

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2024
Newspaper Student Representatives



Student Name: Jenasys Mendoza

School: Annie R. Mitchell Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Megan Madsen

Statement:

Jenasys is always showing respect on school campus in and out of the classroom. She shows respect when working with peers by listening to what they have to say including making eye contact to show her peers that she cares about their ideas and opinions. Jenasys shows respect by helping others when needed. She also shows respect towards others by having empathy for them and supporting them in ways they need. Jenasys does not exclude others and willingly works with all classmates. Jenasys is a SOARing example of what it means to be a Golden Eagle!

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Student Name: Alice Holeman

School: Blue Oak Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jessica Juarez

Statement:

Alice consistently shows responsibility in the classroom by diligently completing her assignments on time and to the best of her ability. She takes ownership of her learning by asking questions when she doesn't understand something and seeking additional resources to improve her understanding. Alice is prepared for class, bringing the necessary materials and staying organized. She also takes initiative in group projects, ensuring tasks are completed efficiently and fairly. Additionally, Alice frequently volunteers to answer questions in class, showing her active engagement and willingness to contribute. Even when faced with challenging questions, she approaches them positively, demonstrating a Growth Mindset. When given classroom duties, Alice fulfills them with care and reliability, showing her commitment to doing what she is supposed to do. Her responsible behavior and dedication to self-improvement set a positive example for her peers, making her deserving of recognition.

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Student Name: Austin Howard

School: Conyer Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Lyndsay Gentert

Statement:

Austin comes to school every day ready to learn with an eager attitude. Austin does not let hard things get in his way. He approaches every assignment with grit and determination. Austin makes friends easily, is a role model to his peers, and is an absolute joy to have in class. Austin is the first to offer a helping hand to a student in class, invite a friend to play, or help welcome a new student. Austin is generous and kind in all aspects of his day and always does the right thing.

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Student Name: Bree Jones

School: Cottonwood Creek Elementary School,
Visalia

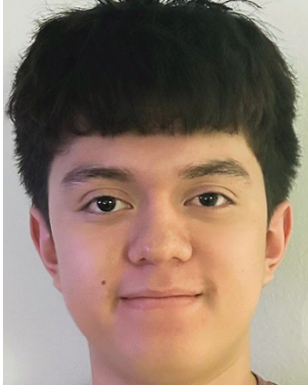
Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Luis Balderas

Statement:

This student exemplifies all areas of character. If there is one area that must be selected it would have to be caring. Bree is one of the brightest, most caring individuals that I have had the honor of teaching in my career. Bree is caring in all areas of this Character Counts. She cares about telling the truth. She cares about being respectful to adults and peers. She also cares about her responsibilities as well as being fair to others. Caring comes automatic to Bree Jones, and it is in her nature. Lastly, she cares about being a good citizen. She has always cared about doing the right thing, helping other students and people when in need, and caring about her actions.

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Student Name: Jeremiah Gonzales

School: Crescent Valley Public Charter School II,
Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Danielle Griffiths

Statement:

Jeremiah Gonzales is an amazing young man and student who exemplifies the pillar of RESPECT every single day! Jeremiah shows up for his appointments, completes his work on time (and sometimes early!) and is respectful and kind. He has a goal of joining law enforcement as an adult, which I have no doubt he will accomplish! I wish I had more students like Jeremiah!

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Student Name: Jasmine Contreras

School: Crestwood Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Kasey Nip

Statement:

Jasmine has been an extraordinary student and quickly learns the class routine. Once familiar with the expectation, she is not only doing it but helping others to follow the instructions. She does so by doing tasks alongside others, holding their hands to guide them, and even motivating her classmates by reminding them of what they should be doing. She is a pleasure to have in class.

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Student Name: Mia Alvarez

School: Crowley Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Hortencia Martinez

Statement:

Mia is a great class participant. She follows directions and completes her learning tasks. She is always eager to learn and help a classmate when needed. Thank you, Mia, for being responsible in all that you do.

