Evelia “Eve” Alvarez wears many hats at Kaweah High School, the continuation school in Exeter. Her principal, Darren Pace, said that while her title is Office Manager and Guidance Associate, she goes way beyond her job description to serve as the school’s registrar, counselor, clerk, librarian, activities director, bilingual coordinator, student services director, ELD coordinator, parent liaison, testing coordinator and independent study coordinator for more than 100 students who attend the school. She also teaches a Reconnecting Youth class designed to build social resiliency skills in students.

On the day that County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak visited Kaweah High School last month to announce that she had been selected as the Tulare County School Employee of the Year, Mrs. Alvarez was serving as school ambassador. Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.
Madeline Langton, a senior at Tulare Union High School, understands that lessons in good sportsmanship never lose their value. The golfer, swimmer and volleyball player said, “What you learn on the field, on the court or even in the pool is the importance of taking responsibility for your actions. Consequences, whether good or bad, are a result of one’s action or inaction. This responsibility carries over from sports life into family and work life.”

Madeline is one of four students to receive the annual Pursuing Victory With Honor scholarship presented by the Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! program. The scholarship program, now in its third year, awards four Tulare County seniors for their academic achievements and for their exemplary character on and off the field. Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.

In Outside the Fox Theater May 15, friendly paparazzi cheered and photographed hundreds of middle and high school students arriving at the Slick Rock Student Film Festival. Emerging from limos, students posed on the red carpet for parents and classmates before entering the theater.

Inside, the party continued with an awards ceremony that featured highlights from winners and finalists in more than 20 categories. The student films, which had been shown continuously during the morning and afternoon before the awards ceremony, demonstrated some extraordinary artistic and technical achievement. Even emcee Marcos Hammer, a comedian based in Los Angeles, seemed to embrace the technology theme, conducting the entire ceremony in a homemade robot costume.

The ceremony took a serious tone when Gene Mendes presented the special Judges Award to Ciara Daniel, Nicolas Gonzales, Josh Henshaw and Alexis Contreras of Golden West High School in Visalia for their film “Every 15 Minutes.” The film was a poignant documentary of an alcohol awareness assembly held at Golden West High School earlier this year. Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.

CHARACTER COUNTS! office presents annual Pursuing Victory With Honor awards

Four student athletes receive scholarships

Students arriving at the 12th annual Slick Rock Student Film Festival smile for an appreciative crowd of photographers. This year, the festival received more than 400 video entries from seven Central Valley counties.

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Special Services teacher Irene Barba honored with annual Brent Rast Award

Teacher’s diverse experience benefits students

Irene Barba has had a rich teaching career full of different assignments in varied locations. The Tulare County native has been a regular education teacher, a reading teacher, a migrant education instructional trainer, a cheer coach, a highly successful diving coach, and most recently, an award-winning special education teacher. She has taught in at least five states, returning to California in 2000 to work for TCOE’s Migrant Education Program. While with the Migrant Education Program, Ms. Barba worked in the summer Intensive Reading Group program and provided training to other teachers in the Step Up to Writing and Thinking Maps programs.

Last month, Irene Barba, who now serves as the teacher in the Woodlake High School Special Day Class, received the annual Brent Rast Award from the Special Services Division. Named in memory of Brent Rast, a Tulare County Office of Education teacher for students with severe needs, the award honors teachers who possess his vision and leadership qualities. Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.

TCOE charter school among four Tulare County high schools to receive recognition

UPHS receives Gold Ribbon Award from state

TCOE’s University Preparatory High School (UPHS) is one of 180 high schools in California to receive the state’s new Gold Ribbon School Award. A few weeks ago, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson announced that 193 middle schools and 180 high schools are being honored under the state’s new Gold Ribbon Schools Awards Program, which is temporarily taking the place of the California Distinguished Schools Program.

“These schools are academically successful, vibrant, and innovative centers of learning and teaching,” Torlakson said. “They provide great examples of the things educators are doing right — embracing rigorous academic standards, providing excellence and creativity in teaching, and creating a positive school climate.” Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.

Read more at www.tcoe.org
This year, Tulare County Physics Day found a new home at the Porterville Fair. On May 13, nearly 300 middle school students attended the event, representing nine Tulare County schools. Students participated in a variety of hands-on activities, including launching rockets (photo 1) and strapping on data-collecting devices designed to measure acceleration and force experienced on the fair’s midway rides. Physics Day will be held at the Porterville Fair again next May. In May, Educational Resource Services held its two-day Battle of the Books competition. Dozens of upper elementary and middle schools competed in four game show-style contests with questions developed from the texts of 30 books selected for each division. In the middle school division, Sundale School (Tulare) captured first and second place with its “Sundale Scholars” and “Nerd Herd” teams, respectively. The “Griffins” team from Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center (Visalia) placed third. In the upper elementary division, Linwood Elementary (Visalia) captured the championship again this year with its “Book Brigade” team. The “Hurley Hawks” from Hurley Elementary (Visalia) and the “Page Masters” from Mineral King Elementary (Visalia) were second and third place, respectively. (photo 2) Pictured are members of the upper elementary champions from Linwood Elementary in Visalia. Kneeling in the front row are (l-r) Alekhyja Rajasekaran and Dakota Brown. In the back row are (l-r) advisor Jennifer Davidson, Joyce Park, McKenna Ruby, advisor Ladonna Jones, Emma Reinccius, Brent Stoble, Colton Montgomery and TCOE’s Battle of the Books event coordinator and Library Media Supervisor Shelley Chappell. On May 21, La Sierra Military Academy held its fifth annual Veteran’s Memorial Event in partnership with numerous local veterans groups. Principal Anjelica Zermeño reports that the event is designed to engage students in first-hand historical accounts, while creating a bridge to their classroom texts. (photo 3) Jonathan Hernandez, a junior, listens as Mr. Brooks, a naval officer, shares his artifacts and a timeline of all of his tours of duty. (photo 4) Last month at the Tulare County Support Staff Conference, six individuals were named “Champions for Character” – one winner for each of the Six Pillars of Character. The honor was created for the conference to support its CHARACTER COUNTS! theme and to celebrate the role of support staff in shaping young lives. Nominated by colleagues and supervisors, the winners are: Orlanda Meneses, Oak Valley Union School (Trustworthiness); Debbie Kenyon, Woodlake Unified School District (Respect); Gabriela Porter, TCOE’s SCICON Program (Responsibility); Virginia Rubio, Ducor School (Fairness); Johnice Robinson, Farmersville Unified (Caring); and Maria Arreola, TCOE’s Early Childhood Education Program (Citizenship). On May 4, hundreds of Tulare County middle and high school students who participated in the annual Step Up Youth Challenge attended a red carpet awards event at the L.J. Williams Theater. This year, 26 community-based projects were implemented by over 400 students throughout the county. The Best Overall winners were Valley Oak Middle School (Visalia) for their water conservation project and (photo 5) Mission Oak High School (Tulare) for their continued work in developing the Harvesting Hope produce collection program. For a complete list of Step Up Youth Challenge awards recipients, visit www.stepuptc.com.
June ‘15

