Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Uriel Sanchez

School: Allensworth School, Allensworth

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Juan Delgadillo

Statement:

Uriel consistently demonstrates exceptional caring by going above and beyond for those around him. Naturally thoughtful and kind, he takes the initiative to lend a helping hand without ever needing to be asked.

Whether a classmate is struggling with an assignment, navigating a difficult moment, or simply in need of encouragement, Uriel always takes the time to offer his support. His genuine concern for others helps foster an inclusive classroom environment where everyone feels valued. Uriel's unwavering kindness and willingness to uplift those around him make him an exemplary model of what it means to be a caring Coyote.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Xaiden Hernandez

School: Cutler Elementary School, Cutler

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Megan Thiessen

Statement:

I want to recognize Xaiden this year for the pillar of caring. While Xaiden is an academically exceptional student, his true leadership shines in how he proactively supports his peers—most notably, our two students who need extra support. This deep compassion is nothing new; Xaiden has consistently demonstrated this dedication throughout his elementary school years. Back in third grade, he would quietly sit alongside a classmate to offer a comforting, calming presence whenever they felt overwhelmed. In fourth grade, he took the initiative every single day to visit another classroom just to check in on his peers and ensure they were doing well.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Chris Gallardo

School: Dinuba Community Based Instruction, Dinuba

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Krista Cisneros

Statement:

Chris exemplifies outstanding citizenship through his steadfast commitment to keeping his school and community clean. He is always quick to pick up trash, pull weeds, and care for his surroundings. Taking true pride in maintaining a tidy and welcoming environment, Chris sets a wonderful example for everyone around him.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Ramses Hernandez

School: Dinuba High School, Dinuba

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Martha Macias

Statement:

I would like to recognize Ramses for demonstrating outstanding character and compassion toward his peers. He has naturally stepped into a supportive role, ensuring a classmate understands classroom assignments and consistently including him in everyday conversations. With remarkable patience, Ramses gently encourages him to step outside his comfort zone—even inviting him to try new foods. Above all, he treats his classmates with genuine kindness, respect, and friendship. Ramses exemplifies what it means to be caring and inclusive, serving as a wonderful reminder of how small acts of kindness can make others feel truly valued.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Aileen Hernandez

School: Dinuba Intermediate School, Dinuba

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Gloria Valencia

Statement:

Aileen is a dedicated student who has participated in Zero Period for two years while maintaining exceptional grades and perfect attendance. She is also making school history as a charter member of DIS's first-ever water polo team. Consistently respectful and polite to everyone around her, Aileen models outstanding character, and we are proud to recognize her remarkable accomplishments.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Catalina Ulloa Pacheco

School: Grand View Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Natalie Verduzco

Statement:

Catalina demonstrates excellent citizenship by consistently being responsible, helpful, and respectful within our classroom community. She willingly assists others, follows classroom expectations, and does her part to foster a positive, welcoming environment for everyone. Always ready to lend a helping hand, Catalina sets a wonderful example for her classmates every day.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Jose Villicana

School: Jefferson Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Alice Flores

Statement:

Jose exemplifies honesty and trustworthiness at the highest level, possessing a rare standard of integrity that is truly exceptional and commendable. When sharing information, he communicates with clarity and composure, maintaining a natural posture, steady eye contact, and relaxed presence. Jose speaks the truth with conviction—even when it isn't easy—and stands firmly by it. His authentic leadership inspires and sways other students to be truthful as well. Dependable, reliable, and remarkable, Jose serves as an outstanding role model for our entire school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Faith Coyac

School: John F. Kennedy Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): James Dial

Statement:

I would like to nominate Faith for the Character Counts pillar of Caring, a quality she embodies every single day. Throughout the school year, she consistently demonstrates remarkable kindness and helpfulness toward her classmates and the entire school.

In our classroom, Faith creates an inclusive and welcoming environment. She actively listens to others, ensures no one feels left out during activities, and treats everyone with genuine respect and warmth. Her gentle nature and positive attitude set a wonderful example for her peers, inspiring those around her to be more thoughtful and considerate.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Ernesto Quinones

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Rich White

Statement:

Ernesto is a standout fifth-grader who consistently demonstrates exceptional responsibility, reliability, and maturity in everything he does. Throughout the school year, he has proven himself to be a trustworthy student who takes his academic and social duties seriously, making him an outstanding role model for his peers.