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Student Name: Lincoln McFarlane

School: Denton Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Mrs. Ernst

Statement:

Lincoln is an extremely responsible Kindergarten student. He is always prepared, organized and ready to learn. He cares about the content he is learning and wants to glean deep knowledge in all academic areas. If we are writing, he wants to properly use new digraphs, spell his sight words correctly, and make sure he covers all three parts of a narrative. He takes his time to ensure his illustrations reflect and depict his story with detail! He always thinks outside of the box, and he is never afraid to try something new! He takes ownership of his learning and has all the qualities of a responsible leader! Lincoln McFarlane sets the bar high! Keep up the fantastic work Lincoln! Mrs. Ernst is proud of you!

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Student Name: Grady Williams

School: Divisadero Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Gabriela Ceballos

Statement:

Our student, Grady Williams, has been a truly exceptional addition to our campus. He has only been at our school since the start of this academic year and has already made his mark. He's leading the way with the start of our Bible Club by helping other students not typically involved in school activities. In addition to his efforts in clubs, he's an amazing student and civic leader. He attempts to learn all student and staff names and tries to include those who are often off to themselves or excluded from the crowds. There is no doubt in my mind that this student will have a successful life. I am extremely happy to see the ray of sunshine he has been to the campus and being caring and kind to all those he encounters.

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Student Name: Kaylee Rivera

School: El Diamante High School Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Jessica Cervantes

Statement:

I am nominating Kaylee for responsibility because she is always doing what she is supposed to be doing. In the classroom, on the court and in the community, Kaylee is very responsible. Kaylee always is on time and holds her peers and teammates to the same standard. Kaylee puts her academics before any extracurricular curricular activities but can manage all that she does because she is responsible. If she is going to be gone, she lets her teachers and coaches know well in advance and gets her assignments to make sure to stay on top of things and not fall behind. She is a responsible leader and sets great examples of how to do the right thing.

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Student Name: Axel Romero

School: Four Creeks Elementary School Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Maribel Garcia Guzman

Statement:

Axel is a student who embodies the values of respect and good citizenship every day. He consistently shows kindness to his classmates, listens attentively to his teachers, and treats everyone fairly. Whether he's helping a friend understand a lesson or including others in group activities, Axel always makes sure that no one is left out. Axel listens carefully when others are speaking, and he values the opinions and feelings of everyone around him. He never hesitates to lend a hand to a classmate in need, whether it's helping with a difficult assignment or offering a kind word of encouragement. He is polite, uses respectful language, and follows school rules diligently. Axel also demonstrates responsibility by completing his tasks on time and handling classroom materials. His positive attitude, helpful nature, and respect for others make him a role model for his peers. Axel truly deserves to be recognized for being a kindhearted and thoughtful student who makes the classroom a better place for everyone.

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Student Name: Roberto Cano Lucio

School: Global Learning Charter School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Lydia Hogue

Statement:

I nominate Roberto for the Kids of Character Award because he illustrates the characteristics of a fair and caring person. Roberto is a great student who works well with others. During group activities, Roberto encourages all members to participate and do their part in making sure their table group is successful in completing their learning tasks. Roberto is also a great teammate in sports like soccer. Roberto shows great sportsmanship by keeping a positive attitude, following the rules, and respecting members of his team

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Student Name: Astryd Oropeza

School: Golden Oak Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Stephanie Hunt

Statement:

Astryd is a wonderful student who shows fairness in all she does. Throughout the week, students can earn tickets by being at school and having good behavior. Then on Fridays, we do a raffle with five winners. One Friday, I had five new and different activity books for October, as prizes. Astryd's name was chosen, and she picked her favorite book. Then another student won. The last name drawn was Astryd's again! I asked her if she'd like the last book, and she declined saying she would let someone else have the chance to win it!

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Student Name: Jorge Ochoa

School: Golden West High School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Richard Bodily

Statement:

Jorge is an exceptional student when it comes to showing others they matter; he is always ready to be of help. Jorge is quick to greet his peers when they arrive at school with a warm hello and a kind smile. With staff, he asks if they need help with anything, and offers to help carry and put away supplies. When he sees one of his fellow students having a rough time, he will try to comfort them and help them calm down, offering them a friendly hello or patting them on the shoulder saying, "Good job." Jorge is very sociable among regular students and enjoys walking with them saying, "Hi, how are you," greeting them with a polite handshake or fist bump. Jorge is a person who genuinely cares about his peers and leads by example under the Pillar of Caring.

