

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Ahriel Clemenson

School: Alpaugh School, Alpaugh

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Francisco Hernandez

Statement:

I nominate Ahriel Clemenson for the CHARACTER COUNTS! Pillar of Responsibility. Ahriel understands that in our school we value student voice and thinking. It is amazing to see her take ownership of her learning, as well as become a responsible citizen looking out for the well-being of others. For example, as she works with her group members, Ahriel asks them questions that help students elevate their voice and provoke more thinking. Furthermore, when situations become challenging, Ahriel keeps an open and positive mindset while keeping in mind that making mistakes helps her mind grow.

She does what she is supposed to do. For example, Ahriel collaborates well with her classmates throughout our day. When we have Socratic discussions, she practices self-control, as she listens to her peers' ideas and disagrees as well as agrees with them in a kind way. Lastly, she makes good choices as she treats others with kindness and respect. It is a pleasure to have Ahriel Clemenson in our classroom.

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Student Name: Kayla Hernandez

School: Cutler Elementary School, Cutler

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Megan Thiessen

Statement:

When I think of Kayla, I see one characteristic that truly stands out, and that is her caring demeanor. Kayla is a student who goes out of her way to be kind to her classmates and other students in her grade. She shows this by the way she speaks to others in the classroom, on the playground, how she reacts to incidents, and how she acts with grace through challenging tasks. Kayla goes out of her way to ensure that everyone around her is taken care of and has everything they need to be successful. One example that we saw in class was when we were working on an inquiry activity for a science lesson. Kayla helped her group get set up and noticed another group was struggling. She made sure that her group was taken care of and then supported the other group. No one asked her but she saw the need and took the initiative. Incidents such as this one are a common occurrence in our classroom. The love Kayla has for her classmates is evident in everything she does. Students feel safe sharing their ideas because their environment had a nurturer like Kayla Hernandez.

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Student Name: Amalia De La Cruz

School:

Dinuba Community Based Instruction, Dinuba

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Randall Steen

Statement:

Amalia is a student who has exhibits and displays the Six Pillars of Character. I chose to nominate Amalia because she is a model student. Amalia helps her peers in class and is always fair and kind to all. She is respectful, and I know when I need something from the students, Amalia I can trust to do what she says she is going to do. Amalia cares about others in her classroom and is fair because she remembers whose turn it is for the special or preferred activities that happen in the class. Amalia will help me remember whose turn it is to go on community outings, volunteer to accept additional responsibilities, and forfeit her turn when she knows others have not had a fair chance to participate. Amalia is currently taking additional classes to earn her G.E.D. and exhibits great responsibility by staying on top of her work and completing her work from the Adult School. Amalia is a joy to have in class, and I know that I and all of Amalia's classmates will be held to the CHARACTER COUNTS! standards.

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Student Name: Sukhdeep Kaur

School: Dinuba High School, Dinuba

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominators: TJ Celaya and Tonya Pennebaker

Statement:

Sukhdeep Kaur, also nicknamed Sandy, is an ideal example of respect as she demonstrates this in everything she says and does at Dinuba High. Currently a Senior, Sandy's character is noticeably admirable to staff and students. As current president of HOSA, one of Dinuba High's largest clubs on campus, Sandy is attentive and caring to the underclassmen and shows this by getting to know them and reaching out to them early in the school year. She continues her care for them by helping them adapt to the challenges of High School and being a mentor. Throughout the year, Sandy continues to make the underclassman feel welcome by creating interactive team building and get-to-know-you activities to ensure they feel comfortable and at home at DHS. Sandy loves being of service to her fellow students and club members. She has served selflessly as an officer in various campus clubs and organizations in many differing capacities.

Her desire to serve has led her to pursue different roles of leadership such as secretary and video technician for NAMI. She has also been secretary of FFA, ACCEPT and Student Council within her high school tenure. As previously mentioned, she is the current HOSA president where she graciously serves her underclassmen and her peers. Sandy is always ready to collaborate with faculty to share in decision-making to execute plans and projects.

Sandy has remained a detail-oriented person that works tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure every club and school event she is involved in is a success. She is active in HOSA as a community service lead for future health professionals in her grade level. Her accomplishments in her service are vast as she has created digital fliers for events in NAMI, HOSA and other clubs. She also leads HOSA meetings and manages the club's social media page on Instagram. Sandy was also a key figure in organizing a care package for the homeless campaign whereby students put together large duffel bags filled with essentials and even Christmas gifts to give to the homeless last holiday season. Despite all of Sandy's accolades and accomplishments, what truly makes her a pillar of respect on our campus and within our community is that she does everything with a servant's heart and with sincere kindness. Sandy's gentle spirit and humility may often go under the radar, but it is these qualities that cause her to be a true and genuine leader.

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Student Name: Addison Moreno

School: Jefferson Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Maria Mendoza

Statement:

Addison is a very trustworthy student. I can always count on her to be honest and tell the truth. She is an excellent helper and will not tell a lie. She will help and watch other students in the class and help them to stay on task. If not, she will report back to me who was following the rules and who wasn't. She reports to me daily to let me know how our class was in the cafeteria, during recess, or after school. I can always trust that Addison will have her work completed, and that she is ready for the next assignment.

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Student Name: Kevin Aguilera

School: *Lincoln Elementary School, Dinuba*

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Courtney Myers

Statement:

Kevin is new to school but is already proving to be a kid of character. I can always count on Kevin to be listening, following directions, and doing the right thing. He is a kind friend to others and eager to help when asked. I love having Kevin in my class and cannot wait to see what he does in his bright future.

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Student Name: David Balderas

School: Ronald Reagan Academy, Dinuba

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Terry McReynolds

Statement:

David is dedicated to his academic success. He expresses kindness to others, sets goals for himself, works hard, and inspires others by being a role model and leader in his school community. David has a growth mindset, a deeply held belief that a person can learn anything given enough time and effort. David is able to break down a big goal, like solving a big problem, innovating or achieving a higher grade, into small bite-sized pieces; therefore, he is more likely to be successful. Also, David is able to see his studies in the context of the wider world. For example, he can relate how argument writing can help him one day in the future if he has to go to court and pay a fine. Mr. Balderas is our RAP (Responsibility, Accountability, Perseverance) student .

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Student Name: Ramiro Hernandez Lopez

School: Roosevelt Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Maricela Ledezma

Statement:

Ramiro is an eleven year-old boy who brings a smile to all his peers and teachers. He demonstrates kindness by helping the educators and friends. He also loves demonstrating his kindness by opening the doors for teachers and classmates in such a chivalry manner that it is heartwarming to see. During clean up time he will help clean without being told. He is such a great helper and loves to learn. He loves to carry items for teachers by delivering folders to the office or books to the library. During classwork, his best friend turns to him for assistance when a task may be challenging. Ramiro always lends a helpful hand and helps his best friend by giving hints as to what the right answer may be. Ramiro also demonstrates generosity. When we are passing out goodies in the classroom, Ramiro always offers his portion to his friends to ensure everyone has gotten a share.

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Student Name: Kailah Mendoza

School: Sierra Vista High School, Dinuba

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Linda Danner

Statement:

I am writing to nominate one of my exceptional eleventh-grade students, Kailah Mendoza, for the "Pillar of Responsibility". In my years as an English teacher, I have had the privilege of witnessing numerous students who exhibit impressive qualities, but Kailah stands out as a shining example of responsibility.

Kailah has consistently demonstrated a remarkable sense of responsibility. Firstly, she is a diligent student who takes her studies seriously. Her assignments are always completed on time, and her work reflects a high level of dedication and thoroughness. She actively participates in one-on-one discussions, showing a commitment to her learning.

What truly distinguishes Kailah is her unwavering commitment to her extracurricular activities. She is actively involved in her 7th-period Friday activities. She is not afraid to try something new and shows great confidence in her abilities. Kailah has consistently demonstrated dependability, taking charge of her responsibilities with grace and integrity, which benefits our school and our community.

Moreover, Kailah exhibits remarkable leadership skills by setting an example for her peers. A few of her classmates turn to her for guidance and support, knowing that she can be relied upon to provide assistance when needed. Her ability to juggle her academic commitments and extracurricular activities is truly commendable.

In conclusion, Kailah Mendoza exemplifies the trait of responsibility in every aspect of her academic life. Her dedication to her studies, active involvement in extracurricular activities, and her role as a reliable mentor to her peers make her an outstanding candidate for the Pillar of Responsibility. I wholeheartedly recommend her for this well-deserved recognition, confident that her actions will continue to inspire others in our school community.

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Student Name: Mia Bravo

School: Wilson Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Maria Lichtenwaldt

Statement:

Mia Bravo has shown responsibility, as well as several other positive character traits, in this new school year. She has been a role model of kindness and integrity to her peers, as well as her siblings. She dutifully helps her twin brothers get to breakfast, then to their kindergarten class, each morning. She has continued to blossom into a responsible and exemplary student that would make any parent proud! We love you, Mia Bravo, and know you will fulfill any goals you set for yourself now and in the future! You are a WARRIOR!

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Student Name: Anahi Morales

School: Ducor Union Elementary School, Ducor

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Maria Barajas

Statement:

Anahi is a very caring and respectful student. She is always eager to help her friends in a caring way.

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Student Name: Dixie Hurtado

School: Alila School, Earlimart

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jessica Contreras

Statement:

The student is always making sure that she does what she needs to do. Even when her group is not sure what they need to do, she makes sure that she explains it to them so that they can do their work. You always see Dixie getting to work right away. She never leaves a job halfway finished if she can help it. If she does not finish an assignment in class, she makes sure that she asks if she can take it home to complete. And this is not for show. She really does work on it whether it is on the weekend or during a weekday. You can count on Dixie to do her work.

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Student Name: Madelyn Basurto

School: Earlimart Elementary School, Earlimart

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Michelle Saunders

Statement:

Madelyn is a very caring person. She is kind to all of her peers and respectful to all adults. Madelyn is very generous with her time. She helps out in the cafeteria everyday by cleaning the tables and making sure all is ready for the next session of food distribution. She is also very kind by organizing my classroom library, my ELD group tubs, and helping her peers in our classroom. She is a wonderful student and a perfect example of what a great character looks like.

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Student Name: Alvaro Montano

School: Earlimart Middle School, Earlimart

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Wendy Sear

Statement:

Alvaro demonstrates the pillar of responsibility on a daily basis. He comes to class prepared and ready to work hard daily. He never gives up no matter how challenging the task.

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Student Name: Meghan Brooks

School: Exeter Union High School, Exeter

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Andrea Venegas

Statement:

Meghan Brooks isn't afraid to go against the grain to do what she thinks is right. This is rare in a high school student. She is a natural leader and students listen when Meghan talks. She is kind to everyone, regardless of popularity status or grade and anyone that speaks with Meghan, instantly feels like they've made a friend. I have been Meghan's teacher for all four years of her high school career, and I know that I can always count on her. When I have a project that needs special care or something that needs to be managed outside of classroom hours, I know I can count on Meghan. She not only gets the work done, but she does it with quality and pride.

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Student Name: Robert Bonney

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Exeter

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Savannah Dougherty

Statement:

Robert is an all-around exceptional student. It's hard for me to pick just one pillar of character that Robert best represents because he is a great example of all of them. I chose responsibility as the pillar which most exemplifies his behavior. His amazing work ethic and dedication to succeeding in school, and outside of the classroom. I can always count on Robert to be the first one to get started on an assigned task. He is a hard worker and strives to make sure he really masters the concept we are working on. I can always expect his name to be listed as a "super student" in the substitute teacher and library feedback. He has an amazing work ethic and is an amazing contribution to our class. He is always an active participant in group work, and I know that he will assist students that may struggle in understanding. Robert is an outstanding student and is the epitome of responsibility.

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Student Name: Clayton J. McBride

School: Rocky Hill Elementary School, Exeter

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Whitney Pollock

Statement:

I would like to nominate Clayton "CJ" McBride under the Pillar of Caring. He is an outstanding young man with a heart of gold. CJ loves people and has a way of brightening everyone's day. He will go out of his way to greet people or give them a much-needed high five on campus. CJ makes people feel special because he remembers names, faces, and even the names of people's pets. After meeting CJ one time, people remember him because of his positive energy and contagious smile. He is curious and kind to his classmates, and he always asks questions to his teachers to further understand a situation. CJ is unique, his zest for life extends outside of the classroom. I am thrilled to be your teacher and to watch you grow and impact the lives of so many. You are truly one of a kind and a role model for so many. You remind everyone of the importance of human connection. We are blessed to have you in our classroom, on our campus, and in our community.

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Student Name: Evan Botello

School: Deep Creek Academy, Farmersville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Charley Defevere

Statement:

Evan Botello works hard at getting his schoolwork completed even if that means working at home over the weekend. It was difficult deciding which of the six pillars was most appropriate for Evan, but he clearly exhibits the Pillar of Responsibility best. He always excels and goes the extra mile in all areas. We at Deep Creek Academy are proud to call him one of our students!

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Student Name: James Hedgecoth

School: Farmersville High School, Farmersville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Justine Gomes

Statement:

James is always looking out for his fellow students as well as his teachers. He will help anyone without being asked or expecting anything in return. He has good manners and is respectful to our classroom rules. I can always count on James to be truthful and upfront in all situations. James is also very thankful to anyone who he knows and the people who care about him or help him in any way. James is truly a great young man and absolutely deserves to be recognized as he has not had an easy childhood and that just goes to show how impressive he really is.

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Student Name: Joseph Hernandez

School: Freedom Elementary School, Farmersville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Sebastian Santillan

Statement:

Joseph Hernandez is a student who strives to respect anyone he comes across. He is always on task when he is assigned any work. Joseph is no longer in my class; however, he comes to me for advice. Even when he has a struggle, he is still being responsible about his education. Some students at this point might want to give up, but Joseph is trying to find ways to do his work. He is always doing what he is supposed to be doing inside and outside the classroom. Last year when he had substitutes, Joseph was responsible enough to let the substitute know where things are located. He is always willing to help those in need. Last year when his classmates were struggling Joseph stepped up, even though his English Language was not fully developed, he was still there to help students.