3 Special Services Graduation (for Porterville area students)
10:00 a.m., L. B. Hill Learning Center, 1051 S. Plano, Porterville
For information, call Linda McKeen at (559) 730-2910

4 La Sierra Military Academy (LSMA) Graduation
7:30 p.m., LSMA, 1735 E. Houston Ave., Visalia
For information, call Anjelica Zermeño at (559) 733-6963

9 Special Services Graduation (for Tulare area students)
10:00 a.m., Tulare Community Based Instruction Class #1 (City of Tulare Youth Center), 948 N. “H” St., Tulare
For information, call Linda McKeen at (559) 730-2910

9 Administrative Services Credential Program (Tier II) Information Meeting
6:00 – 7:30 p.m., Teleconference Room, 2637 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia
For information, call Donna Glassman-Sommer or Jesse Coronado at (559) 730-9956

9 IMPACT Intern Program Information Meeting
6:00 – 7:30 p.m., Education Center, 2637 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia
For information, call Marvin Lopez at (559) 624-1035

14-19 SCICON Summer Adventure Camp
(for students entering grades 6-8)
SCICON Campus, Springville
For information, call Dianne Shew at (559) 539-2642

17 Summer Institute for Tulare County School Administrators
8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Edison Energy Education Center, 4175 S. Laspina, Tulare
For information, call Marlene Moreno at (559) 733-6302

23 & 25 Administrative Services Credential Program (Tier I&II) Information Meetings
Tier I: June 23, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m., Teleconference Room, 2637 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia
For information, call Donna Glassman-Sommer or Jesse Coronado at (559) 730-9956
Tier II: June 25, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m., Teleconference Room, 2637 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia
For information, call Donna Glassman-Sommer or Jesse Coronado at (559) 730-9956

23 IMPACT Intern Program Information Meeting
6:00 – 7:30 p.m., Education Center, 2637 W. Burrel Ave., Visalia
For information, call Marvin Lopez at (559) 624-1035

July ‘15

17-18 Theatre Company Summer Musical, Peter Pan
7:30 p.m. evening performances July 17-18 and 23-25
2:00 p.m. matinee performances July 18 & 25
L. J. Williams Theater, 1001 W. Main Street, Visalia
Tickets available July 1 at TCOE’s Visalia offices: 2637 W. Burrel and the ERS office at 7000 Doe Ave. General admission: $15; preferred seating: $25 (cash or check only). “Neverland Experience” tickets also available for children to meet the characters backstage before the show. Tickets are $10 per child and include a gift from Peter. One adult permitted per family.
For information, call Brian Roberts at (559) 651-1482

For more events, programs and meetings, visit our online calendar at www.tcoe.org/CalendarOfEvents

Dozens of students from Tulare County Office of Education programs are preparing for graduation in early June. Check the calendar at tcoe.org/Gradations for graduation dates, including La Sierra Military Academy and Special Services programs in Porterville and Tulare. Among the Special Services graduates are students in the Community Based Instruction (CBI) classes. For the past five years, these 21-year-old students have been gaining skills that will help them prepare for adult life, including – for some – vocational skills that will be useful in finding employment.

On June 10, the Human Resources Division will host its annual Retiree Reception in the Education Center beginning at 5:00 p.m., following the TCOE board meeting. Over 25 TCOE teachers, administrators and support staff members who retired or will retire during the course of the 2014-2015 school year will be honored. For a complete list of retirees, visit tcoe.org/Retirees.

At the May meeting of the Tulare County Board of Education, winners were announced in the annual Foundations for Life Essay Competition. The competition asks students to select an adage or maxim and explain its meaning in their lives. This year, five winners were selected to read their essays before the board, including Lily Stetson (6th grade, George McCann School); Emma Newcomb (8th grade, Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center); Bernidean Terry (9th grade, Lindsay High School); Claire Stetson (10th grade, Redwood High School); and Sophia Stetson (12th grade, Redwood High School). Each winner, whose essays can be found at tcoe.org/FoundationsForLife, received $100 from the TCOE Foundation.

Last month, Madison Meredith, a senior at Monache High School in Porterville, was named California State Science Fair Student of the Year and awarded a $1,000 cash prize. Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.