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Student Name: Neil See

School: Goshen Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Sarah Van Dermeyden

Statement:

Neil is a wonderful student in class. He understands that we are all in this together. He will often ask students if they need help cleaning or putting their things away. He models classroom behavior, takes care of his belongings and is always helping make our campus a beautiful place. It is not often that students will voluntarily pick up a piece of trash, but Neil shows care for the campus by picking up after himself and others. He contributes to our community by sharing his thinking, by showing excellent behavior, and by being a leader in his actions and deeds. One specific instance comes to mind. Our class was cutting out lamination. He asked if he could clean the classroom and make sure that all the pieces were up off the floor. He also collected all the scissors and put them away without being asked. Unlike the rest of the students, he did so just because he wanted to do a good job. He wasn't asking for reward tickets or points or awards; just a job well done.

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Student Name: Davis Welch

School: Grace Christian School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Brooke Bailey

Statement:

Davis Welch is such an amazing student, and I can always count on him to be kind and always helping others. We are so blessed to have a great, caring, and respectful student like Davis. He always makes everyone feel included and that is his greatest treasure, the way he is with others.

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Student Name: Lucero Rueda Garcia

School: Highland Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Amanda Bennett

Statement:

Lucero demonstrates responsibility every day at school. She is dependable and is always doing what she is supposed to be doing. She takes her class job, as paper leader, very seriously and is always on top of it. Lucero has developed good habits as a 3rd grade student and makes sure to turn in all her classwork and homework. I am proud of her for demonstrating responsibility this year!

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Student Name: Daniela Hernandez Barvosa

School: Houston Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Henryallen Ralston

Statement:

Daniela is the most caring student I have ever had. Having previously taught her in First Grade, she is now in the Fourth Grade and still just as caring as ever. Daniela cares about her learning, which you can tell by how hard she works to maintain good grades. She cares for her peers by helping whenever she is given the chance to. She checks on students to see if they get hurt. She is someone who asks, "How was your day?" And genuinely cares if you've had a good day or not. She is also a very giving student and likes to give her friends and even teachers a gift just to brighten up their day.

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Student Name: Avery Avinelis

School: Hurley Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Natalie Hodgin

Statement:

Avery is an amazing role model and a bright light in our classroom. He could truly be nominated for any of the pillars, but responsibility is one that comes to mind first. He comes to school with a positive attitude and a fun mindset! He is eager to learn and is always doing his job! Not only does he complete all assignments on time, but he does so while also being an encouraging and helpful teammate! He even makes sure to reach out for missing work himself when he is absent! He is one of the first to raise his hand to share answers. He is a responsible role model in and out of the classroom, almost always the first one to be standing in line. I know he is setting a great example to the younger students on our campus.

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Student Name: Jocelyn Moreno

School: La Joya Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Julie Cates

Statement:

Jocelyn Moreno is now in Middle School. She came back to visit me seeking advice and encouragement regarding her Honors English class. This demonstrates great responsibility to self and to family and her teacher. Jocelyn was seeking advice from a teacher in her comfort zone so that she could move herself out of her comfort zone. I know adults who do not take these mature steps. I am impressed with Jocelyn's sense of responsibility.

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Student Name: Emira David

School: La Sierra Junior Military Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Gabrel Castro

Statement:

I am excited to nominate Emira David for the Kids of Character Award in the pillar of Caring. Throughout her time at La Sierra, Emira has consistently demonstrated kindness, generosity, and a willingness to help others, making her a standout member of our school community. As an eighth grader and a first-year student at La Sierra, Emira quickly made her mark, not only by maintaining an impressive 4.0 GPA but also through her active involvement in Color Guard. Her commitment to her academics reflects her serious approach to learning and her desire to excel, but it is her caring nature that truly sets her apart. Emira is deeply involved in her church, where she assists with functions and fundraising efforts. Her contributions to these activities demonstrate her dedication to serving her community and making a positive impact on those around her. Emira's organizational skills shine not only in her personal life but also in her school environment. She is known for her initiative in helping to keep the classroom organized, often staying after class to tidy up desks and ensure everything is in order. This thoughtful action supports her teachers and fosters a conducive learning environment for her classmates. Her positive attitude and friendly demeanor make her approachable, and she easily connects with her peers.