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Student Name: Alia Orozco

School: George L. Snowden School, Farmersville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Karen Zeibak

Statement:

Alia demonstrated the trait of responsibility in many ways in our classroom last year, as a second grader. To begin with, she always had a happy positive attitude about all classroom assignments. Whatever type of assignments we were completing she always made sure she finished the work. On most days Alia spent time in the nurse's office, but she always took the responsibility to turn in all assignments and do her best work. Alia was always willing to help others. If someone was unable to log on to a computer or couldn't find a page, she was there to help. Alia ended last school year, with high academic marks. She met her learning goals in all subjects. Alia is the pillar of responsibility and proves that with determination and a positive attitude she can reach for the stars.

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Student Name: Uriel Torres-Garcia

School: Ivanhoe Elementary School, Ivanhoe

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Maria Botello

Statement:

Uriel is my poster child for caring. He demonstrates true caring and empathy for others. I have personally witnessed how Uriel guides students to make good choices. He acknowledges and praises students when they do well. His previous teachers have shared how he has been a friend to others by showing kindness and caring. Uriel has a kind and caring heart and is not afraid to show it. I truly appreciate Uriel. He reminds me of the quote by Maya Angelou, "People often forget what we say and usually what we do, but they always remember how we made them feel."

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Student Name: Monserrat Becerra Mendoza

School: Kings River Union School, Kingsburg

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Michelle Etchegoinberry

Statement:

Monserrat Becerra Mendoza represents all the pillars, but caring is where she shines. Monserrat has a heart of gold and advocates for herself and others. She is the youngest child in her family with her first nephew recently being born. She is very proud of her family. The character traits her family has instilled in her carryover into the school setting. She is nurturing, compassionate, empathetic, logical, and mature when it comes to challenging or uncomfortable situations. Monserrat protects her peers and younger students fiercely. She is not afraid to stand up for what is right and for what is safe. She is a member of King River's SAVE Promise Club (Sandy Hook Foundation) teaching students to protect their community. She encourages them to "say something" to protect themselves and others. Monserrat is always willing to help others and to provide comfort when needed. In typical teenage situations, when faced with challenges, Monserrat respectfully removes herself, never creating additional issues. She has created relationships with trusted adults that she will report situations to if needed. This school year, one of her daily highlights is to meet a kindergarten student with exceptional needs at the gate in the mornings to walk him to class. Monserrat is a tremendous young lady and certainly makes the world a better place.

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Student Name: Helena Rios-Zuniga

School: Jefferson Elementary School, Lindsay

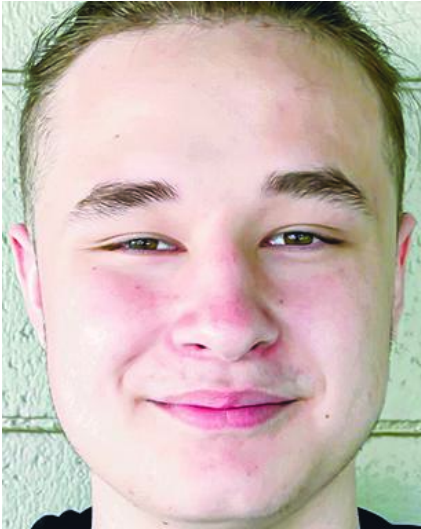
Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Berenice Benson

Statement:

Helena arrives at school every day, prepared and eager to learn. She always maintains a positive attitude and demonstrates a great deal of perseverance, even during more complex activities. She exemplifies citizenship daily. Helena is a compassionate learner and genuinely cares about everyone around her. She collaborates very well with peers and shows fairness in ensuring that she treats everyone with the same respect. Helena is always respectful and shows leadership skills beyond her years. Helena has demonstrated that she is trustworthy and a student of great character who will make a big difference in the world. I am so proud to have Helena in my class this year as she sets a wonderful example of how we should interact with those around us. Helena always puts her best foot forward and displays outstanding character every day!

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Student Name: Dominic Goodman

School: J.J. Cairns Continuation High School, Lindsay

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Amalia Lopez

Statement:

Dominic Goodman is an incredibly kind, empathetic, and good-hearted young man. As a student, he works to help those around him and offer his support. He volunteers to support school events and serves as the school mascot. Notably, Dominic views the world through the lens of service. He helps his teachers with tasks and serves in the Associated Student Body (ASB) to improve the school climate and culture. He has become a valued learner voice on our campus because of his insight and how he views others' needs ahead of his own.

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Student Name: Roman Espinoza

School: Kennedy Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Timothy Paul

Statement:

Roman is always willing to lend a helping hand. Roman always takes initiative to clean our snack tables after snack.

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Student Name: Kimberly Lemus

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Lindsay

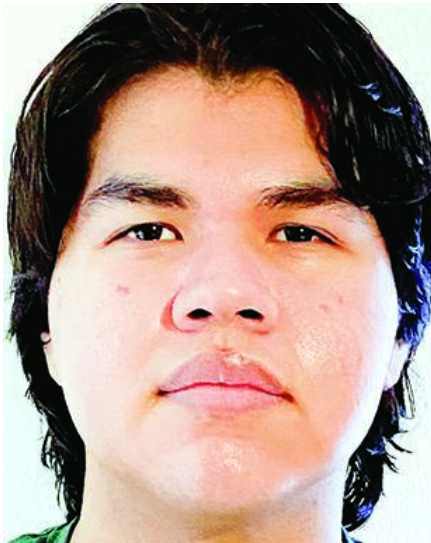
Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Jeanette Garcia

Statement:

Kimberly is always willing to help out her fellow learners. She will set up their activities for them and help to support the needs of the younger students. She is always bringing ideas to the table to share with the learners. Kimberly does amazing face painting on the younger grades.

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Student Name: Javier Lemus-Romero

School: Loma Vista Charter, Lindsay

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Juana Moreno Martinez

Statement:

Javier is one of my learners from our Independent Studies program. Javier exemplifies all of the character traits, but I nominate Javier as a learner who most exemplifies responsibility because he has taken this character trait to the next level. Javier does what he is required to do every day. He completes his daily assignments, he shows up to weekly meetings, and Javier asks for additional help when needed. This year Javier has taken it upon himself to complete an additional class that is not required for him to graduate. When I asked him why he was doing that he said, "It was fun to learn the content I am learning in that class." I believe the statement shows his deep commitment to learning and to his personal development. Javier also exemplifies integrity in all his work, which is an essential quality to be successful in our independent studies program — just another way in which he has demonstrated himself to be a responsible learner.

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Student Name: Stephanie Lemus Espinoza

School: Reagan Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Manuel Cobarruvias

Statement:

Stephanie always has a positive attitude and a caring bright big smile. She is the type of student who can change the mood in a classroom just by her positive presence. Recently she saw a new student crying and without hesitation she went to comfort her. I later saw her talking to her in the library introducing her to other students. She is always the first to volunteer to help and you can always count on her. She keeps others from making bad choices and helps anyone in need. She is such a positive leader in our school and that is why I wanted to nominate her.

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Student Name: Yanet Gomez

School: Roosevelt Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Ana Medrano

Statement:

Yanet is a great friend, mentor and student. She excels in the classroom and helps support others to make good choices. She completes all of her tasks and is always willing to help others in and outside of the classroom. Yanet is kind and respectful to everyone she interacts with. Anytime she is asked to help she never hesitates and does it with great attitude. For example, she was asked to help monitor the younger students during recess to help them play fairly. She has taken that role very seriously and with pleasure. She truly exhibits all of the characteristics of an admirable student who deserves recognition for all that she does each and every day.

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Student Name: Kevin Izquierdo

School: Washington Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Angel Cortes

Statement:

I come in contact with Kevin daily and he is always exhibiting great citizenship. He is polite and he always asks me how my day is going or how my day went. He is kind and respectful. Every day after school, I supervise a section of the school for dismissal, which just so happens to be an area that Kevin passes on his way home. When I am out for dismissal supervision, and Kevin sees me, he says "Bye" and "Have a good day!" If it is a Friday, he will say "Have a good weekend!"

One event that really pushed me to nominate Kevin for citizenship was when an eighth-grader let me know that Kevin returned her laptop that fell out of her backpack. The student said that she did not even know she dropped it and left it behind until Kevin had tracked her down and returned it to her. Mind you, this was after school, and everyone was going home. I thought this was a big gesture coming from a fourth grader to return it to an older student. I feel like Kevin's polite behavior, in combination with acts of kindness and good citizenship makes a great case for him to be nominated for the Pillar of Citizenship.

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Student Name: Madison Patino

School: El Monte Middle School, Orosi

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jose Montemayor

Statement:

My name is Jose Luis Montemayor and I am an eighth grade English and History teacher at El Monte Middle School. I am writing this letter to nominate Madison Patino for the 2023 Kids of Character Award, for the Pillar of Responsibility. I have had Madison in my English and History classes since the beginning of the year. I think that she is an excellent candidate because she embodies the qualities of responsibility in her life every day. One reason I feel that she deserves this award is because Madison has turned in every assignment on time or early since the school year started. Let me tell you why that is significant. This amazing student has started doing voluntary conditioning for sports to help her become a better player. Madison gets up every morning at 4:30 a.m. Monday through Friday to train for two hours before school even starts. She then goes to school and has soccer or basketball practice afterwards and she still manages to not only complete her assignments but excel at them. She has never once complained or asked for an extension on any assignment even with her busy schedule. This means she's willing to sacrifice in order to be successful in life. If that is not the true meaning of responsibility, I don't know what is. What is amazing about her is that she is learning these lessons at a very young age and how to apply them to her life. When she comes into the classroom, Madison brings life and vitality with her. She always has a smile on her face and a compliment for her fellow students or myself. She is kind and polite, respectful of the other students and above all she is incredibly grateful to everyone around her. It is very rare to meet someone with so much gratitude in their heart, especially at such a young age. When I look at someone like Madison, I see aspirations of how I would like to be. She is an inspiration to me to be a better teacher for all my students by seeing how she conducts herself. For these reasons I believe she is truly worthy of being selected for the Pillar of Responsibility.

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Student Name: Sofia Mejia

School: Golden Valley Elementary School,
Orosi

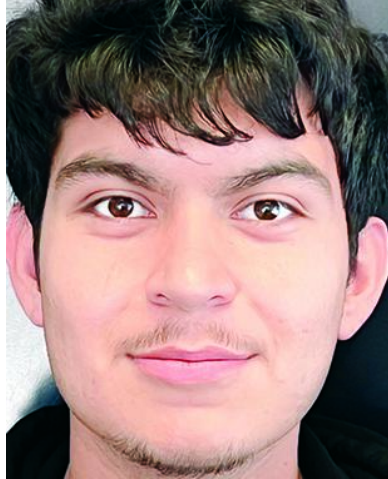
Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Norma Lupa

Statement:

When I saw that it was time to nominate Kids of Character, I immediately thought of Sofia. Our paths often cross on campus and she is ALWAYS doing the right thing. She cares about others, uses our playground equipment appropriately, respects her peers, and she notifies staff when she sees something is wrong. One afternoon, I called her home to report that a student had not been respectful toward Sofia. After I talked to her dad, I asked if I might talk to Sofia to get some information regarding the incident. Her dad, "Yes, of course you can talk to Sofia, she is right here next to me doing her homework." It didn't surprise me that this young lady goes home and immediately starts her homework. I applaud Sofia and her parents for sending us this awesome little girl who comes to school ready to learn and ready to be an outstanding citizen every day.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Juan Salazar

School: Orosi Community Based Instruction, Orosi

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Chloe Rodriguez Hernandez

Statement:

I would like to nominate our student Juan Salazar for his outstanding display of responsibility. He is a student at Orosi CBI. He currently works in my K-6 AcCEL class in Cutler as part of his community-based work. Within the classroom he has done an amazing job being an example to our students and giving back to the program that has helped him so much along the way. Juan is not scared to jump right in and help support the students by reading to them and giving them support to complete their work. Juan takes his job very seriously as "Teacher Juan" and takes pride in his work. Juan has not only been a great example to the students in my class but also to the others in his program by setting the example of a hard worker. It has been an honor to work with him.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Andrew Camarillo

School: Orosi High School, Orosi

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Marlena Celaya

Statement:

It is with honor that I recommend Andrew Camarillo for the Pillar of Respect. As the Principal of Orosi High School and an educator for the past seventeen years, I have yet to see such a respectful, well rounded student athlete as Andrew. Not only was he selected as an All State Running Back as a Junior in high school, but he's also maintained a 3.0 GPA. I've had the privilege of being Andrew's middle and high school principal and have witnessed the respect he gives teachers, teammates, and opponents. During a playoff game last year, Andrew was injured and could not finish the game. After the game, the entire opposing team walked over to him, as he was restricted to the bench with an injured knee and shook his hand. This was a true testimony to the respect he has earned by opposing teams because of the respect he gives. On another occasion, I witnessed Andrew bringing his offensive line donuts on the day after he broke a football record. He is the young man all mothers want their son to be!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Jaylah Alanis

School: Palm Elementary School, Orosi

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: David Belman

Statement:

Jaylah is a student that exemplifies responsibility and doing what you are supposed to do! Her most noticeable qualities were self-discipline and accountability. Jaylah does a wonderful job at keeping herself on task and following all directions. She would also look out for her peers and remind them to follow the classroom rules and expectations. This student has a high level of self-discipline and accountability because she would ask for my help whenever she needed additional support. She always seeks to improve in all subjects! Her attitude towards learning is second to none and her growth mindset helps her achieve anything she sets her mind to!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Magali Reyes

School: Pixley Elementary School, Pixley

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Ana Lucio

Statement:

I met Magali at the beginning of her fourth-grade year. I had the honor of being her teacher for the 2022-23 school year. She started out needing small group interventions, especially in writing. She was a little quiet and shy but always came prepared with materials and ready to listen. By the end of the school year, she earned student of the month awards, Pillar of Character awards, and AR awards, just to name a few. By the end of the second trimester, she was a leader among her peers and always offered peer support to those struggling with directions or subject material. I was always so amazed by how much responsibility she took for her own learning. Because of this character trait, Magali grew so much in less than a year that I cannot wait to see her growth in junior high and by the end of her senior year in high school!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Jonathan Diarte

