Three area high schools work to build awareness of problem gambling among young people

At a press conference held May 29 at El Diamante High School, students from Sequoia, Hanford West and El Diamante High Schools spoke to reporters about their work in developing problem gambling awareness campaigns and community outreach. They shared public service announcement videos and posters, and talked about working with local lottery ticket merchants on the issue of sales to minors. While their results were impressive, the process of researching the topic, developing and testing solutions, working with the public, and presenting their results before a real-world audience was, as Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire told the audience, “doing the work adults are often paid to do!”

The students work to increase awareness of problem gambling in Tulare and Kings counties was supported by the California Friday Night Live Partnership (CFNLP), the Tulare County Office of Education, and the California Office of Problem Gambling. The three local schools connected through Betting On Our Future (BOOF), a statewide program that supports students in 30 sites across California to develop a multimedia campaign to raise awareness of problem gambling.

Students began their advocacy work in the fall of 2018 by distributing a prevalence survey to gain a snapshot of what underage gambling looks like in their local community. Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.

(upper photo) El Diamante senior Manuel Hernandez shares with reporters the work the school’s team did in building awareness of laws governing the sale of lottery items to minors. (lower photo) Lottery vendors were encouraged to commit to abiding by the laws by signing a “Not on my Watch” pledge.
Teacher in Bright Start Parent/Infant Program receives annual award for exemplary service

Brent Rast Award given to Dianne Thompson

From client to service provider, Dianne Thompson has seen both sides of the Bright Start Parent/Infant Program. This year’s recipient of the Brent Rast Award, Ms. Thompson first encountered the Bright Start Program as a parent of a son who received services. “At the conclusion of his services, I was asked if I would like to join the program,” she said. “I was able to accept a position while I worked on obtaining my special education credential, and eventually my master’s degree.” Twenty-four years later she’s still enjoying her work.

The Brent Rast Award is a memorial award presented to an exemplary teacher at the annual Community Advisory Committee (CAC) luncheon. The award was named for a TCOE teacher of students with severe needs who passed away over 20 years ago. “I knew Brent Rast,” said Ms. Thompson. “He was a wonderful man and a real ‘teachers’ teacher.’ To receive this award is an incredible honor.”

Ms. Thompson serves 38 children out of the Bright Start office in Yettem. “I love my babies and I enjoy the north county parents, who are so grateful for our services,” she said. Ms. Thompson, who has additional training to work with children with autism, enjoys the challenge and creativity it takes to address each child’s needs. “I wake up Monday morning looking forward to work and thinking about solutions to their needs,” she said. “It can be as simple as creating felt icons for a child with a speech delay, or putting a bunch of TV remotes in front a child who isn’t yet crawling,” she laughed. Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.

Partnership between UC Merced and SCICON brings students and researchers together

New field station creates summer internships

This summer, a small group of high school students will be the first to benefit from the generous community support given last year for the new UC Merced/SCICON Field Station. During the last week of June, students will receive a stipend to begin an ongoing project to map the Circle J-Norris Ranch, which is the site of the new field station. Using GPS devices, students will establish a grid, which can be used by local environmental science students and researchers from the University of California. The grid will also serve as a basis for their own ongoing oak mortality research.

The three-day mapping project will begin on June 25 at Circle J-Norris Ranch and will be led by lead teacher Nancy Bruce, with support from staff at UC Merced. Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.
On Friday, May 10, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire visited the top winners in the 25th Annual Excellence in Education Awards Program, surprising each of them in the middle of their workdays. Dr. Clare Gist, superintendent of Tulare City School District, was in the middle of a staff meeting in her office when Mr. Hire opened the door and told her that she’d been chosen as the 2019 Tulare County Administrator/Manager of the Year. Dr. Gist brushed away tears as her staff applauded and crowded in to take pictures.

Across town at Tulare Union High School, Dr. Tabby Grabowski, an English teacher and literacy coach, was alone in her classroom when Mr. Hire, principal Dr. Michelle Nunley, district superintendent Tony Rodriguez, and several staff members surprised her with the news that she had been chosen Tulare County Teacher of the Year.

Back at the Tulare County Office of Education administration building on South Mooney Boulevard, receptionist Taurie Thayer was answering the phones when Mr. Hire passed through the lobby to announce that she had been selected School Employee of the Year.

Last month, the Tulare Kings College & Career Collaborative (TKCCC) received a grant in the amount of nearly $4.5 million through the state’s K-12 Strong Workforce Project (K-12SWP). Funded by the state, the K-12 Strong Workforce Project is a recurring grant program of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors designed to spur career technical education in partnership with California’s 113 community colleges.