Additionally, Emira's love for drawing and music reflects her creative spirit, which she shares with others. Whether she's expressing herself artistically or simply enjoying a good song, her joy is contagious. She also maintains an active lifestyle, enjoying exercise, volleyball, and caring for her pets, including her two cats, Greyson and Muffin, and her hedgehog, Amy Rose. This balance of interests shows her ability to lead a well-rounded life while remaining committed to her responsibilities. Emira's aspirations to move into a leadership position at the school showcase her ambition and desire to contribute meaningfully to the school. This goal, coupled with her strong work ethic, reflects her caring nature and her wish to support others.

In summary, Emira David exemplifies the pillar of Caring through her kindness, helpfulness, and generosity. Her commitment to her family, community, and classmates, along with her positive attitude and responsible nature, make her an exceptional candidate for the Kids of Character Award. I wholeheartedly support her nomination and believe she is truly deserving of this recognition.

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Student Name: Junettzy Esquivel Bernal

School: La Sierra Military Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Gabrel Castro

Statement:

I am honored to nominate Junettzy for the Kids of Character Award for the pillar of Citizenship. Throughout her time at La Sierra, she has consistently demonstrated her commitment to her family, community, and school, embodying the spirit of citizenship in meaningful ways. As a dedicated member of the volleyball team and the school's Leo's club, Junettzy actively engages in community service initiatives, contributing her time and energy to make a positive impact. Her recent promotion to 'Cadet' and current role as a Platoon Sergeant for Charlie 1st Platoon further showcases her leadership abilities and willingness to take on responsibilities. In her position as an S1 Assistant, she oversees students aiming to rank up, exemplifying her supportive nature and dedication to helping others succeed. This level of maturity and selflessness is remarkable for a ninth grader and speaks volumes about her character.

Her journey at La Sierra has been transformative. Her commitment to academic excellence is evident, as she takes her studies seriously, aspiring to enter a nursing career fueled by her passion for helping others. Junettzy's leadership qualities extend beyond her academic and extracurricular pursuits. She has a natural ability to make new students feel welcome, easing their nerves as they transition into a new environment. Her compassion and empathy shine through these interactions, showcasing her understanding of the importance of community and support.

In her leisure time, Junettzy finds balance by resting on weekends while still dedicating time to help around the house. Her plans to participate in basketball this school year further reflect her desire to stay active and engaged in school life. Additionally, her involvement in History Day last year demonstrates her commitment to learning and personal growth. Junettzy's frequent check-ins with faculty, including her warm greetings and thoughtful conversations, highlight her positive spirit and willingness to connect with others. Her growth in such a short time has been inspiring, and I feel proud to witness her journey.

In summary, Junettzy embodies the pillar of Citizenship through her unwavering support for her family, active involvement in her community, and her dedication to fostering a positive environment for her peers. She is a true leader, and her contributions make her deserving of the Kids of Character Award.

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Student Name: Dariel Medina-Gutierrez

School: Linwood Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Isabel Beltran

Statement:

Dariel has been an active member of our student leadership club “Eagle Academy” for the past three years! He has dedicated many volunteer hours at before and after school events promoting a positive school culture and supporting student engagement at Linwood Elementary! Some of his leadership activities include weekly school spirit rallies, assisting during award assemblies, and making morning announcements. He has used her confidence, creativity, and communication skills to promote school wide campaigns such as Unity Day, Red Ribbon and Kindness Week and other goodwill projects like our annual Holiday Food Drive and Miracle Mile of Quarters.

Thank you, Dariel! Your service, enthusiasm, and involvement have made a positive difference at our school daily!

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Student Name: Judah Serrato

School: Manuel F. Hernandez Elementary School,
Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Rocio Hernandez

Statement:

Judah is a very happy and energetic 2nd grade student with a heart of gold. I am thrilled to nominate Judah for the pillar of caring as his actions have demonstrated what it means to care for others. In our class, we have a student with some very special needs and Judah is always there ready to help his friend in any way possible. Judah's compassion and empathy toward his friend and other students in class truly stand out and are making a significant impact in our classroom.