School: Pixley Middle School, Pixley

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Iris Rodriguez

Statement:

Jonathan cares so much! He is always willing to help others with nothing in return. He genuinely wants to see others do well. Not only does Jonathan care for others, but he cares for himself and his education. He always carries himself with such respect and is so empathetic. He is the student who sees others and will check up on them and is always willing to help. He is the student who will not be afraid to take risks in his learning, meaning he will ask questions and answer them even if he is not sure of the answer. Jonathan will try hard because he cares so much about learning, and he always wants to do his best.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Ricardo Rodriguez

School: Pleasant View Elementary School, Poplar

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Tashima Irving

Statement:

I know school has just started, but this young man has already touched so many teachers and students with his genuine heart and compassionate character. Ricardo Rodriguez is a 3rd grader at Pleasant View and ever since I could remember he has exhibited a heart of gold. He is always willing to help a fellow classmate or even a student he doesn't know if they need assistance. I witnessed him giving a student a gentle pat on the back when they were in our classroom library. He was encouraging the student, regarding a situation he had. Facial expressions told it all when they both looked at each other and smiled as Ricardo patted him on the back letting him know everything was okay. There was another situation where Ricardo and another student didn't know whose \$5 (of classroom money) was left on the table. The student thought it was his and Ricardo couldn't remember if he left it there or if it really belonged to the other student. Instead of arguing Ricardo gave the student the \$5 without hesitation. My Co-Teaching partner witnessed the situation and immediately gave Ricardo \$10 (doubled his money!) because he was so willing to use simple Problem-Solving skills in that situation. I am really proud of Ricardo as he shines for all to see. He truly deserves to be recognized for his caring character.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Jonathan Brown

School: AcCEL - Porterville, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: John Cemo

Statement:

Jonathan saw an incident on the bus involving one of his classmates and was concerned about it happening again. Jonathan talked to his friend and told him that he needed to discuss the problem with me, but his friend was afraid that he would get in trouble. Jonathan was so worried about his classmate that he took it upon himself to bring the problem to my attention. Because of his actions we were able to resolve the problems that were occurring, so that it will not happen again. Because of his actions and wanting to do the right thing I am nominating him for the Pillar of Responsibility.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Arianna Alvarado

School: Alta Vista School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Liliana Gaxiola

Statement:

Arianna Alvarado deserves this award as all of these Six Pillars of Character are clearly a part of her character. Arianna is constantly showing responsibility as she is always doing what she is supposed to be doing. Arianna is ready as she comes in first thing in the morning, she is always in line by the time the bell rings, she is in class with her morning work ready on her desk. I nominate this student because she is a true representative of all of the character count pillars, there is not one pillar that she does not represent.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Selene Vargas Andrade

School: Bartlett Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Nayeli Colunga

Statement:

Selene is a true exemplar of an individual who will do what is least expected of her to help those around her. Selene recently helped a classmate get organized and prepared for a class she did not have. She made sure this student was ready for his upcoming notebook check. Selene not only did this, but she has also made this student feel welcomed and a part of the class. Selene has impacted this young individual's life positively in a way that he will always remember. The young gentleman has commented that Selene is his best friend and will never forget her name. Selene did what she did not for attention but because she saw her family in need of help and instead of letting him struggle, she showed citizenship.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Yocelin Aguilar

School: Belleview Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Judith Church

Statement:

Yocelin is always doing the right thing. She is a great student and is always on task.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Jaydah Gonzalez

School: Burton Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Leslee Taylor

Statement:

Jaydah is a good citizen. She does little things all day long to help things run very smoothly. It starts out first thing, with breakfast. She lays out the items each day, lays the clipboard on the teacher's desk, and then afterwards, she loads up the wagon, puts the clipboard in, and then returns the wagon to the cafeteria. She has never been asked or taught these details. She just watched and took it upon herself. And this is just one example of her taking things on. She sees a need, and she jumps in to help. She definitely does her share in our school community. We are so glad she's a part of Burton Elementary — a wonderful part!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Paxton Maynor

School: Burton Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Betsy Bautista

Statement:

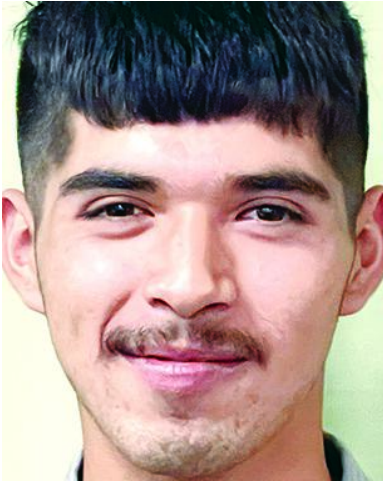
Paxton Maynor exemplifies responsibility both on and off the field. One notable instance of his responsibility is evident in his commitment to improving his science grades. Despite initially struggling with a low grade in the subject, Paxton didn't shy away from his academic responsibilities. Instead, he took the initiative to attend extra help sessions, diligently completed make-up assignments, and consistently sought ways to boost his grade. This proactive approach to his education demonstrates his strong sense of responsibility towards his academic commitments.

Moreover, Paxton's responsible attitude extends beyond the classroom. On the football field, he leads by example as the team's quarterback. His dedication to practice, punctuality, and willingness to take responsibility for the team's performance are evident in every game. Paxton understands that as a quarterback, he plays a critical role in the team's success, and he takes this responsibility seriously.

Additionally, Paxton's participation in group activities showcases his sense of responsibility towards teamwork. Whether it's collaborating on school projects or working with his teammates on the field, he consistently contributes his best efforts and encourages others to do the same. His leadership and accountability make him a role model for responsible behavior among his peers.

In summary, Paxton's commitment to improving his academic performance, leadership as a quarterback, and active participation in group activities all reflect his strong sense of responsibility. He sets a positive example for those around him, emphasizing the importance of taking ownership of one's actions and obligations in both academic and extracurricular pursuits.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Rene Garcia

School: Butterfield Charter School, Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Stan Dillon

Statement:

Rene has been a model student since he transferred from Porterville Military Academy. He has gone above and beyond in being responsible with his schoolwork. Not only does he come prepared each week, but he comes prepared with quality work at a very high standard. He will be graduating mid-term first semester prepared to join the graduates of Butterfield Charter School!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Names: Andrea Andrade Delgado
and Kimberly Perez

School: Granite Hills High School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Richard Lambie

Statement:

What a fabulous job Andrea Andrade Delgado and Kimberly Perez did presenting the ambassador Clean Up Campaign at Olive Street Elementary School on Friday! This is a campaign the ambassadors designed for launch this year and we are so proud. With Andrea and Kimberly's permission, I'm attaching two videos. Enjoy!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Armando Robles

School: Hope School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominators: Sally Ramirez and Joanie Arnold

Statement:

Armando is in the eighth grade at Hope Elementary. He has always been respectful and helpful, but this year he has gone way above what would be expected of a student. It is easy to see just how great of a student he is, but even better is how great of a person he is. Since the second week of school Armando has gone into the cafeteria to help Mrs. Rameriz. He checks the dates on the milk daily. He stocks and rotates the milk. He takes out the empty milk crates, and any food that needs to go to the dumpster. The food going to the dumpster is usually boxes of fruit that are too heavy for Mrs. Ramirez to lift. He wipes down the tables and picks up the trash that is left behind. He was never asked to do this, he just started coming to the cafeteria and offering to help. If Mrs. Ramirez starts the milk task, he will respectfully scold her, take the milk from her, and finish it on his own. Again, he is always respectful.

(CITIZENSHIP)

Outside of school Armando is on a traveling baseball team. He is always willing to help around the campus and does so with a smile on his face. He enjoys being involved in his school community and is also involved with his community outside of school. He is involved in 4-H where he raises and shows hogs. He also shows hogs out of state for livestock producers. Armando is a hardworking and a respectful young man who exemplifies many pillars of character and deserves to be recognized.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Emily Bautista

School: Jim Maples Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Donald Ramey

Statement:

This young lady started the school year with enthusiasm and focus. She jumped right in and helped to organize the classroom as well as assisting other students with whatever needed to be done. I am very excited to have such a trustworthy and prepared learner in my class! I am confident that she will be a wonderful example to the other students in our classroom!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Rodrigo Nunez

School: John J. Doyle Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Irma Martinez

Statement:

When I think of the word respect, an image of my student, Rodrigo comes to mind. He shows respect first thing in the morning when he greets me with a "Good morning, Mrs. Martinez".

Throughout the day, he continues being respectful by showing the adults in the classroom how a true scholar behaves. He works hard on his assignments and doesn't hesitate to ask for help when needed. Rodrigo is also respectful to his peers. He listens to them as we have class discussions and as he works well with them in groups. He takes charge when needed but does allow the others to add their piece to the discussion. He definitely treats others the way he wants to be treated.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Bentley Penn

School: Los Robles Elementary School, Porterville

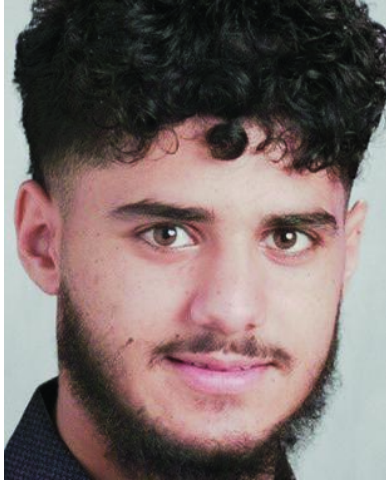
Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Christina Dole

Statement:

Bentley Penn is a respectful Lobo in our class. Bentley is new to our campus, but already he is exceeding at demonstrating our HOWL expectations across campus. If you were to meet Bentley, you would be meeting a sweet, kind, young man who speaks with respect to adults and his peers. Some situations can be hard, but no matter what, I can count on him to tell me the truth and be respectful. For example, Bentley demonstrates his ability of CHARACTER COUNTS! by being respectful to her peers, coming to an adult for help with a situation, and choosing to do what is right and fair by others. I am so happy to have Bentley in my class this year!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Mohammed Abdullah

School: Monache High School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Jennifer Giannetto

Statement:

Mohammed Abdullah takes time to visit, check in, share joy with the students in Monache's K1 classroom. We first met Mohammed when his older brother was enrolled in the AcCEL program classroom at Monache. Mohammed has maintained a connection with the students and staff in classroom K1. He is now a student assistant. He is authentic with his interactions with the students. He can be anywhere on campus and notice a need that one of the students might have. He provides comfort and care without bringing any attention to himself. He is loved by the students and staff. His maturity allows for him to offer guidance and friendship to his peers with special needs with the utmost respect and dignity. His interactions with others are truly beautiful to encounter.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Chloe Alvarado

School: Monte Vista Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Robyn Dunn

Statement:

Chloe is a great citizen. She has a strong sense of right and wrong and is always willing to go over and beyond to help others.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Mason Duran

School: Oak Grove Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Rachel McCusker

Statement:

Mason has shown respect towards his peers inside and outside of the classroom by taking the time to listen and help them out. Mason is always showing the 4 L's in class by looking, listening, lowering his voice, and leaning in to listen to his peers' opinions. Mason follows the golden rule by treating others the way he would want to be treated. Mason is always giving his full attention to me when I'm speaking to the whole class and is the first to put up the hand signal for time out when the class is being loud or extra chatty. Mason always encourages other students around him.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Ayleen Bedolla

School: Olive Street Elementary School, Porterville

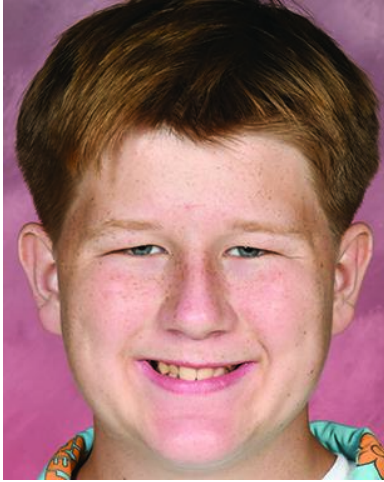
Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Maribel Alcantar

Statement:

Ayleen Bedolla is always helping the community and family. Ayleen spends time with her neighbor who is a veteran and keeps him company since he doesn't have anyone to visit him.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Zackary Wells

School: Pioneer Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Mikaela Carter

Statement:

Zackary exhibits positive character traits but being caring exemplifies his regular behavior. Zackary has struggled with others not always being kind to him, but continues to model how to treat people. He is constantly helping students and staff with a variety of tasks. Zackary spent his time at the Renaissance Fair volunteering his time in a booth opposed to enjoying the games. He truly enjoys helping others. When the school has functions for students, Zackary will help set up and pick up trash afterwards. He volunteers to help the custodians with trash pick and up cleaning without being prompted or asked to do so. Additionally, Zackary will help students who are in distress, volunteer to walk others to class if needed, and encourage others. He will compliment others and make people feel good about themselves. Zackary loves animals; he takes care of his dogs; feeding, bathing, playing, and walking them. He will save animals that are hurt or hungry. He recently saved a baby bird who was not able to fly.

Zackary is currently creating a business plan to earn money. He has created flyers for advertising and to gain customers. He is doing spider web removal outside of homes. Overall, Zackary is a kind, caring, and hard-working young man.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Kayla Mungia

School: Pleasant View West Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominators: Camille Valdez and Tashima Irving

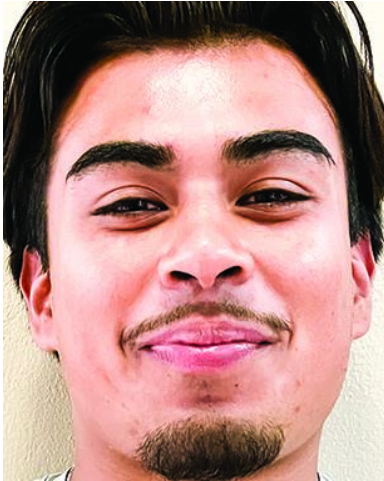
Statement:

A remarkable student who shines brightly through their exceptional caring nature is Kayla Mungia. Kayla consistently goes out of her way to show kindness and empathy to her peers, teachers, and even those she may not know well. Her willingness to lend a helping hand, offer a comforting word, and genuinely listening to others has created a warm and inclusive atmosphere within our school and her eighth-grade classroom. Kayla serves as a beacon of compassion and has a remarkable ability to make everyone feel valued and cared for. Their actions remind us of the power of simple acts of kindness and the positive impact they can have on our school and beyond.