Academically, Ernesto approaches his work with great dedication. He completes all classroom assignments and homework on time, always putting forth his best effort. When faced with challenging tasks, he perseveres by asking thoughtful questions and using available resources to find solutions. His organizational skills are evident in how he manages his materials, keeps his desk tidy, and tracks his daily assignments independently. Ernesto takes full ownership of his learning and thrives during independent projects.

Beyond academics, Ernesto shines as a responsible classroom citizen. He is always willing to support his teachers and classmates, frequently volunteering to distribute materials or organize the classroom library. He treats school property and his peers with the utmost respect. During group work, he ensures everyone has a turn to contribute while reliably fulfilling his own responsibilities to help his team succeed. Furthermore, he models excellent digital citizenship and takes great care of his physical environment.

Ernesto also demonstrates high accountability for his actions. His self-discipline and positive attitude contribute significantly to a productive, welcoming classroom environment, and he can always be counted on to follow school rules—even when an adult isn't watching. Ernesto exemplifies what it means to be a responsible student, and his strong work ethic, dependability, and respectful nature make him a true joy to teach.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Cassidy Peek

School: Roosevelt Elementary School, Dinuba

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Rosa Popp

Statement:

Cassidy demonstrates respect through the quiet, thoughtful moments that make our classroom feel warm and welcoming. She actively listens to her peers and patiently gives classmates who need extra time the space to think and process. When others need support, she guides them with gentle encouragement.

Cassidy's consideration extends beyond simple interactions: if a classmate leaves early, she makes sure their computer is plugged in and their headphones are put away. She even lifts the chairs at empty desks to assist our custodian with vacuuming. Cassidy simply notices what needs to be done and takes action without needing to be asked or seeking praise. While nominated for Respect, her kindness, responsibility, and integrity shine just as brightly. By helping build an environment where everyone feels valued, Cassidy serves as a wonderful role model for her peers.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Dakota O'Bryan

School: Sierra Vista High School, Dinuba

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Mark Newlin

Statement:

Dakota is being recognized for the pillar of Citizenship. She frequently volunteers her time with both her church group and her school, generously contributing her time to support the well-being of others. Notably, Dakota serves in her school's food distribution program to help get meals to families in need and regularly dedicates time to civic events in her community.

Always friendly and ready to lend a helping hand, Dakota brings a bright, positive outlook to everything she does. In the classroom, she is a hardworking, respectful, and pleasant student to be around. Dakota consistently displays honesty and integrity in all her actions, making her a true asset to our school and community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Ariel Pando

School: Washington Intermediate School, Dinuba

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Autumn Kekaualua

Statement:

From the very first day of school, Ariel stood out for her genuine kindness. Her demeanor is consistently warm, welcoming, and respectful, creating an environment where everyone feels comfortable and seen. She makes a deliberate effort to learn the names of her classmates and teachers—a gesture that may seem simple, but speaks volumes about her character. Where many students default to addressing teachers simply as "Miss," Ariel took the time to learn my Hawaiian last name, Kekaualua, and makes a point to use it when speaking with me. That small act reflects the deep level of care and respect she extends to others.

Ariel also leads quietly by example, maintaining high standards for her own behavior regardless of her surroundings. When classmates become distracted or off-task, she remains focused and grounded. Without ever needing to utter a word of correction, her composed presence naturally encourages those around her to follow suit.

Though I have only had the privilege of teaching Ariel for a few weeks, I gained deeper insight into her character during our “My Story” yearbook project. Throughout her presentation, one message stood out above all else: kindness is her core value. Ariel wrote, “Every day I try my hardest to be a kind, welcoming, and understanding person towards everyone. I wouldn’t want to be someone’s reason why they don’t want to come to school or attend a function because they are being mistreated or feeling left out.” What makes those words so meaningful is that Ariel truly lives them. This was not written merely for a good grade; it is who she is. Ariel notices people, actively includes others, and ensures everyone around her feels valued and welcome. I see it in her daily interactions with her peers, and I experience it myself as her teacher.