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Student Name: Ariel Chavez

School: Mountain View Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Elizabeth Sanchez Sanchez

Statement:

Ariel exemplifies fairness in our first-grade classroom through her balanced and just approach to interactions with peers. She always ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity, whether during group activities or when sharing classroom resources. She is known for treating all classmates with equal respect and never showing favoritism. She takes care to include everyone and make fair decisions, helping to maintain a sense of equity and harmony in our classroom. Ariel's commitment to fairness is greatly appreciated and sets a positive example for everyone.

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Student Name: Dolores Carter

School: Mt. Whitney High School, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator: Victoria Johnson

Statement:

Dolores Carter exemplifies the pillar of fairness! Dolores plays by the rules and ensures that all her teammates follow the rules. She is an exceptional teammate that mentors all athletes and gives all players an opportunity to thrive! She has unanimously been voted by her team to be a captain this year. It is for her high standard of Fairness pillar that she displays both on and off the court! In addition, she takes her role seriously and makes sure that all her teammates are treated fairly and genuinely wants what is BEST for her team! Dolores also has taken our one freshman under her wings and builds her confidence daily! Mt Whitney volleyball program is BLESSED to have Dolores in our program. She doesn't limit her character to volleyball; you can see it on the basketball court, track, our campus and all that she is involved in!

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Student Name: Harlow Corona

School: Oak Grove Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Ashley Akers

Statement:

Harlow takes it upon herself to check in with her classmates and help anyone who needs it. For example, she will finish setting up her notes and then will help set up the notes for those who are absent. She will also go around the room and collect the trash to help keep our room clean. In addition, she will share her supplies if someone needs them. For instance, the other day I misplaced a marker, and she immediately handed me a spare marker. She is prepared and ready to lend help to anyone and everyone around.

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Student Name: Chelsea Iglesias

School: Pinkham Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Ray Cartagena

Statement:

Chelsea has a huge heart, and it shows daily. She always takes the time to make everyone around her feel comfortable and wanted. She seems to embrace the ones that others try to pick on. She's like a shield that keeps them safe. One example is our campus has a lot of SLC students who are not always accepted by others on campus. They love Chelsea, and Chelsea never turns them away when they call her over during break. She will put her time aside with her friends for them. I have also seen after school during HEART, that all the kids in all the grades just love her. From TK to 6th, they cannot resist saying hi, or hugging her. It's amazing how she does this daily and with such a constant happy spirit. In class, she never hesitates to help those who need help, and she always has a smile for everyone. I know she's human, but it's hard to imagine her in a bad mood.

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Student Name: Samantha Woods

School: Redwood High School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Keenan Naylor

Statement:

During Samantha's time at Redwood High School, she has proven that she is a true Ranger. Samantha is a caring and selfless student, who is always eager and ready to help others. She has helped fellow peers with emotional support, volunteered her time to be a tutor to peers that are struggling in the classroom, helped myself extensively in the classroom as a teacher aide, and provided support to our administration team by giving her time to help them out when the opportunity presents itself. No matter what the job, Samantha is always excited to help others. If she could join and help every club, sport, activity, etc. I know she would. She has a strong sense of responsibility which is reflected in her desire to offer her help/support to others. The staff and students on campus all know Samantha, as she is always going out of her way to share a smile, greeting, or high-five with everyone she knows.

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Student Name: Zander Ramirez

School: Ridgeview Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Statement:

Zander Ramirez shows all areas of citizenship. He is very trustworthy, caring, respectful, helpful and dedicated to his peers. He is very involved in school activities such as leadership, President for the musicals/play department and choir, and history club. He keeps promises in all that he says and does. He is very dedicated to helping others around him. He loves to help students if in need. You can always count on him to be the first to volunteer to help. He also is a 4.0 student on the principals list. We are so proud of him, all he accomplishes and loves to be involved in.

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Student Name: Princeton Butler

School: Riverway Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Cindy Guzman

Statement:

For his entire time at Riverway he has always demonstrated compassion and respect toward his peers, and toward any adult. He loves to hold doors for classes and adults, he loves to give compliments to encourage people whether he knows them personally or not. If he sees someone who needs help, he is always ready to offer a helping hand. He perfectly exemplifies what it means to be a Riverway Otter and to show CARE through his actions and words every day.