(CITIZENSHIP)

Kayla is the Poster Child for Character at Pleasant View Elementary School. This young lady shines brightly from the East to West and North to South parts of our campus and community. Kayla is receiving this nomination for citizenship, but I can honestly nominate her for each of the Six Pillars. She is charismatically involved in so many school clubs and activities. She has been an active member of SQUAD for three years and serves on SQUAD's leadership team as well. I can count on her to help out at our school CHARACTER COUNTS! assemblies and organizes campus and after school events for both SQUAD and her junior high school campus. Kayla is not just an involved and responsible young lady but she is also compassionate and caring when it comes to her peers. I have witnessed her helping out SQUAD members who suffered from depression and anxiety during days when they were having episodes. She reaches out beyond her means to help in any way she can. I am truly excited to highlight this young lady. She is definitely worthy of the honor. Thank you, Kayla, for being an example for our students, staff, and community.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Jose Saldana

School: Porterville High School, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Larry Herrera

Statement:

Jose (Angel) Saldana is an incredibly trustworthy student-athlete. As Angel's football coach, I've seen him work hard to become a leader on the field through his actions. He can always be seen doing what is right and working hard. I trust him to lead the Early Out drills by himself. That leadership is rare and I applaud him for it. He is an amazing individual and I am so proud of him.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Braden Martin

School: Porterville Military Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Rudy Cardona

Statement:

Braden Martin is a senior at Porterville Military Academy. Braden will be a part of the first six-year graduation class since the seventh-twelfth grade school opened in 2018. In addition to being on the Dean's Academic List of high performing students, Braden is the school's cadet commander, having achieved the highest student leadership position on campus. He is a role model for other students, as a student-athlete, respectful, caring, and has earned the trustworthiness of his fellow students. As the cadet commander, he is responsible for ensuring all new students successfully complete the school's entrance camp, provides school staff with feedback, collaborates with on-campus clubs, and leads his own cadet staff to plan and execute events, training, and community contact. Braden leads by example in being courteous to others, works through changes, communicates effectively and is fair in his leadership approach with other students.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Diego Avalos

School: Roche Avenue Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Sarah Scott

Statement:

Diego is careful and fair in every part of his day at school. He embodies fairness with his kindness to others, respectfulness when playing with others and his common sense for following and playing by the rules. I can rely on him to know the exact process for any game or routine in class.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Maria Bedolla

School: Santa Fe Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Joseph McIntire

Statement:

Maria is a constant reminder of what true responsibility looks like. She is always organized, prepared, on time, and ready to learn. Even when she is absent, she completes missing work before her return to campus. Whereas many must develop an understanding of newly introduced rules and procedures, Maria can convert one conversation into immediate action. For those active in education, they have met “a Maria.” The student who produces exemplary work with minimal to no prompting. The student who is willing to help others and share their strategies. The student whose intrinsic motivation drives their success. The student who is so well-behaved that often they are overlooked when it comes to receiving recognition for their efforts. Please help me to recognize Maria Bedolla for her exemplary display of responsibility.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Liam Newsom

School: St. Anne's School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Sylvia Herrera

Statement:

Liam is an eighth grader and can be seen helping other students at the school. He is kind and loving to all ages. He has been especially helpful in the TK classroom during book buddies. He always gravitates to some of our students with Autism and is always willing to read or play with them based on their needs. Sometimes you will find kids holding his hand or climbing on him. Sometimes this can be embarrassing for older boys, but Liam's kind heart has no concern for what others think.

He comforts and helps the littles in any way he can. The Tk teachers have been grateful to see such a helpful and kind-hearted young man around their students.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Grant Balangue

School: Summit Charter Academy Mathew Campus,
Porterville

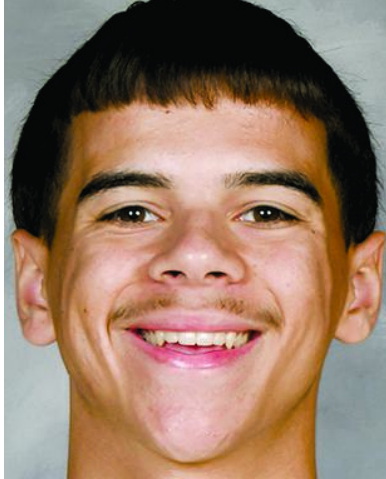
Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Vanessa Orozco

Statement:

Grant Balangue always has a smile on his face and is willing to help those in his community. He helps with keeping the classroom and school community clean and will always go above and beyond. Grant has a big heart, and understands what it is to be a good citizen in and out of the classroom.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Jayden Barrios

School: Summit Charter Collegiate Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Kimberly Wertman

Statement:

Jayden Barrios is an outstanding student. Not only is he an outstanding student but he has tremendous character as well. He is the first to help someone out in class while working hard. I have had Jayden as a student since he was a freshman and he has demonstrated stellar character throughout his high school years. He demonstrates his leadership qualities in class consistently which leads others in a positive manner. Jayden truly deserves this CHARACTER COUNTS! Award for 2023!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Stormi Farmer

School: Summit Charter Intermediate Academy,
Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Samuel Novinger

Statement:

Stormi started the year off right — being helpful in the classroom. She cares about the assignments and spends extra time improving her skills. She works well collectively with others and is concerned with wanting to do artwork to showcase to a public audience. I noticed she cared about learning the new digital program we started this year and was already looking for ways to help other students with the submission process. She pays attention to the details and is concerned with the objective and reaching her full potential. I appreciate her ability to communicate her innovative ideas. She shows a concern for improving in the arts and doing more than the expected amount by going above and beyond.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Angelique Ibarra

School: West Putnam Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Sean Phillips

Statement:

Angelique is honest. She doesn't lie, cheat, or steal. She always keeps her promises and she does what she says she will do. She is also a good friend to many of her classmates. She also treats others like she wants to be treated. Angelique is a great example of a trustworthy student.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Carter Christenson

School: Westfield Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Renee Carson

Statement:

Carter Christenson exemplifies the Pillar of Trustworthiness in every aspect of his behavior and interactions within my classroom. His consistent and responsible approach to his academic responsibilities, such as willingly admitting when he forgets homework and offering to make up for it during recess or the next day, demonstrates his integrity.

Carter's leadership qualities also highlight his trustworthiness. He not only takes charge of group projects and assignments but also ensures that his peers stay on task, fostering an environment of reliability and accountability within the group. His ability to lead effectively and have others willingly follow him speaks volumes about the trust his classmates place in him.

I recently asked Carter to take on a special project of creating a 9/11 Memorial slide show based on his recent visit to Ground Zero. His willingness to take on this project and the exceptional quality, attention to detail, and creativity of his work were beyond impressive. I will use his slide show for years to come.

Beyond his academic accomplishments and leadership, what truly sets Carter apart is his genuine kindness and compassion. His dedication to helping fellow students, especially those who may struggle or feel excluded, demonstrates a trustworthy and caring character. By making an effort to include and engage with others, he creates a sense of trust and belonging in our classroom.

In summary, Carter Christenson embodies the Pillar of Trustworthiness through his responsible behavior, leadership qualities, commitment to excellence, and his compassionate nature. He is truly deserving of recognition for this pillar, as he serves as an outstanding example of trust and reliability for his peers, and he is someone all teachers can unquestionably count on to do the right thing.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Pearla Farah

School: William R. Buckley Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Melissa Emerson

Statement:

Pearla epitomizes the Pillar of Trustworthiness. She can be counted on to always do her job to the best of her ability. She takes ownership for her actions and is always doing what she is supposed to be doing. I am pleased to recognize Pearla for the CHARACTER COUNTS! award for the Pillar of Responsibility. She not only takes care of herself, but she helps those around her that may be struggling. She has a kind heart, and we are blessed to have her as part of our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Isabella Cruz

School: Woodville Union School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Yesenia Martinez

Statement:

I would hear the name of Isabella around campus, but I never knew who she was until last school year. It was then that I had the pleasure of meeting her as a student. Many great words describe Isabella but the one that keeps coming to my mind is responsibility.

Isabella has shown responsibility in many ways like helping to take care of her sisters. She took responsibility for taking her sister to kindergarten last year and made sure she was well before she left. This year, I see her walking with her two sisters. One is taken to UTK and the other to first grade. Every day I see her, and I stare because I see how gentle and kind she is to her sisters. Being responsible is ensuring that she does what her mom has asked of her.

You might think her responsibility is only taking her siblings to class, but last year, I saw how responsibility is part of her growing character. We take students to the "Ultimate Warrior Trip" at Giovanni's Pizzeria (for students who have good grades, show character and if they have perfect attendance). On these two trips, I saw how Isabella walked around with her sister to make sure her sister ate, went to the bathroom, and played. On one occasion, I saw how she gave her sister coins to put into the machine so they could have fun.

Isabella is a selfless individual who will always do the right thing because she wants others to be responsible too. We had a student in our class who needed to develop responsibility. Isabella would sit with him and encouraged him to work and do better. She worked all year with him and he loved being next to her and working with her.

Isabella is no longer in my class, but she comes every morning and tells me how she helps her mom and her siblings. She always says it with a smile and with pride, she's a great responsible person to have around!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
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Student Name: Zydelle Murguia

School: Richgrove School, Richgrove

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Adena Joseph

Statement:

Zydelle Murguia is a second-grader at Richgrove Elementary School. She is a member of the Garden club as well. Zydelle is fair and caring towards others. When a student misplaced his treat after gardening, she willingly gave him hers. Whenever there is a conflict, Zydelle helps to resolve the conflict. She also strives to follow the rules and play fair. Great job Zydelle!

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Abel Monk

School: Springville Union School, Springville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Michele Punian

Statement:

Able Monk is a very joyful child. His peers say that he is fair on the playground as well as in the classroom, and he always cheers people on when they do something good. Abel is not afraid to communicate his feelings of discomfort or praise. He is willing and able to talk about an issue through using his opinion in a way that is neither rude or boastful. Our third-grade class voted Abel as the most respectful student because of his actions. Able works well in a group. Abel takes the time to explain a solution to a math problem so his teammate can have a better understanding of the problem.

Able gives his opinions clearly and makes eye contact in a genuine way. He is very polite when he speaks to others whether they are adults or peers. He is a good example of respect. I am very proud of his ability to reach this achievement.

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Sophia Colunga

School: Harmony Magnet Academy, Strathmore

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Nayirah Dosu

Statement:

Sophia Colunga is one of, if not, the most responsible and hardest working freshmen I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. She is a two-sport, varsity athlete this fall semester and was also just nominated Freshman Class President! On most days, Sophia goes to cheerleading practice then stays for volleyball practice. Despite her busy schedule, Sophia always makes sure her homework is done, continues practicing her sports at home, and still makes time to be present and enjoy her family and friends.

No matter what she does, Sophia always gives a 110% effort. That includes what she does when others are watching and when they're not. After a home game loss, Sophia stayed after to help clean up trash from the bleachers. She even walked back and forth to make sure she didn't miss anything. Nobody told her to do it. In fact, the gym was almost empty at the time. It stands out because even though her team didn't get the win that night, she showed a lot of leadership and responsibility by staying and taking the time to help keep her school clean. There's a lot of ways to show pride and sportsmanship in the uniform you wear, and she showed it with her actions.

Another example of how responsible Sophia is, is her work with her freshman classmates for homecoming week. It didn't matter that she had just finished two practices, she stayed well into the night with her classmates to finish the freshman float. With support from the freshman class and their families, that float went on to win the float contest and shock the senior class.

I am proud to nominate Sophia Colunga for the Pillar of Responsibility as she is one of the most selfless and responsible students I have ever known.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Valeria Anguiano

School: Strathmore Elementary School, Strathmore

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Candy Carrizosa

Statement:

Valeria demonstrates her caring trait with her actions! She is a very kind student. Valeria's initiative to show compassion has helped build on other students' social and emotional needs. In my classroom we have friends with different needs. I have a student who is extremely scared to use the restroom. Without being prompt or asked, one day Valeria went and held the student's hand and told her, "Don't be scared, come on I'll walk you to the restroom and wait outside until you come out." The student agreed. Valeria assisted her with washing her hands. When they returned, I heard Valeria say, "See everything is okay." She continued to assist and now the child goes on her own. That was not all, Valeria also encouraged this child to play out at recess. This child was always next to yard supervision waiting for the bell to ring. Valeria would go and encourage her to go and play with her. The child now plays with her peers.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Paola Carcamo Lovo

School: Strathmore High School, Strathmore

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Viviana Franco

Statement:

I nominate Paola Carcamo Lovo for the Pillar of Responsibility. This young lady has demonstrated all the pillars of character and although she has faced many obstacles, she has excelled academically, even with her language limitations. She is not only responsible with her schoolwork, but she also hurries every day after school to work at a local family-owned restaurant, because she also helps support her family in Honduras. She sends them whatever money that she saves. At her young age, Paola is a very mature and responsible individual, who has proven resiliency that is admirable, and I am very proud of her for that.

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Jasmine Avalos Mondragon

School: Strathmore Middle School, Strathmore

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Stephen Sobko

Statement:

Jasmine Avalos Mondragon is currently in 5th grade PE, and I have been her teacher and coach for a little over a year now. I have taught and coached at multiple different schools throughout my career. Jasmine is one of the most respectful, responsible, and thriving students I have ever worked with. She has consistently been a leader amongst her peers in class and leads her classmates in various classroom activities which are still new to many students as if she has been preparing to do so for years. Jasmine even gives her classmates tips on how to stretch and exercise correctly. She has the entire grade level organized each day and ready to participate in PE.