I am especially grateful that Ariel is on our yearbook staff this year. In this role, she interacts with students and staff across our entire campus to capture stories and memories. Because of her position on the team, even more members of our school community will benefit from the quiet warmth and empathy she brings to every room. Ariel reminds us that caring does not require grand gestures. Sometimes it is learning someone’s name, including someone on the sidelines, choosing respect when others do not, or simply ensuring another person feels like they matter. Ariel does these things naturally and consistently. She makes our school community better simply by being herself, and I cannot think of a student more deserving of representing the Pillar of Caring.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Valeria Avila

School: Ducor Union School, Ducor

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Lupita Flores

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Valeria for the Character Counts pillar of Trustworthiness. Valeria is a dependable, responsible role model who consistently demonstrates respect, integrity, and leadership. She actively contributes to a positive, inclusive school culture and steps up to lead various school activities. As an eighth grader, she represents her peers and helps incorporate youth voice into schoolwide initiatives. Valeria leads by example, listens intently to others, follows through on all her responsibilities, and uses her voice to make a meaningful, positive difference in our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Ulises Nunez Ayon

School: Alila Elementary School, Earlimart

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Kimberly Garcia

Statement:

Ulises truly exemplifies the pillar of Responsibility! He consistently makes sure his work is both complete and accurate. He comes to class prepared, ready to learn, and engages as an active listener so he can always deliver his best effort.

When he makes a mistake, Ulises takes ownership of it and works to make it right. He also takes great care of our classroom by cleaning up materials and kindly reminding classmates of expectations. Ulises is dependable, trustworthy, and a student I can always count on to get the job done!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Ximena Fernandez

School: Earlimart Elementary School, Earlimart

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Narcedalia Montes

Statement:

Ximena demonstrates outstanding responsibility in our classroom each day. She consistently follows directions and completes what is expected of her the first time she is asked. Taking great pride in doing her best, Ximena shows that she can be trusted to make positive choices, stay on task, and manage her classroom responsibilities with care.

Ximena is also a wonderful role model for her peers. She encourages others to stay focused and kindly, respectfully reminds her friends to follow classroom expectations. Her positive attitude, dependability, and willingness to help others make her a truly valuable member of our classroom community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta Weekend Ad



Student Name: Andrew Ortega

School: Earlimart Middle School, Earlimart

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Jessica Powell

Statement:

Andrew is one of the kindest and most genuinely caring students I have ever taught. His kindness isn't a performance for adults—it is simply who he is.

Every day, Andrew brings warmth to those around him. I teach in two distant classrooms, and daily, Andrew walks with me between them, asking how I am doing and offering to carry my things. These small gestures reflect a much bigger truth: Andrew truly notices people.

That same attentiveness extends to his peers. Last week, when a student became overwhelmed while looking for his supplies, Andrew quietly found them and gently reassured him—all before I could even intervene. There was nothing patronizing or performative about it; he simply saw someone struggling and chose to help without prompting or expectation of praise.

This week, he moved me to tears again. When another student became upset because his illustration didn't look like his friend's, Andrew met him where he was, consoled him, and highlighted every wonderful detail of the artwork until the student felt valued.

Although the school year has just begun, Andrew repeatedly shows the depth of his character. He doesn't just include others—he makes them feel they belong. Andrew exemplifies the Caring pillar through everyday actions: protecting dignity, offering encouragement, and showing kindness when no one is watching. He is an extraordinary example of the compassionate, inclusive, and generous person we should all strive to be.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Alyssa Singleton

School: Exeter Union High School, Exeter

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Solinda Niles

Statement:

Alyssa “Delaney” is a shining example of what it means to be truly caring. She consistently puts the happiness and well-being of others before her own, always looking for ways to support those around her. Whether ensuring her friends feel valued or going the extra mile for her family, Alyssa’s kindness stands out.

On football game days, she makes a special effort to buy lunch for her sister on the cheer team, ensuring she has the energy and encouragement she needs. Alyssa’s thoughtful actions and unwavering friendship demonstrate a genuine commitment to making everyone feel included and cared for. Her compassion and selflessness make her an outstanding nominee for the Character Counts Caring award representing Exeter Union High School.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Jasper Delgado

School: Kaweah High School, Exeter

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Darin Pace

Statement:

Jasper exemplifies the Character Counts pillar of Citizenship through his leadership, service, and kindness across multiple school sites. At Exeter Union High School, he serves as an officer for the “Be That One” campaign, actively promoting kindness, inclusion, and belonging. At Kaweah High School, Jasper serves as the School Site Council Student President while mentoring several younger students. He consistently uses his leadership to lift up others, strengthen school culture, and make his school communities a better place for everyone.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Milly Stringham

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Exeter

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Bianca Poncey

Statement:

Milly is always a helping hand in class, consistently taking the initiative to support both her teachers and her peers. She is a trustworthy leader during group work, naturally taking charge while encouraging her classmates to stay focused and on task.