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Student Name: Scarlett Zavala

School: Royal Oaks Elementary School, Visalia

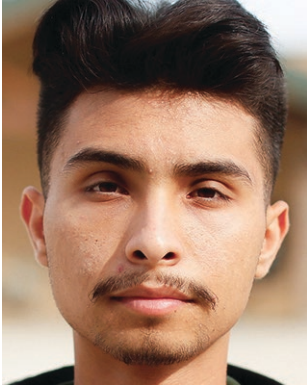
Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Tena Ficher

Statement:

Scarlett is so kind and nice to all her friends. She is especially helpful to another friend in our class that at times needs a little extra help. She will help her friend by opening her milk at breakfast, holding her hand to lead her to the carpet when it's carpet time and help her line up when recess is over. Scarlett has exhibited being a caring person and kind and generous to her friends.

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Student Name: Pablo Govea Calderon

School: Sequoia High School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Erica Gonzalez

Statement:

This nomination is being made for Pablo Govea Calderon. Pablo is a remarkable young man who has shown responsibility and commitment to his educational journey. As an English Language Learner, Pablo is faced with several obstacles. To be admired is Pablo's outlook on life and resiliency as he turns such obstacles into opportunities. Pablo is respectful and committed to his future. Pablo holds an overnight full-time job and manages to come to school each morning and has remarkable attendance. Pablo is thriving academically and aspires to attend trade school and become a mechanic. Pablo takes pride in his work and helping his family financially. In my short time of being Pablo's academic counselor, I have come to admire his work ethic, dedication, and discipline.

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Student Name: Brianna Evangelista

School: Shannon Ranch Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator: Brittany Gray

Statement:

Brianna Evangelista shows respect to herself and others. She is always deeply invested in the conversations she has with others. She makes eye contact and is actively always listening. She respectfully waits for her turn to speak. She does very well with disagreeing respectfully too. She takes care of others and speaks the truth while respecting others. She respects the environment around her. I am impressed by her every day.

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Student Name: Remi Rollema

School: St. Paul's School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator: Amy Sanchez

Statement:

Remi has been the best friend to new students coming into class. We have had 2 new students start in the past week. As soon as they walked in the door on her own, she wanted to make them feel welcome and included all day. She holds their hands and takes them to show the toys and tells them about the rules in the classroom and asks them to play with her and the others always. She has been so helpful and welcoming to make sure the new friends are feeling included and helping the fears of starting school get easier every day. It has been so great to see how her heart is growing and caring for others.

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Student Name: Callie Magbanua

School: Sycamore Valley Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Natalie Gonzalez

Statement:

Callie is a bright, caring and responsible student. She is always leading by example and treating everyone with respect. She is constantly striving to stay on task and finish her work. Apart from that she is always ready to help anyone without hesitation. Callie quite often represents all pillars of character counts and especially responsibility. This is my second year having Callie in my class and I could say without a doubt that she deserves this recognition.

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Student Name: Isaac Serrano-Medina

School: University Preparatory High School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Teresa Cortez

Statement:

Isaac Serrano-Medina is a spectacular student and is most deserving of this recognition. Isaac represents each pillar, but what stands out the most is his passion in sports and sharing his passion with others. His involvement in his community is noteworthy and eye-catching among his peers. Isaac started 10th grade at UPHS and since then has been a marvelous student.

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Student Name: Hailey Culver

School: Valley Life Charter School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Margie Florente

Statement:

I knew Hailey Culver before she became my third-grade student (this year) as a second-grade leader who was part of Valley Life's leadership team known as The Little Lighthouse Leaders. She participated by attending meetings and took part in leadership activities such as greeting our students as they entered the school gate on Friday mornings and during Fall Carnival. She took part in school's morning announcements and sometimes Friday announcements during Flag Salute Friday. She took part in doing her job seriously and always with a smile. This is how Hailey has shown RESPONSIBILITY with our leadership team. As a third-grade student, I noticed the first week of school how responsible Hailey is. She has completed her work in class, shows student leadership by being an example to her classmates in class and outside the classroom. She is a great example of a leader and showing responsibility. For these reasons, this is why I nominate Hailey Culver for the pillar of RESPONSIBILITY.