The Tulare Kings regional award was the second largest in the state and will allow the TKCCC to expand the work it has been doing since receiving the California Career Pathways Trust Linked Learning grant in 2014.
On May 22, the first of six graduation ceremonies was held for students in Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) programs. Ten young adults graduated from Special Services AcCEL Programs in the Porterville area, including the L.B. Hill Learning Center and the Community Based Instruction (CBI) programs. Many of the graduates are transitioning to community-serving adult programs, including Providing Self Worth and Social Vocational Services. (photo 1) Teacher Robbie Ridenour of Porterville CBI is pictured speaking about graduate Jermaine Domingo, who will be attending Providing Self Worth. For a list of future TCOE graduation ceremonies, visit tcoe.org/graduations. On Saturday, May 18, TCOE’s IMPACT Intern Program graduated 98 teachers who had completed a variety of multiple subject, single subject, and education specialist credential coursework offered by the program. The IMPACT Intern Program is an accredited alternative certification program. (photo 2) Redwood High School teacher Alyssa Aguilar is pictured with her proud grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Aguilar, following the ceremony. Ms. Aguilar completed her single subject credential. For more information on the IMPACT Program, visit tcoe.org/NTLD or call (559) 624-1035. The annual Reading Revolution event was held over two days in May with 23 elementary teams and 16 middle school teams competing. To prepare for the quiz-style competition, students began months ahead reading, studying and quizzing each other on material in the same 15 pre-selected books. Reading Revolution was developed by TCOE to help students develop a lifelong love for reading. In the elementary category, the winners were the “Taco Cats” from Springville Union School (morning session, photo 3) and the “Legitimate Literary League” from Pixley Elementary School (afternoon session, photo 4). The “Fiction Addiction” team from Ridgeview Middle School in Visalia (photo 5) took first place in the middle school category. On Wednesday, May 15, KSEE24 and the TCOE CHARACTER COUNTS! office hosted a celebration of the students featured in the 28 Your Character Matters stories aired by the station this year. (photo 6) Emceed by Central Valley Today host Stefanie Bainum, pictured with honorees in the middle school category, the event featured video clips of the 28 stories. To view the videos, visit tcoe.org/YourCharacterMatters. Again this year, the Porterville Fair helped to host the annual Physics Day at the Fair – an event attended by 250 middle school students. (photo 7) Students participated in 11 hands-on stations to learn about physics concepts and used an app to measure acceleration and force on various midway rides. Physics Day is one of several TCOE events that involve students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics activities and career exploration. Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.
**June ’19**

4. **Special Services Graduation (for Tulare area students)**
   10:00 a.m., 948 North H Street, Tulare
   For information, call Tammy McKean at (559) 730-2910.

5. **Court/Community School Graduation**
   1:00 p.m., TCOE Conference Center, 6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia
   For information, call Nicole Rocha at (559) 651-2904.

6. **La Sierra Military Jr. High Academy Promotion Ceremony**
   8:30 a.m., LSMA, 1735 E. Houston Ave., Visalia
   For information, call Anjelica Zermeño at (559) 733-6963.

6. **La Sierra Military High School Academy Graduation**
   7:00 p.m., LSMA, 1735 E. Houston Ave., Visalia
   For information, call Anjelica Zermeño at (559) 733-6963.

10-28 **Theatre Company Summer Camp**, featuring *Winnie the Pooh Kids*
   $100 per student, open to those entering first grade through sixth grade
   9:00 - 11:00 a.m. daily, Monday – Friday, 7000 Doe Ave., Visalia
   For information, call Bethany Rader at (559) 651-1482.

12. **Planetarium Matinee Shows: Earth, Moon & Sun and Secrets of Gravity**
   12:00, 1:00, 2:00 and 3:00 p.m., Peña Planetarium, 11535 Avenue 264, Visalia
   Tickets available day of the show; box office opens at 11:00 a.m. For show and ticket information, call (559) 737-6334.

14. **Planetarium Public Show: Perfect Little Planet**
   6:00 and 7:00 p.m., Peña Planetarium, 11535 Avenue 264, Visalia
   Tickets available day of the show; box office opens at 5:00 p.m. For show and ticket information, call (559) 737-6334.

19. **Summer Institute for 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.

25-27 UC Merced/SCICON Field Station Mapping Internship
   (open to Tulare County high school students)
   For information, call Dianne Shew at (559) 539-2642.

28. **Planetarium Public Show: From Earth to the Universe**
   6:00 and 7:00 p.m., Peña Planetarium, 11535 Avenue 264, Visalia
   Tickets available day of the show; box office opens at 5:00 p.m. For show and ticket information, call (559) 737-6334.

**July ’19**

19-27 **Theatre Company Summer Musical, Newsies**
   L. J. Williams Theater, 1001 Mam St., Visalia
   2:00 p.m. matinees July 20 & 27, 7:30 p.m. evening performances July 19, 20, 25, 26 & 27.
   Tickets: $15 general admission/$25 reserved seating available at TCOE Visalia offices at 6200 S. Mooney Blvd. and 7000 Doe Ave., Suite A beginning July 5.
   For information, call Bethany Rader at (559) 651-1482.

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

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For the sixth year, the Tulare County Office of Education CHARATER COUNTS! Program recognized high school senior student athletes with a Pursuing Victory With Honor college scholarship for their exemplary character on and off the field. Thanks to support from the Provident-Salierno Family Foundation, the program is able to provide four $500 scholarships. The recipients, who possess exceptional traits in sportsmanship, leadership and initiative, are: Jenna Perryman from Mission Oak High School in Tulare, Parker Boswell from El Diamante High School in Visalia, Kaden Sorensen from Redwood High School in Visalia, and Mia Pengilly from Monache High School in Porterville.

Tulare County middle and high school students are invited to create a logo for the annual Red Ribbon Week Celebration next fall. The national theme for the 2019 Red Ribbon Week is “Send a Message, Stay Drug Free.” The winning logo will be incorporated on an event t-shirt which will be distributed to students who attend the Tulare County Red Ribbon Week Celebration. The event, which includes student activities that promote alcohol and drug prevention, is hosted by the CHOICES Prevention Program, Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency, and numerous other community organizations. The event will be held at the Visalia Convention Center on Wednesday, October 30. Students can obtain a copy of the logo contest rules by contacting Alvaro Rodriguez at the CHOICES Prevention Program at (559) 651-0155. Entries are due no later than Friday, September 27.

The Instructional Services Division has announced its Tulare County Learning & Leadership Forum for the 2019-20 school year. The four-session series will provide administrators, instructional coaches and teacher leaders a setting for discussing and collaborating on improving student learning.

Read more at tcoe.org/NewsGallery.