Recently, when a classmate broke her arm, Milly eagerly stepped up to be her designated helper. She assists with carrying her items and keeps her company during recess with thoughtful, gentle activities. Milly is a genuinely caring, helpful, and compassionate leader in our classroom community!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Everly Broadway

School: Rocky Hill Elementary School, Exeter

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Krysta Alvarado

Statement:

Everly consistently goes above and beyond to help those around her. She makes a point of including others whenever she notices someone left out. When a new student joined our class, Everly immediately stepped up to welcome him, guiding him around our area of campus and helping him settle in. She continually goes out of her way to ensure everyone feels included, supported, and cared for—both in the classroom and on the playground. Everly is a wonderful role model for our entire class.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Lucas Alves

School: Wilson Middle School, Exeter

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator(s): Dona Johnson

Statement:

Lucas is recognized for his calm yet assertive disposition and his strong sense of right and wrong. He consistently follows school rules and expectations while bringing a fun, positive spirit to those around him. Lucas has the courage to stand up for what is right and is willing to speak up whenever he notices something that is unfair or inconsistent with our school values. His ability to stay composed, make responsible choices, and demonstrate courage in challenging situations makes him a wonderful role model for his peers. Lucas shows us that you can have fun, enjoy school, and still lead with unwavering integrity and respect.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Anahi Arevalo

School: Farmersville Junior High School, Farmersville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Mercedes Rosales

Statement:

Anahi is a remarkably reliable, kind, and outgoing student. She is actively involved across campus in organizations like FFA and Builders Club, while also serving as a lead participant for Step-Up this year. She can always be depended on to take on projects that elevate our school community.

Our school site has frequently counted on Anahi to serve as a student speaker, amplifying student voice for key events and cultural initiatives. She has grown tremendously in her ability to positively impact the lives of her peers and eagerly steps in wherever help is needed. In everything she undertakes, she brings a warm and encouraging presence—you can genuinely hear a smile in her voice. Anahi truly exemplifies what it means to strive for self-improvement and excellence every single day.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Evalyn Loredo

School: George L. Snowden School, Farmersville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Kayla Vest

Statement:

Evalyn Loredo is nominated for the Character Counts award in the pillar of Caring because of the kindness and compassion she consistently shows to her classmates and teachers every day. Even as a first grader, Evalyn has a natural instinct to notice when someone needs help or comfort—whether it's checking on a classmate who seems sad, sharing supplies without being asked, or offering an encouraging word to someone having a hard day.

Evalyn treats everyone with warmth and respect, going out of her way to make sure no one feels left out during class activities or on the playground. Her caring nature creates a welcoming classroom environment, and she sets a wonderful example for our entire campus.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Ariana Ugalde-Duran

School: J.E. Hester School, Farmersville

Pillar: Caring

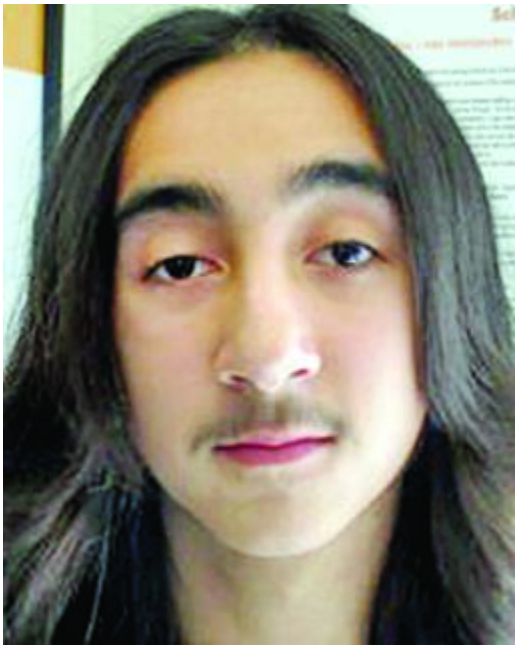
Nominator(s): Mrs. Corona

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Arianna Ugalde for the Character Counts pillar of Caring. Arianna consistently demonstrates kindness, compassion, and genuine concern for others. She is always willing to lend a helping hand, include her peers, and offer encouragement whenever someone needs a boost. Her thoughtful actions and warm attitude help foster a positive, welcoming classroom environment.