Ms. Avalos Mondragon has a level and sense of responsibility which transcends what I believed could be accomplished by any young school-age student in such a short amount of time. She takes all of her tasks throughout her day seriously and has the respect of all of her peers, teachers and family members. I look forward to having her in my classes for the next four years and I know she will continue to thrive and be responsible throughout her life. I wish everyone could have the opportunity to work with a student like her at least once in their career to feel the enjoyment and surprise I have been fortunate to have for almost two years.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Michelle Sanchez

School: Sunnyside Union School, Strathmore

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Alicia Franco

Statement:

Michelle is truly deserving of recognition for her exceptional display of caring. She consistently goes out of their way to help her classmates and make everyone feel included. For example, she often checks in on their peers who might be struggling and offers a helping hand without hesitation. During group projects, she makes sure everyone's voice is heard and ideas are considered, showing their genuine concern for others' perspectives. Additionally, Michelle has been observed comforting new students on their first day, making them feel welcome and supported. Every day Michelle checks on me. Her actions highlight her empathy and willingness to make a positive difference in the lives of those around her.

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Yovanni Moreno

School: Monson-Sultana Joint Union School, Sultana

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Mayra Ortega

Statement:

I would like to nominate Yovanni for his exceptional kindness, respect, and dedication to both his peers and the school community. Yovanni's actions consistently exemplify the qualities that make him a deserving candidate for this award.

Yovanni's selflessness and empathy are evident in his interactions with a fellow student who is autistic. He goes above and beyond by voluntarily assisting this student with their schoolwork, demonstrating a deep understanding of the importance of inclusivity and support within the classroom.

Furthermore, Yovanni's commitment to maintaining a clean and organized classroom environment is commendable. He takes the initiative to tidy up the classroom without hesitation, showing responsibility and a genuine care for his learning environment. His willingness to stay after class to pick up chairs, trash, and pencils without seeking recognition or reward speaks volumes about his character.

Not only is Yovanni helpful to his peers, but he also extends his respect and courtesy to both teachers and other adults within the school community. His consistent display of respect and consideration sets a positive example for his fellow students and demonstrates his commitment to creating a harmonious and respectful learning environment.

In summary, Yovanni's kindness, respect, and dedication to helping others, makes him a standout student who embodies the values of respect, empathy, and responsibility. His actions set a high standard for his peers, and he is truly deserving of recognition.

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Natalia Bedolla

School: Saucelito School, Terra Bella

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Courtney Castle

Statement:

As an eighth-grader, we have had the pleasure of watching Natalia grow over the course of her schooling with us. Natalia is always practicing fairness in all that she does, whether she is in the classroom, on the court or on the playground. Natalia demonstrates character in her daily actions by following school rules and being a role model for other students on campus. She plays multiple sports for our school during the year and shows integrity and sportsmanship by supporting her fellow teammates as well as supporting the players on the opposing team. In volleyball, if the referee cannot clearly see a line, Natalia will be truthful in calling the ball appropriately even if that means the other team earns the point. In the classroom Natalia is a model student. She is focused and diligent in her studies. She participates in all activities and labs and strives to make the most of every learning opportunity.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Emir Barajas

School: Three Rivers Union School, Three River

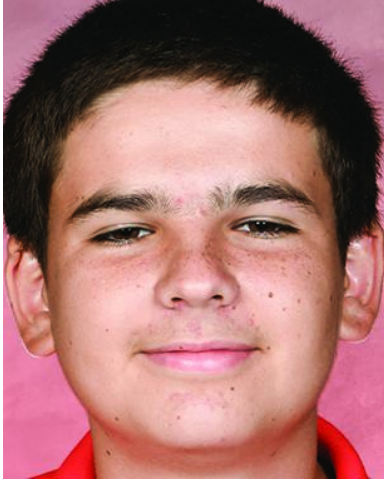
Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Edmund Pena

Statement:

I am thrilled to nominate Emir for the Pillar of Responsibility. Emir's transformation over the years is a testament to his unwavering commitment to growth and leadership. His journey from struggling with grades to becoming a team leader showcases his exceptional character and determination. Over the three years that I have coached him, he faced challenges with eligibility due to grades. However, this year he has made it a priority to improve his grades to be eligible for participation in sports. Emir has emerged as a true leader within the team. His ability to lead by example ensures that his team members can count on him to set a positive tone and consistently display a strong work ethic, dedication, and sportsmanship. His leadership serves as an inspiration to his peers. Emir's exemplary behavior and dedication have earned him the right to be the team captain. This leadership role reflects his responsibility and commitment to the team's success. As a captain he will undoubtedly continue to lead with integrity and inspire his teammates to reach their full potential. I am extremely proud of Emir.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Alfredo Martin Gutierrez

School: Tipton School, Tipton

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Gina Manfredi

Statement:

On a Friday at 3pm after sports and all students have been dismissed, this student really stood out from the rest of his classmates. I was coming in after PE and had dismissed the students, it was hot, and we were all ready to leave. Suddenly I feel a pinch on my arm, I look down to see a bee, it has stung me. I start to panic; I think I yell ouch. Many students and teachers are near me, no one is paying attention, except Alfredo. He comes running up to me and says, "Are you ok?" I responded, "I just got stung." He says, "I can run and get you some ice." He was willing to stop all he is doing and run to the office, instead of heading straight home.

This is not an isolated incident for this student either. The first day of school I noticed Alfredo leaning over after I explained the directions and talked to his elbow partner. I asked what he was doing. He says, "Well, you see she is new and does not speak a lot of English, so I am translating what you are saying to her so that she understands the assignments." He continues to translate for this student and make sure that she is always on task for me.

I have learned that Alfredo is extremely kind and caring. He is always engaged in class and offers help whenever he is needed. As a teacher, I love to have students like Alfredo in class that are such great examples to their classmates. He will continue to excel in life because of his kindness and generous spirit. This is why I am nominating Alfredo Martin Gutierrez for the Pillar of Caring.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Fernando Escalante

School: Traver Joint School, Traver

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Linda Navarro

Statement:

Fernando Escalante is just the sweetest student who always has a smile on his face. He comes into the office and tells me good morning and to have a good day or he will come in my office and tell me, I came to give you a hug. He is just a caring student that makes my day!

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: David Martinez

School: Accelerated Charter High School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Dana Shook

Statement:

David is one of our students that stays for our XL Program after school. On a daily basis, you always see David helping out a student or helping staff with building tables, moving items around or just hanging out with new friends and showing them around campus for the new school year. When things need to be done, we can always count on David, and we all appreciate him very much.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Kevin Simiano

School: Alice G. Mulcahy Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Marlena Lester

Statement:

Kevin Simiano is in our English Language class for students who have been in the United States for two years or less. Kevin is a very kind, responsible young man. He works hard and pushes himself to learn English. He is always asking questions and trying to get involved with things that push him to do better. I met Kevin this year when he asked to participate in my math class to learn more English because he is usually in a self-contained classroom and so that he would be prepared for high school. Kevin takes responsibility for his learning. Kevin is a very responsible young man.

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Student Name: Kirsten Crook

School: Alpine Vista School 5-8, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jenna Porchia

Statement:

Kirsten is an excellent student and very responsible. She maintains excellent grades, follows directions well, and goes above and beyond to be an active member of her school and community. Kirsten is involved in dance and in the Portuguese community outside of school. Both take a lot of time, yet her schoolwork never takes a back seat. She also has to manage her health, and she does it well. She is responsible and a pleasure to have in class.

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: William Robinson

School: Alpine Vista School K-4, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Jordan Doherty

Statement:

There are those that are molded into leaders and then there are those who are natural born leaders. William can be described as a natural leader. From the day he stepped foot into the classroom, he has continuously looked for ways to help those around him. He is a special type of leader in that he doesn't help out to receive any type of recognition, he does it because of the intrinsic value. With only a few days into the school year, William has cemented himself into a classroom environment. Other students turn to him when they need assistance. As the teacher, I have been able to count on him to demonstrate classroom routines, procedures, and the carrying out of important tasks. William can consistently be found putting others before himself. If there is someone in need, William will stop what he is doing and go to help them. He is the first student to volunteer and the last to see a task to completion. No matter what he is doing, from classwork, to playing outside, William puts his all into everything. He has internalized the *Leader in Me Habit of Think Win-Win*. When a problem arises, he tries to think of solutions to which he and his friends all benefit. As only a first grader, I know William will continue to strive to be a leader as he grows up. He will leave a positive impact on all those around him.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Raul Marcos

School: Buena Vista School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Alex Mendes

Statement:

Just about every morning I can expect to see Raul assisting his younger siblings on campus. The three of them walk onto campus together; Raul flanked by his two younger ones. He walks them to their class to drop off their belongings. He then leads all of them into the cafeteria for breakfast. He is quick to respond with a "Good Morning" once he is greeted. He is a very caring older brother. It's great to see a young man leading his two younger siblings by example!

Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Hallie Irving

School: Cherry Avenue Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominators: Corey Hargis, Rosalynda Mazon, and Angella Chamalbide

Statement:

This is my second year having Hallie in my class. She is an excellent student and young lady. She comes to school everyday with her best. Hallie is hardworking and very generous. She is often helping others with their work or checking on students who might be struggling. Everyday she comes in she makes an effort to check on me to see how my family and I are doing. She enjoys reading and encourages others to work hard so they are successful. One of my favorite things about Hallie is that she always says, "Thank you for today" whenever she leaves for the day. Last year when I called Hallie's Mom for a parent conference I asked her if she is just as kind and helpful at home as she is in school. She responded, "Yes. She has always been that way. I don't know how we got so lucky". Hallie is a wonderful kid in and out of the classroom and she deserves recognition for it.

(CARING) Hallie Irving is a model student for really ALL of the pillars, however the most noticeable is the Pillar of Caring.

She greets her teachers everyday with a hello and asks how their day is going. She volunteers to help out with cleaning up art supplies or offers her assistance in the hallways with opening doors or carrying items. When she leaves the classroom, she wishes her teachers to have a great day and thanks them for the lessons they taught her. She is respectful to all her peers and gives words of encouragement on the Volleyball court to her teammates.

Hallie is thoughtful, considering other people's feelings and is understanding with being a good listener to her friends. I have witnessed her on many occasions, just being a GOOD friend and a SUPER helpful student. Not only is she like this at school, but I have had the pleasure to witness it outside of school, caring for her younger sister Abby.

Hallie deserves to be recognized for her exemplary behavior and kindness.

(CARING) Hallie Irving is a Cherry Avenue Bulldog that eats, breathes, and lives the pillar of caring. She has a smile and positive attitude every time she walks in my class. Everyday when she exits my class she says, "Thank you for today!" Hallie is empathetic and offers encouragement to other students at Cherry. She actively goes out of her way to include others in activities. She is respectful of fellow students and school staff. Hallie's caring nature is one of many wonderful things about her.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Jersie Rodriguez

School: Countryside High School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Cherilyn Austin

Statement:

Jersie has demonstrated what it takes to fulfill the CHARACTER COUNTS! Pillar of Citizenship by actively engaging with our leadership class and promoting interaction with all students on campus. She encourages students on campus to get involved with activities.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Gustavo Ruiz

School: Cypress Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Jenna Davis

Statement:

Gustavo is reliable and will always be there to do something when you need him. I don't have to worry about him doing the right thing. He is always honest and presents himself in a way where others can see that they can trust him. I know that I can count on him to do anything I ask.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Madeleine Silva Parra

School: Frank Kohn Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Michael Langton

Statement:

As the Principal of Frank Kohn Elementary, I have witnessed Madeleine Silva embrace the Pillar of Caring in every interaction with fellow students, teachers, site leaders and anyone she comes into contact with. As a member of our school's student leadership team, she is an example for us all. She greets students each morning with a "high-five," or "fist-bump" and a smile. She embraces and lives the school motto of being a CHAMP: Caring, Honest, Ambitious, Making a difference, and Perseverance. Madeleine was the first student to welcome me as I took the principal position at Kohn and continues to greet me with her kind words each day. There is not a day that has passed in which Madeline doesn't ask me how my day is going, seek out ways to assist when needed and wish me and all others in the office a good day as she is leaving. She is an example for others to follow and has the respect from peers and staff alike.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Lillian Martin

School: Garden Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Cheyenne Crook

Statement:

Lillian is a remarkable student who epitomizes the essence of responsibility in her academic journey. With unwavering commitment and dedication, she consistently goes above and beyond to excel in the classroom. Her peers often rely on her dependability, knowing they can count on her to be a valuable team member. Additionally, Lillian's organization skills are truly commendable, maintaining a meticulously structured schedule that enables her to manage assignments and her personal life with ease. She approaches every assignment/activity with the utmost integrity, embracing honesty and ethical standards in all of her endeavors. Her proactive nature is what really sets Lillian apart. She actively seeks opportunities for self-improvement and isn't afraid to take initiative in her academic pursuits. Her effective communication skills ensure that she can articulate her thoughts and collaborate seamlessly with teachers, peers, and classmates. In a world where adaptability is key, Lillian shines as she navigates hard changes and challenges in her personal life, displaying resilience that just completely inspires everyone around her. Lillian is not only a responsible student; she's a role model for responsibility in education and beyond.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Nayeli Andrade

School: Heritage Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jillian Hanson

Statement:

I'd like to nominate Nayeli for responsibility, although I could have chosen her for any of the pillars. Nayeli is an exceptional student, and a wonderful addition to our school. From the first day of school, Nayeli has demonstrated an exceptional level of dedication to her learning. She finishes her assignments on time, but also approaches each and every task with the determination to learn and do her best. What truly sets her apart is her proactive attitude in seeking clarification when needed. She has the ability to ask thoughtful questions that further her learning, demonstrating her commitment to understanding and completing all of her assignments. Nayeli's dependable nature makes her a perfect role model for her classmates.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
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Student Name: Jaxon Jacobo

School: Liberty School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Miranda Evans

Statement:

Jaxon has demonstrated exceptional care and compassion inside and outside the classroom setting. His actions consistently reflect a genuine care for the well-being of his peers and creating a positive and supportive atmosphere. Inside of our classroom, Jaxon is known for his willingness to help his classmates, give encouragement and offer assistance whenever it is needed. His positive spirit enhances the overall environment of the classroom, helping create a space that is conducive to learning and fosters a sense of teamwork among his classmates. Outside of the classroom, he goes the extra mile by participating in acts of kindness. Fellow Liberty Lions, students and staff members alike, know Jaxon for providing assistance to those needing help, offering solutions to those facing challenges, and showing genuine care for those around him. His consistent display of care and compassion for others helps enrich our campus and truly merits recognition as an example for others to follow.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Rodrigo Jara Mora

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Anekka Guy

Statement:

Rodrigo consistently highlights the Pillar of Responsibility throughout his day. Each morning, he completes his tasks with a careful eye and makes sure he is always using his best penmanship. He takes care of his school supplies and stays organized throughout the day, always prepared for the task we are working on. Rodrigo is a student leader in the classroom, able to assist his tablemates and encourage others to do the right thing. He is kind to those around him and his classmates are eager to work with him and be a part of his group. He treats others the way he would like to be treated and puts away playground equipment when he and his friends are done using it. Many teachers who have interacted with Rodrigo know him to be a role model for others. Rodrigo models responsibility inside and outside of the classroom.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
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Student Name: Jazlynn Flores

School: Live Oak Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Melissa Gonzalez

Statement:

Jazlynn Flores for the Character Counts Pillar of Trustworthiness. Jazlynn's unwavering commitment to honesty, integrity, and reliability makes her an exceptional candidate for this esteemed recognition.

