck to see all sides of an issue and has a gentle way of helping others do the same.

Karina (Spanish for "CARING") is the kangaroo who has a seemingly endless supply of "things" inside her pouch, including a special box of little hearts for the children she meets on her travels.

Kupa (Hawaiian for "CITIZEN") is the bear who considers herself a citizen of the world. A philosopher and poet, she believes that we are all part of the same family and must do our share to help each other.

A SCHOOL WHERE CHARACTER COUNTS
Tipton School
Tipton, California
Tipton School
Tipton, California
Tulare Western High School
Tulare Joint Union High School District, Tulare, California
Tulare Western High School
Tulare Joint Union High School District, Tulare, California
Tulare Western High School
Tulare Joint Union High School District, Tulare, California
Tulare Youth Service Bureau
Downtown Tulare, California
Vandalia Elementary School
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
West Putnam Elementary School
Porterville Unified School District, Porterville, California
Wilson Middle School
Exeter Union School District, Exeter, California
Yettem Continuation High School
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, Yettem, California
The Six Pillars of Character

**Trustworthiness**
Be honest • Don’t deceive, cheat, or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you’ll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends, and country

**Respect**
Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant and accepting of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don’t threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

**Responsibility**
Do what you are supposed to do • Plan ahead • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes • Set a good example for others

**Fairness**
Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don’t take advantage of others • Don’t blame others carelessly • Treat all people fairly

**Caring**
Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

**Citizenship**
Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment • Volunteer

CHARACTER COUNTS! in Tulare County

To request additional copies of this publication, or for more information on the CHARACTER COUNTS! program including training for your school or community, contact CHARACTER COUNTS! Coordinator Kelley Petty at (559) 740-4303.
“CHARACTER COUNTS!,” “The Six Pillars of Character,” and “Pursuing Victory With Honor” are registered trademarks of Josephson Institute.