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Student Name: Moises Morales

School: Valley Oak Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Maria Botello

Statement:

I am nominating Moises Morales for the character trait of responsibility. I remember Moises coming to me in 5th grade and explaining that he was not strong in math. I told him that I would help him become better if he stayed focused, asked questions and studied hard. He promised he would. Boy, did he keep his promise! Moises took the challenge. He studied hard, asked questions, asked for help and never gave up! He became one of my strongest 5th grade students! I then got him in 6th grade, last year, he continued to work hard, and I saw tremendous growth in math. He then began to help other students who were struggling with math and became a coach in my classroom. Moises moved on to middle school this year but returned with his mom on Back to School Night to share something important. He shared that he had just moved from a regular math class to an honors math class! I was so excited and may have shed a tear or two of happiness. This goes to show that if you work hard, ask questions and take responsibility for your learning, you will excel. I am honored to nominate Moises for the character trait of responsibility.

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Student Name: Olivia Hunyady

School: Veva Blunt Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Maria Edholm

Statement:

Olivia is a student that deserves to be recognized for responsibility. She is always doing the right thing in class and at school. She is someone that can be counted on to do what needs to be done. She is always looking for ways to help the teacher and her classmates. She is the first one to volunteer to pass out papers or to read a passage aloud. She is a student that has a very positive outlook on everything. She comes to class ready to learn. She is prepared. She brings all the supplies she needs to succeed in school. In class, she follows directions the first time and helps others as well. She is focused and always on task. I can always count on her to do what is right. Olivia is a student that never gives up even when things are hard. In math, she always asks for help. She doesn't give up and is someone that will do everything she can to learn something until she succeeds. Olivia is an excellent role model in my class and in our school Veva Blunt.

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Student Name: Garrett Kiester

School: Visalia Technical Early College High School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Travis Wyrick

Statement:

Jack Welch said that “Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.” Garrett Kiester last year served as the VTEC FFA Chapter President and served as a Tulare/Kings FFA Sectional Officer. This year he serves as a Chapter Vice President and chooses to support younger members looking to grow their leadership skills. Garrett has been known to work with students at various high schools in and outside of Visalia supporting their efforts to grow better FFA Chapter Programs. On campus he chooses to look towards the freshman and sophomore members and build up their skills in public speaking and livestock production. Garrett takes the time to empower others and raise them up for their successes.

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Student Name: Braxden Senior

School: Washington Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator: Vanesa Ruiz Zamora

Statement:

Braxden exemplifies responsibility and academic excellence, consistently demonstrating a strong commitment to his studies and school community. His dedication is evident through his high grades, active participation in class discussions, and willingness to assist peers. Braxden approaches challenges with determination, inspiring others to strive for their best. This combination of academic achievement and personal integrity makes him a deserving candidate for this award.

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Student Name: Sophia Munoz

School: Willow Glen Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator: Andre Navarrette

Statement:

As a sixth-grade teacher I have met many students as they are preparing for their journey through 6th grade and into 7th grade. Some come to me with skills they just need to sharpen. Some come to me with a need for support both academically and behaviorally. It is rare that I get the opportunity to meet a student who already exemplifies so many strengths and qualities of compassion, respect, and caring to begin the year. This year I am lucky to have a student who has already demonstrated all Six Pillars of Character. Sophia Munoz joined my class this year and from day one has exemplified what it means to be a leader, how to collaborate with peers of all backgrounds and academic levels, and how she is looking to Rise to the Top as a Willow Glen Warrior. Sophia takes pride in her hard work and is self-motivated to be successful in all areas of her life. Whether she is acting as a math coach and helping classmates, engaging in thoughtful discussions with her peers, demonstrating and leading by example, or when she is being courteous, respectful, and generous with everyone. Sophia is always looking to do her best and be a positive and supportive friend. I'm looking forward to the leadership role I know Sophia will take on with an open mind and heart. It is with this in mind that I would like to nominate Sophia Munoz as a 2024 Kid of Character.