Jazlynn embodies the essence of trustworthiness in every aspect of her academic and personal life. Her remarkable ability to be unfailingly polite while remaining completely honest in all situations is truly commendable. Jazlynn has established herself as a beacon of integrity within our school community.

One of Jazlynn's defining characteristics is her commitment to truthfulness. She consistently approaches every interaction with sincerity and transparency, earning the respect and trust of both her peers and educators. Jazlynn's honesty is not just about avoiding falsehoods; it's about always speaking the truth in a considerate and respectful manner.

Furthermore, Jazlynn Flores is known for her steadfastness in upholding her promises. She possesses an incredible sense of responsibility when it comes to fulfilling commitments, whether it be in her academic endeavors, extracurricular activities, or personal relationships. Her classmates and teachers have come to rely on her for her unwavering reliability.

Jazlynn's politeness and honesty create an environment of trust and respect in our school community. She consistently treats others with kindness and courtesy, making her an approachable and approach-worthy individual. Students and staff alike feel comfortable confiding in her, knowing that she will provide honest and thoughtful feedback.

In addition to her commitment to truthfulness and reliability, Jazlynn Flores actively contributes to the betterment of our school community. She serves as a role model for her peers, consistently demonstrating that trustworthiness is a pillar upon which strong relationships and a positive school culture are built.

In conclusion, Jazlynn Flores epitomizes the Pillar of Trustworthiness in its truest sense. Her ability to be polite yet honest in every situation, coupled with her unwavering commitment to upholding promises, sets a remarkable example for all of us at Live Oak. Jazlynn embodies the values we seek to instill in our students.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
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Student Name: Emiliano Salamanco Murillo

School: Los Tules Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominators: Karen Vaughn And Aaron Thron

Statement:

Emiliano could represent any of the pillars of character. He exemplifies the Pillar of Respect. He is polite and respectful to faculty and peers alike. He is a true leader in his actions and speech. Emiliano is respect personified! - Mrs. Vaughn

Emiliano has a great demeanor to him. He comes in with an open mind to learn new things. He helps others in the class and is willing to be a risk taker in my classroom. Emiliano has been a great asset to my classroom because he is respectful to his table groups and wants to learn and understand more about math. - Mr. Thron

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Luke Harvey

School: Maple Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Ashley Meneses

Statement:

I would love to nominate Luke for the Pillar of Responsibility. Not only does he work hard to complete tasks in class, but he has also taken on additional helping roles within our classroom. You can find Luke going above and beyond and following the rules outside at recess, Noon League or other areas of our campus. Luke does most things with a smile on his face, seeking more responsibility. Luke sets a great example for his peers, and I look forward to seeing him grow throughout this year.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
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Student Name: Alessandra Contreras

School: Mission Oak High School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s):

Corina Gomes, Marie McPhetridge, and Laurie Jones

Statement:

Alessandra has been great working in the counseling office and takes charge without being told.

She's a fast learner, hard worker, and has a great personality, while always having a smile with a positive attitude.

(RESPONSIBILITY)

If I could check each box for Alessandra, I certainly would, as she is and demonstrates each one of these pillars of character!

Alessandra is our Co-op student and works each afternoon in our Counseling office. She comes in right after the student lunch break and works through 4:30 pm with our office staff. Alessandra is TRUSTWORTHY and holds to our confidentiality standards, shows RESPECT to all staff, families, students and outside agencies, is RESPONSIBLE as she performs all of her job duties without having to be reminded or asked to, and takes the initiative to assist anyone coming into our office.

Alessandra's FAIRNESS exudes in her performance, she is CARING and she shows CITIZENSHIP in doing more than her share within our school community

(CARING)

This incredible hawk shows such love in and out of the classroom. They are so nurturing!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Sarah Vaughn

School: Mission Valley Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Rachel Purkiss

Statement:

I have had the pleasure of knowing Sarah Vaughn for the last three years. She is a wonderful and energetic student who is very responsible. Sarah is in our Independent Study program. Sarah has shown responsibility by letting me know of things that are happening and makes sure she works ahead in order to not fall behind in her schoolwork. Sarah is always early to our zoom class and makes sure to check in with me on her work and grades. She attends study halls when needed. Sarah stays on task and completes her work on time. She is such a smart and responsible student!

Tulare County Office of Education
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Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Fernanda Chavez

School: Oak Valley Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Margaret DoCanto

Statement:

If there were a million awards to be given out to any one student, I would choose Fernanda again and again. She lights up a room with her smile and personality. She naturally does everything that is expected of her, and she goes above and beyond anytime that it is possible. She never needs to be reminded of the rules. She is trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and without a doubt, a model citizen. She is a leader among her peers, and she will go on to accomplish great things in life because of the positive dynamic that she brings into any and all situations. I'm very fortunate to have her as a student in at least one of my classes for the third year in a row. She is an eighth-grade student and I will be very sad when she leaves at the end of this school year. To say that she is outstanding is a gross understatement!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Xzavier Aldana

School: Palo Verde Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Rose Machado

Statement:

Xzavier saved his sister's life! His sister was diagnosed with leukemia after already battling cancer for over three years. A bone marrow transplant was one way to help his sister. He quickly agreed to have his bone marrow tested after his parents explained the procedure, even though he was afraid of needles. Miraculously he was a 100% match with his sister and this summer he underwent surgery to donate his bone marrow. His sister beat leukemia with her brother's help and is recovering at Stanford Children's Hospital. Overall Xzavier is a wonderful young man. He is a jokester who enjoys a good laugh, works hard in his studies and is an athlete. Mature beyond his years, he carries himself like a normal eighth grader after giving so much.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Camila Navejas

School: Pleasant Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Helen Richardson

Statement:

When Camila's mom asked her if there was anything she would want her new teacher to know about her, Camila responded, "I'm organized, I listen a lot, and I am nice to others." Now that school has started and in a short period of time, Camila has shown herself to be a very sweet and kind kindergartener. It is a joy to have Camila, she makes good choices, follows directions quickly, and I can depend on her to help others.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Jose Lara Juarez

School: Roosevelt Elementary School Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Tami Rodriguez

Statement:

I have known Jose since he was in first grade. During our online instruction, he was there every day with a smile and ready to work. He has had this work ethic all through his school career. Jose is now in the fourth grade, and he is still on time, in his seat, and ready to always do his best. He rarely misses school, and he is always prepared to succeed. If he gets frustrated with something, he tries his best to understand and work through or asks questions until he understands. He is kind to everyone and loves to help other people. In class, he is focused and conscientious. Jose always displays a positive energy and is a great model student.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Jerahmi Flores

School: Sundale Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Brittany Grieb

Statement:

When I first met Jerahmi, he looked me in the eye, shook my hand, and introduced himself as one of my new seventh grade students. I was extremely impressed with his level of respect. Jerahmi is a student-athlete, and understands the high expectations our school has for student athletes. Once a week, I open up my classroom at lunchtime for any student that wishes to receive extra study help. Jerahmi has not missed one study session. Jerahmi takes responsibility in his learning. He often requests a quiet place to read, raises his hand during lessons, and what inspires me most, is how much he cares about others. He never ceases to lend a helping hand, offer support to myself or a peer, and never makes his peers feel inferior.

Jerahmi has made me very proud and am blessed to be his teacher this school year!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Falicity Shelley

School: Tulare Tech Prep High School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Silvia Sausedo

Statement:

Falicity is always willing to help the teacher and her classmates. She would help me clean up the classroom and always ask me if I need any help. If she sees one of her peers needing help with their work, she volunteers to help them.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Evelyn Arias

School: Tulare Union High School, Tulare

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Chandra Benevento

Statement:

Evelyn Arias is one of the most trustworthy students I know. She has been a leader in “Intro to Foods and Advanced Foods” over the last two years. I asked her to lead two of the dishes at a major school wide event and not only did she come through for her dishes, she also helped the other student executive chefs with their dishes. She was in my classroom (the kitchen) that whole week in her free time and stayed outside at the event the entire time and even helped on cleanup duty.

On another similar occasion, she was outside (while I had to be inside) helping serve salsas that our students had made. She noticed that something had fallen into one of the salsas and immediately, quietly handled the situation with professionalism and grace without contributing to anyone feeling bad about the situation. I don’t know many people who would have done the same.

I trust Evelyn in so many ways. I trust her judgment, her leadership, her responsibility, her tact, her determination, and her willingness to learn. I’m so proud of her and can’t wait to see what she does in her future!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Arena Galeana Oregon

School: Tulare Western High School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Melissa Garcia

Statement:

Arena Galeana Oregon is one of the most special students I have ever encountered. Arena is responsible in every sense of the word—she is mature, organized, and a committed student. I'm sure that all of her teachers could attest that she has truly set herself apart both in and out of the classroom.

During her time at TWHS, she has challenged herself academically with multiple advanced courses, in addition to dual-enrollment courses through College of the Sequoias. In the courses she took with me (US History / HIST 17 and 18), she was always fair-minded, receptive to new ideas, and respectful of others. It is deeply important to me in my History classes to discuss multiple perspectives and dive deeper into the simple facts of historical events. Arena was always a considerate contributor to such discussions and demonstrated a clear understanding of complex issues like racism, sexism, classism, and more. I could always count on her to be prepared and engaged in class discussions and was constantly impressed by her nuanced understanding of complex concepts like justice, power, and identity. I also observed that Arena possesses incredible generosity and empathy. She has a gift for understanding others' perspectives, even those far different from her own. She is a hardworking and responsible student with integrity, but equally importantly, she is an exceptionally kind person. I wish I could have an entire class full of students like her.

Since I have known her, Arena and I have also had occasion to discuss her other academic work in the Pre-Medical Academy and her future goal of becoming a doctor and software engineer. I can attest not only to her passion and excitement, but also her seriousness and commitment to her future studies. I cannot wait to see what comes next for her; I am confident that Arena will continue to use her gifts to make this world a better place.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Adrian Gutierrez

School: Waukena Joint Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Christy Dawes-Hansen

Statement:

Adrian is being nominated for the character Pillar of Fairness. He is amicable with his classmates from his class as well as the other students on campus. When we engage in P.E. activities, he is helpful and competes with a good attitude. He is quick to help others or share turns during activities, as well.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Chris Balderas

School: Wilson Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Courtney Dodson

Statement:

Chris lives by the "Golden Rule." He really does treat others the way he wants to be treated. He is so kind to anyone he comes into contact with. He plays fair during PE and respects others and himself. He is respectful to subs and other teachers. He respects the school and any property he uses, such as the computers, equipment, and library books. He works well with his group and he is helpful to them if they need anything.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Keyla Tortoledo

School: Annie R. Mitchell Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jessica Cisneros

Statement:

Keyla comes to class every single day prepared and ready to do her absolute best. She has maintained perfect attendance, quickly learned our classroom expectations and followed them without reminders. Keyla has completed every single homework assignment, and class assignment. During independent work time, Keyla understands how important every minute is and uses her time wisely to complete her work. Keyla is an exceptional role model for the pillar of responsibility!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Daniela Yanez

School: Blue Oak Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Jocelyn Hendershot

Statement:

Daniela is a role model student who exhibits respect. She is quick to follow directions and exemplifies “doing what is right, because it is right” our school motto. She respects her peers by listening attentively, giving them personal space, and assisting them if they need help. She respects classroom property by being responsible with where she puts her papers and how she uses class supplies. Daniela comes to school ready and eager to learn, showing respect for herself and the many things she can accomplish.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Mason Esquerra

School: Compass Program, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Amayrani Lozano

Statement:

Mason is a sweet and caring student. She is always helping her peers when they are upset and wants to include everyone when she is playing a game. When other students or staff miss school; she asks if they are okay and gets sad when they are not feeling well. Mason is excited when they come back and tells them she is happy they are feeling better. If she ever accidentally does anything to upset another student, she quickly apologizes and checks to see if her peer is okay. Mason is a great role model for other students and is a true example of being helpful, kind, and generous.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Zayden Ramirez Ibarra

School: Conyer Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Christopher Marsh

Statement:

Zayden comes into the classroom with a smile, ready to learn, he has a positive attitude, and says “good morning”. This young man is prepared every day with his Chromebook, puts it away when asked and starts to read silently. Zayden shows self-control at all times and uses self-awareness of when to make a decision on doing the right thing

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Melody Stedman

School: Crestwood Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Raul Gonzalez

Statement:

Melody is a very caring young lady. In our class we have a student who is struggling with the adjustment to school and sometimes has big emotions. Melody has taken this student under her wing. She comforts her classmate throughout the day; when she sees the student having a rough time. Melody is a great friend who cares about her peers.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Jennifer Rivera Saucedo

School: Crowley Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Kara Wilson

Statement:

Jennifer has gone above and beyond what is expected of her during the day-to-day of our after-school program. She holds herself accountable for any actions she makes daily, along with others both inside and outside of the classroom. During this school year alone, she has even helped our newer Program Leaders settle into their roles during our Community Circle time by helping through yoga, Table Talk (a healthy eating/nutrition program designed to have students learn and practice healthy habits), and an SEL discussion. Jennifer is also always aware of when it is time to learn, to focus on her work, and when to have fun. No matter the task that is set before her, she has always done her best and never gives up, knowing when to ask for help on things she knows she might struggle with. She is an excellent role model for her peers and for the younger students who emulate her behaviors throughout the day. It has been an absolute pleasure and delight to watch Jennifer grow and become who she is today since that first fateful meeting in my first-grade class when I first started to work in the after-school program here at Crowley Elementary five years ago.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Gilbert Salinas

School: Denton Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Frank Ghiglia

Statement:

Gilbert started the year with a little bit of a struggle academically, finding that his new grade level was quite a challenge from day one! While this can be typical for many students, what makes Gilbert special is his growth mindset and willingness to persevere through any challenge. Like many students, reading, writing, and math did not come easy to him. Although Gilbert didn't immediately find success, his hard work, participation, asking questions, answering questions, asking his teacher for more lessons to help him grow, and practicing explaining his understanding to his peers, were all strategies that helped him find academic success. He now demonstrates amazing leadership both academically and behaviorally, with students in the classroom and at recess following his exceptional example. We are incredibly proud of his efforts!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Reah Florez

School: El Diamante High School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Tina Guzman

Statement:

Reah has the gentlest and kindest soul I have ever met. She is very conscientious of students in our class with special health needs and makes sure those needs are met during class activities. For example, during our nutrition unit students could bring in foods or drinks that aligned with their poster projects and she made sure that our student with a special diet had a non-sugary drink so she wouldn't be left out. When we've had students including myself who are out with illnesses, she is very concerned and checks in. She has a huge heart and goes the extra mile to make sure everyone is included.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Julio Cuevas Romero

School: Elbow Creek Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Cianna Balderama

Statement:

Julio Cuevas Romero is starting off his academic pathway at Elbow Creek Elementary strong and positive. He is a helpful, kind and generous student. The Pillar I chose for Julio is Caring. He comes to HEART every day with a positive and polite attitude. He is always asking students and staff if there is anything he can help with and be assistance. When other classmates are down and upset, he is there to offer them a hug to make sure they are okay. He is constantly boosting students and staff moods with his bubbly personality. During any and all activities we have in the program, he plays with everyone fairly and makes sure that others are involved in the fun as well. We are delighted to have Julio Cuevas Romero be a part of our Heart Ohana here at Elbow Creek.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Honey Posadas

School: Four Creeks Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Greg Fowler

Statement:

Honey Posadas is a model fifth grade student in my classroom. She is always on task, always completes her work to the best of her ability (which is at a very high level), and she asks questions when she doesn't understand something. She is a group leader, so she also helps others to stay focused, stay on task, and understand a lesson that they are struggling with. She is always the first one done on most assignments and is on top of extensions to the lesson or research assignments that will help other learning skills. She does not talk out of turn, but always answers my questions when she is asked. She is neat and organized, which are skills I usually don't see before seventh grade in students. She could be successful in any classroom, but I am lucky enough to have her in mine.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Mason Munoz

School: Global Learning Charter School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Nicole Lemon-Newman

Statement:

In the classroom, Mason consistently demonstrates a remarkable commitment to fairness. His interactions with peers are characterized by an unwavering sense of equity, whether participating in group discussions or collaborating on projects. Mason ensures that everyone's voice is heard and respected. Mason not only refrains from favoritism, but actively seeks to create an inclusive environment where every classmate has an equal opportunity to excel. His fairness extends beyond social dynamics; they exhibit an honest and principled approach to their academic endeavors. Mason adheres to classroom rules and guidelines without exception, treating each assignment, assessment, and classmate with the same level of respect and consideration. His dedication to fairness not only fosters a harmonious learning environment but also sets a commendable example for their peers.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Eric Maupin

School: Golden Oak Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Stephanie Hunt

Statement:

Eric is a very caring student. I can always count on him to show love and kindness to others. He will help me with any task, he talks to others in a friendly way. He also shares supplies without complaint and is patient with students. I really appreciate his caring attitude!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Karina Buenrostro

School: Golden West High, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jennifer Carlson

Statement:

Karina is a young woman who is motivated to build a successful future for herself. This young lady manages her time wisely, and is sure to check in with staff; offering a smile and a genuine "How are you doing?" In the midst of all the hurdles that life can throw, Karina has continued to keep her head held high and move forward. She came to Golden West her sophomore year, and has made growth both academically and emotionally. Karina is earning excellent grades on campus while participating in the Nurse Assist Cohort. She is the epitome of hard work and dedication.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Cynthia Adame-Luna

School: Goshen Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Veronica Benavides

Statement:

I am nominating Cynthia Adame-Luna for the Kids of Character Award in the category of Caring. From the first day of the school year, Cynthia lights up our classroom with her positive energy. She is frequently looking for ways to help others and takes it upon herself to jump in when she sees her peers struggling with something. In group work, she is a leader and helps make others feel comfortable to share their ideas. In addition to helping out in our classroom, Cynthia is a peer tutor for the band, and she enjoys helping others learn something new. I was especially impressed when a new student joined our classroom, and she took it upon herself to make sure they knew where to go and how things work at our school. We are incredibly lucky to have a student like her at Goshen as a role model for her peers..

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Logan Hatherley

School: Grace Christian, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Brooke Bailey

Statement:

Logan has been super helpful in our class. I can always trust him to do the right thing. Not only does he let me know when someone is not doing the right thing (even if it is his closest friend), he also speaks up and lets them know that it is not the right thing for them to be doing. He will take full responsibility for anything he has done. He is so involved with all students at any grade level and lets anyone be his friend. He is an overall great student.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Gabrielle Contreras

School: Green Acres Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Jacky Gonzalez Lopez

Statement:

Gabrielle helps pick up trash and cleans up after others who don't pick up their trash. She always makes sure everyone around her is always listening and following the rules when the teacher is talking. Gabrielle always cares about others and is always a nice person.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Moses Prieto

School: Highland Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Amanda Bennett

Statement:

Moses Prieto demonstrates Trustworthiness each and every day at school. He follows the rules and is honest, even when no one is watching. If he is unsure about doing something, he makes sure he asks before he does it. He is a loyal friend to others and stands by his words. I can trust that Moses will take care of items that are given to him, and I can rely on him to always tell the truth.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Blanca Carranza

School: Houston Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Mabel Gong

Statement:

Blanca is a student who is visually impaired. Blanca is impressive in her learning capabilities. She is at the top of the class when it comes to our assessments and performance. She has always brought a happy, joyful aura into the classroom. Her laugh is infectious. She has excellent name recall of friends by the sound of their voices. She is always happy to meet new friends.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Korra Patino

School: Hurley Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Sarah Van Dermeyden

Statement:

Korra always meets expectations 100% of the time. When students enter the art classroom, they often need reminders about behavior. Never Korra. She is always looking at the teacher, modeling behavior, and being an amazing student. She is polite, honest, and respects the teacher. She makes sure her friends don't leave belongings behind in the classroom, and she is always the last student out of the room because she is making one more sweep of the room to make sure it is as clean and put together as it was when she walked into the room. She does all this without being asked.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Socimo Esquibel

School: La Sierra Military Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Alfredo Saenz

Statement:

Cadet Esquivel has been at LSMA since the seventh grade and is on track to graduate this year. It is rare for a student to attend grades 7-12 at LSMA, but what is most impressive is the way he has and continues to do it. If I could nominate him for all the pillars I would, but the pillar of Responsibility is what best describes what Cadet Esquivel is all about. He is a cadet leader in and out of the classroom, is involved in our soccer, volleyball, and cross-country teams, and is an active member of USO. I have had the pleasure of having him in my Culinary and Music classes and he always has a great attitude for learning and treats everyone with respect, including myself and his other teachers. He is often tasked with taking new cadets and giving them the tour of campus, showing them to their classes, and making sure they get their uniform squared away. He was chosen for this task because he is a responsible person and is always doing what he is supposed to be doing. I am happy and proud to acknowledge Socimo Esquibel for the Pillar of Responsibility.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Addison Cooper

School: Linwood Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Lori Irvine

Statement:

Addison sets the standard for excellence in our classroom! Because of her careful attention to detail and her ability to analyze complex information, she scores exceptionally high on everything we do in class. It's easy to forget that she's only in sixth grade. One reason Addison does so well is because she is always listening and always eager to learn. It doesn't matter if I'm talking with her or to another student. If she hears something that she doesn't know or is curious about, she looks at me and soaks up every word I say. This intense curiosity and desire to learn new things is why she knows so much! It also doesn't matter if it's Monday morning or Friday afternoon at 2:30pm Addison gives 100% of herself to everything we're doing. She is a true scholar because she chooses to learn rather than having me force her to learn. Addison goes the extra mile, no matter if it's a chapter test or a homework assignment. She cares about both equally. She fills up every line with her written response. She meticulously shows her work on every math problem, even though I'm sure she could do so much of it in her head. She follows the steps and shows her work because that's who she is. I love watching her unpack complex math problems because she is so tenacious as she reads and rereads the problem and then analyzes what is happening.

Addison is my Teacher's Assistant in my classroom economy. Rather than go for a job where she would earn a lot of money, she went for a job where she would help me and her fellow students. Whenever I need to remember something, I ask Addison to remind me, and she always does.

She is my right hand. If a student is absent, she collects all the papers they miss and helps them to understand what they've missed. This is such a huge help because it frees me up to keep teaching or working with other students rather than being relegated to collecting papers and explaining assignments.

Besides being responsible for her learning, Addison always does the right thing, no matter where she is or where I am. If I ask her to do something, she always does it. She is truly an amazing young lady!

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Robert Garcia

School: Manuel F. Hernandez Elementary, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Ken Sawatsky

Statement:

Robert Garcia, who goes by Austin, shows responsibility every day. He takes care of his school supplies, such as his computer and library books. He works his hardest by reading at home, passing quizzes on the books he reads, paying attention in class, volunteering to answer questions in class, and working respectfully with his classmates. I can always count on Austin to do the right things, whether an adult is or is not watching him. I am proud to have such a responsible young man in my class like Austin.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Martha Rios Cervantes

School: Mineral King Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Nieves Suarez

Statement:

Martha has shown herself to be caring not only to her peers but also with anyone to whom she speaks. She has shown all the characteristics of the six pillars of character. The pillar that she most represents is caring. She is always willing to help others when they need it. Martha only speaks Spanish so, there is a language barrier. She doesn't let that slow her down, she still tries her best to communicate with her classmates. Martha is learning English to be able to communicate with her friends. She is so caring and respectful to everyone.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Marea Vidak

School: Mt. Whitney High School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Gene Mendes

Statement:

Marea is a member of the Sportsmanship Action Team Youth Council (SAT). The SAT is an extension of the Pursuing Victory with Honor program. We currently have twenty-one student-athletes representing high school athletes from across our county. I would like to nominate Marea for the Pillar of Trustworthiness. She is a remarkable young lady who helps to plan various youth driven conferences and she volunteers at many events our office produces. Ms. Vidak is not only an above average student, but a student- athlete, deeply involved in her school and has volunteered to help at the Special Olympics and many other community service projects and events. Most recently, she was an important member who, along with the SAT group, planned the Annual Huddle Youth Conference for high school athletes. She is a great young lady we could trust to facilitate and plan and partner to create the topics of the conference, do the research, and create the information that was delivered in her workshops. She, along with the other members had many planning meetings that would take place over the summer, after they spent the day at school, after practice and sometimes after high school games to prepare and plan for the conference. Marea and these student-athletes are part of the SAT by choice and are outstanding role models and leaders in their communities.

Being a member of this group there is no grade given, and they do not get paid. She has the drive and desire to help and serve.

I am honored and proud to work with Marea and this entire group of individuals who WANT to make a difference. In my opinion Marea exemplifies what the Pillar of Trustworthiness represents.

**Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2023
Newspaper Student Representatives**



Student Name: Aubrey Fajardo

School: Oak Grove Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Rachael Ray

Statement:

Aubrey shows fairness in how she considers problems and weighs approaches to solve them. She is a careful listener who will pay attention to everyone's contribution before helping the team come to an agreement. I appreciate Aubrey's fairness, and I learn from her actions daily.

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Student Name: Amiah Esparza

School: Pinkham Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominators: Ray Cartagena and Marleen Martinez

Statement:

Amiah Esparza represents "Be The Change"; she excels when it comes to being responsible. She has an organized binder with tabs and a pouch full of supplies she keeps in order. She writes her assignments on her agenda and checks it throughout the day. She then ends the day by checking off what she has finished, and circling what needs to get done for homework. This has helped her turn every assignment in on time.

Further, she is always at school, and she is never tardy. During her work day, she takes notes and goes over them with the AVID Focused Notes steps. These skills she is learning are helping Amiah excel in academics. She is a wonderful citizen who is helpful to her peers and looked up to by them. She is responsible for everything she does and truly values her education. Amiah is the student every teacher desires to have in their class.

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Student Name: Jasmine Gomez

School: Redwood High School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Travis Roebuck

Statement:

During the first six weeks of this school year, I have had the pleasure of getting to know one of our new 9th grade Rangers, Jasmine Gomez. Jasmine is a responsible leader who has gained respect from her peers in both subjects I teach. Jasmine excels in Physical Education and Health class. Jasmine is the first one to motivate her classmates through hard work, and positive comments. Her integrity is consistent throughout each day, and she excels through her performance in Physical Education. She is currently a 4.0 honor roll student, whose success in the classroom is reflected by her accomplishments in her extracurricular activities. As a freshman, Jasmine was selected to the Redwood Dance Force Team. This elite level of dance and competition demonstrates the extreme talent and commitment which Jasmine possesses. In my Health class, Jasmine has taken on a mentorship role, assisting students who are struggling with our curriculum. Her leadership and integrity are why she is highly respected by her classmates and teachers. She is an inspiration to her peers. Thank you for considering Jasmine for the CHARACTER COUNTS! award.

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Student Name: Varna Mothe

School: Riverway Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Christopher Kusserow

Statement:

Varna is a model example of what responsibility looks like. Varna is always on task and is consistently challenging herself to be the best she can possibly be. When the bell rings, she is usually the first student opening her Chromebook to log-in and start her assignments. She has never needed to be redirected and always strives for excellence on a daily basis. She consistently engages effectively with all her peers and encourages others to be the very best they can be. She is a true leader and can always be relied on to make great, kind choices. Her kindness goes a long way, and she is always striving to make this world a better place.

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Student Name: Michael Brassfield

School: Royal Oaks Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Rochelle Ford

Statement:

Michael is a model student who continues to show others how to complete assignments, staying on task, and having great class participation.

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Student Name: Izabella Coronado

School: Shannon Ranch Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Taylor Hendershot

Statement:

In the time that I have been able to teach Izabella Coronado, I have seen a student that I know will go on to do great things, not only because she is motivated and works hard, which are some great qualities that she possesses, but because she has a kind heart that she uses daily to serve and support her classmates and her teachers. The work she produces goes above and beyond what is asked of her. I believe that Izabella exemplifies what any teacher would look for in a student. When initially getting to teach Izabella, I noticed that she was quite shy, keeping to herself. This wasn't a negative quality, this was just the way Izabella was. After getting to talk with her throughout our years of learning together or from spending some extra time chatting after school, I realized that this student was one of the kindest and most joyful people I have ever met. She has had a tremendous impact on our classroom. She is consistently viewed as one of the top leaders in my class by her peers, who go to her and ask for guidance because they know when she speaks, they will learn if only they listen. She adds to the conversation and facilitates discussion as she continues to support everyone in their learning not because she has to, but because she wants to make this classroom a better place for learning; she makes my classroom a place for others to grow into the best versions of themselves. She challenges me to be the best teacher that I can possibly be with her questions, with her work, with her thoughts, her ideas, and with any student. In my opinion, there is no greater gift. This once shy girl has been transformed into someone who I am honored to say "She is my student. And I am truly blessed because I get the opportunity to teach her every day." She is sometimes the only bit of sunshine in my classroom and students like her are the reason that I got into the teaching profession. She is destined for greatness in all that she does and whatever the future holds for her. Izabella Coronado, I can guarantee that this world will become a better place because of her influence in it.

**Tulare County Office of Education
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Student Name: Andrew Alameda

School: Stone Corral School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Susana Haro

Statement:

Once a month students at Stone Corral receive a CHARACTER COUNTS! presentation that students attend. Andrew Alameda is always attentive to the lesson and participates in a respectful manner. He raises his hands quietly, listens to what his peers say, shares comments and uses good manners. Not only have I witnessed this in the classroom, but his behavior follows him outside in the playground. I have witnessed Andrew do nice acts of kindness to his peers and younger siblings. He is a great student who treats others the way he likes to be treated, he exemplifies being a kid of character while continuously learning and building his character.

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Student Name: Daniella Cardenas

School: Sycamore Valley Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Andrew Alcantar

Statement:

I am writing to nominate Daniela Cardenas in recognition of her outstanding display of responsibility. Daniela has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to her responsibilities, making her a prime candidate for this award. Her actions and behaviors align perfectly with the expectations of responsibility. Here are some of the compelling reasons why Daniela deserves this recognition:

- Daniela consistently meets her commitments and obligations. Whether it's completing assignments, assisting her peers, or participating in extracurricular activities offered here at Sycamore Valley Academy, she can always be counted on to follow through with dedication and diligence.
- Daniela takes ownership of her actions and decisions. She readily acknowledges her mistakes and seeks to rectify them, showing a high level of accountability for her responsibilities.
- Daniela goes above and beyond in her commitment to the community of learning in our classroom. She actively engages and volunteers, demonstrating a profound sense of responsibility towards making a positive impact on her peers' lives.
- Daniela's dedication to her studies is commendable. She consistently maintains high academic standards, reflecting her sense of responsibility and ownership towards her education.
- Daniela adeptly manages her time and priorities, ensuring that she fulfills her obligations while also actively participating in extracurricular activities, showcasing her excellent organizational skills.

With these reasons in mind, I wholeheartedly recommend Daniela Cardenas for the pillar of responsibility as a deserving recipient. Her dedication, integrity, and sense of responsibility are truly exceptional and make her a standout candidate.

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Student Name: Aesha Elashwamy

School: University Preparatory High School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Jennifer Becerra

Statement:

Aesha spent part of her summer preparing to welcome new students on campus. Then during our new student orientation Aesha was able to see that one of the students in her group was unable to keep up with the group during the campus tour and wanted to ensure that the student didn't feel left out and was included in the day's activities. Instead of continuing with the group and leaving the student behind, she and her partner decided to have her remain behind and get to know the student as her partner continued with the tour with the other students. Aesha showed great maturity as she showed empathy for the students in her group and cared for all of them, especially the student that was unable to remain and keep up with the whole group. Rather than leave the student behind she remained with the student and spent time getting to know her, connecting with them and letting them know that our school was a place of caring individuals that were interested in making sure everyone was cared for and that everyone's individual needs were met. Aesha was so concerned that even following our orientation day she asked that I follow up with the student to ensure that they had a great experience at orientation and felt included. She demonstrated great care and empathy for her fellow students.

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Student Name: Lilliana Castro

School: Valley Life Charter School, Visalia

Pillars: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Brandi Travis

Statement:

Lilliana always sets a great example for others on being a trustworthy individual. She follows through with her promises, and her friends can rely on her to be a good friend in good times and bad. They know that she won't talk behind their back, and they can count on her to never let them down. Lilly will do what is right, even when it might not be the option that benefits her the most; she has integrity and strong convictions. Lilly has helped others when there are disagreements or issues because she can be fair, objective, and is a big believer in finding win-win solutions. It is challenging to choose just one pillar for Lilliana since she is such a well-rounded good person.

She is respectful to not only adults, but also her peers. She has got to be one of the most responsible students I have ever had the pleasure of teaching; she is an exemplary student and still excels at multiple extracurricular activities while keeping her grades high. She is fair to everyone, and her strong moral compass helps her to follow the rules and make sure things are done properly to benefit everyone. On top of all of these great qualities, she does it all with so much kindness to others. She will go out of her way to help struggling students, teachers who need an extra hand, and just about anyone else who has a need. I chose trustworthiness to focus on for Lilliana because I know that I can absolutely trust her one hundred percent and she could be chosen for any one of the pillars and be a perfect fit.

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Student Name: Hayden Johnson

School: Valley Oak Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Emily Carrillo

Statement:

Hayden is an exceptional student and an amazing person to have in class. Hayden is one of the most hardworking students I have met. He is involved in various activities in school from sports to AVID, while maintaining a high GPA in all of his classes. Hayden is a joy to have in class as he is always doing his best, asking questions, and participating in discussions during class. His classmates also love having him around because of how helpful he is. Hayden is always willing to give a helping hand to anyone who needs it, and I have witnessed multiple times where he helps his classmates when they do not understand something in class. Hayden is respectful and an overall joy to have in class. I look forward to the amazing individual he will become.

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Student Name: Aaliyah Cuellar

School: Veva Blunt Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Patricia Gutierrez

Statement:

Aaliyah is an extremely helpful and caring person in the classroom and is kind to her peers. She is a student who takes charge of her learning and is proactive. When she sees a need, she is the first who will respond to help. I am very Blessed to have Aaliyah in my classroom..

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Student Name: Faith Ramos

School: Virtual Learning Program, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Heather Mackey

Statement:

Faith has made some great strides in her academic growth. She's had challenges to overcome and yet still worked hard to remain focused. She has been coached by her grandmother to persevere, looking to always find a way to improve and put in the work necessary to be the change that will one day pay off for her in very big ways. It's not easy when you view yourself in a "stuck" state or always striving and yet still struggling. Faith shared with me that she has felt behind for years and that she couldn't do it and would never see herself "improved." I am honored to have had the opportunity to get to know her as my student since her seventh-grade year in the Virtual Learning Program in V.U.S.D. and to be even luckier to have her again this year as an eighth grader. She has shown me through her actions and dedication to her learning in after school meetings, emails for clarification, questions asked in chat on Zoom or even in her assignments (submissions and resubmissions in Schoology) that she is beyond responsible. She is a role model! Faith is a role model to not just me, but to her sister, her peers and others of just what dedication to always doing what you are supposed to do, even when it gets hard, is supposed to be! I can't wait to see not just what the world has to offer her, but what she has to offer the world!

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Student Name: Carmen Ortiz

School: Visalia Technical Early College High School,
Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Travis Wyrick

Statement:

Carmen Ortiz is a senior at Visalia Technical Early College. She currently serves as the FFA Chapter Vice President and was previously elected as the Chapter Treasure last year. She is outgoing, involved and cares for others. Carmen has been determined to see success with the chapter's community service activities including the "Trick or Treat" for pets drive, where students distribute fliers and collect supplies from the community that are donated to the local pet shelter. Carmen has been instrumental in making sure VTEC leadership is connected with all chapters in the community, county and state of California by being a consistent source of positivity and inclusion. Lastly, Carmen works with horses, training them and well as training others, ensuring that people in the community have a positive experience and the animals are well cared for.

Charles Handy said, "Citizenship is the chance to make a difference to the place where you belong." Carmen Ortiz has made a difference at VTEC, she continues to make a difference in the community and cares deeply for others that wish to do the same.

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Student Name: Kaylee Myers

School: Washington Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Aaliyah Marin

Statement:

Kaylee Myers is an outstanding student and advocate on campus. She actively participates on campus through clubs and activities. She is involved in art club, movie club, spelling bee, dance, and is also an active member of our Student Leadership team. She is constantly advocating for her fellow students and is full of ideas on how to make our campus great. When participating in clubs, she effortlessly contributes new activities and ways to make others on campus feel included. Kaylee has leadership and teamwork qualities that make her a vital part of our campus and campus life.

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Student Name: Allyanna Guevara

School: Willow Glen Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Andre Navarrette II

Statement:

Alyanna has been an excellent example of Responsibility, whether she is engaging in her academic journey through note taking, participating and volunteering information in class discussions, helping her peers by communicating effectively, peer coaching, volunteering to assist as a coach's assistant for sports, or running for the office of secretary in our school's leadership team. Allyanna shows responsibility in many ways and takes pride in being active and responsible. Alyanna always makes sure she is ready for whatever the day brings by making sure she has, and uses, her resources in class to do what she can to learn and assist others. Alyanna asks questions specific to the day's learning goals. Alyanna has also decided to run for leadership secretary which shows her willingness to be a responsible school leader. Alyanna is a phenomenal student who takes responsibility for herself and always pursues success.

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Student Name: David Magallan Velazquez

School: Castle Rock Elementary School, Woodlake

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Brenda Garver

Statement:

David has done his best from day one in the fourth grade. He knew it was his responsibility to improve. He paid attention during class time, always did his homework and even did extra reading with his mother nightly. He made sure he had a new book each time he finished one book. On the smarter balanced test, he improved from a two to a four in ELA and from a three to a four in Math. He is a role model for his fellow classmates.

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Student Name: Cienna Diaz

School: Francis J. White Learning Center, Woodlake

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Daniel Salazar

Statement:

I nominate Cienna Diaz for the Pillar of Responsibility. Cienna is a successful student not only on an academic level, but a character level as well. During the 2022-2023 school year, Cienna exemplified responsibility. She is always prepared for school. Not only is she eager to learn, but she is determined to get all of her school tasks done correctly and on time. She is very organized and thoughtful in her approach to school. Her desk is always neat, her homework is consistently completed. She completes each of the class jobs she had, and follows all the rules regardless if anyone was watching. I could always count on Cienna to do what she was supposed to do!

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Student Name: Alyssa Coelho

School: Woodlake High School, Woodlake

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator: Gene Mendes

Statement:

Alyssa is a member of the Sportsmanship Action Team Youth Council (SAT). The SAT is an extension of the Pursuing Victory with Honor program. We currently have twenty-one student-athletes representing high school athletes from across our county. I would like to nominate Alyssa for the Pillar of Trustworthiness. She is a remarkable young lady who helps to plan various youth driven conferences and she volunteers at many events our office produces. Ms Coelho is not only an above average student, but a student- athlete, deeply involved in her school and has volunteered to help at the Special Olympics and many other community service projects and events. Most recently, she was an important member who, along with the SAT group, planned the Annual Huddle Youth Conference for high school athletes. She is a great young lady we could trust to facilitate and plan and partner to create the topics of the conference, do the research, and create the information that was delivered in her workshops. Along with the other members she had many planning meetings that would take place over the summer. After they spent the day at school, after practice and sometimes after high school games, they would prepare and plan for the conference. Alyssa and these student-athletes are part of the SAT by choice and are trustworthy role models and leaders in their communities.

Being a member of this group there is no grade given, and they do not get paid. She has the drive and desire to help and serve. I am honored and proud to work with Alyssa and this entire group of individuals who WANT to make a difference. In my opinion Alyssa exemplifies what the Pillar of Trustworthiness represents.

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Student Name: Alejandra Aguilar

School: Woodlake Valley Middle School, Woodlake

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Joseph Beltran

Statement:

Alejandra is one of the most caring students at WVMS! She treats everyone with respect. During the first week of school, several students would come up to ask me where their next class was located. Any time Alejandra was in earshot, she would greet the students, exchange names, and walk them to class. I've seen Alejandra buy water bottles for students on hot days. I've seen Alejandra welcome new students to our school. Alejandra is a WEBB leader at WVMS, her positive attitude is consistent, and she is an excellent role model.

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Student Name: Humza Saleh

School: AcCel Yettem Learning Center, Yettem

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Erin Elliott

Statement:

Humza has grown so much over the past year. He has improved in all areas, however, the pillar that jumps out the most is caring. Humza cares about those around him, including his peers and teachers. He is always the first one to share and gets joy from watching others be happy. He is a delight to have in class.