Arianna demonstrates that caring is more than just being kind—it is noticing when someone needs support and choosing to make a difference. She is a wonderful example of how small, everyday acts of kindness can make a meaningful impact on those around her, and I am proud to honor the caring heart she brings to our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Adam Hopkins

School: Kings Valley Academy II, Hanford

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Cassia Jameson

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Adam for the Character Counts pillar of Caring. In our open-concept school, students often work independently and may not attend at the same time as their peers. Despite this, Adam consistently takes the initiative to support others. He patiently helps classmates with science labs by explaining concepts, clarifying directions, and guiding them so they can actively participate and complete their work.

His calm, respectful demeanor shows that he genuinely wants his peers to succeed. He does not simply help—he leads, encourages, and makes a meaningful difference in the classroom. Adam's willingness to share his time and knowledge without being asked is a true example of kindness and caring in action.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Ashley Mendoza Garcia

School: Ivanhoe Elementary School, Ivanhoe

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Maria Botello

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Ashley Mendoza for demonstrating the Character Counts pillar of Citizenship. Ashley takes great pride in her school community and demonstrates it daily through her actions. She cares deeply about keeping our campus clean and frequently picks up trash on the ground—even when it isn't hers.

Ashley also extends caring and kindness to her classmates and teachers by treating everyone with genuine respect. She leads by example and serves as a wonderful role model for her peers, showing what it truly looks like to be a responsible and contributing member of our school.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Victoria Castellanos

School: Kings River Union School, Kingsburg

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Sophia Perez

Statement:

Victoria Castellanos demonstrates outstanding trustworthiness both on and off our campus. She is remarkably reliable, cooperative, and engaged across numerous school initiatives. Serving as our School Council President, After School Program Leadership President, a volleyball player, and an active member of our History Day team, Victoria balances a demanding schedule with poise and integrity.

Her current responsibilities include public speaking, managing the student store, leading school announcements, and participating in competitions. Over the years, she has shown an unwavering commitment to Step-Up, History Day, athletics, student council, and leadership activities. Both students and staff know they can always rely on Victoria for a thoughtful, responsible, and honest perspective. She truly models the highest standard of trustworthiness for our entire school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Mohamed Albithany

School: Jefferson Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Bernadette Fultz

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Mohamed for the Character Counts pillar of Respect. Everyday in our classroom, he shows what it means to treat others the way he would like to be treated. When he sees another learner playing alone, he invites them to join him. When a peer is hurt, he offers comfort or seeks help from an adult.

Mohamed is gentle and thoughtful with his peers, and he possesses a contagious smile and laugh that lifts up everyone around him. Classmates naturally gravitate toward him because he makes them feel welcome and valued. His kindness is genuine and consistent; he notices when someone needs a friend and immediately takes action. Mohamed brings joy to our class and helps create the caring, respectful community we hope every learner will experience.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Daniel Ceballos

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Alyssabeth Salas

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Daniel for the Character Counts award for his outstanding commitment to excellence and his caring heart. Daniel is an amazing learner who always strives to do his absolute best in every area. Whether working through Math and ELA or simply being a compassionate friend, he is always willing to give whatever it takes.

Daniel puts 200% effort into everything he does. Beyond his dedication to learning, he is selfless, consistently stepping up to help, teach, and support his peers. Daniel is an outstanding student and a loyal friend whose hard work and kindness inspire those around him, and I am so excited to see all the great things life has in store for him.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Cash Lottermoser

School: Lindsay High School, Lindsay

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Ken Spencer

Statement:

Cash Lottermoser is a learner who quietly leads others by example, demonstrating a respectful demeanor in every situation. He collaborates effectively with his peers and is frequently relied upon by his learning facilitators to assist other students in class.

Cash is actively involved in both the Ag Mechanics and the Automotive & Transportation CTE Pathways, and he is on track to complete both three-year programs. In both pathways, he can be trusted to handle all tools safely and master new skills at a rapid rate. Balancing his technical training with strong academic performance, Cash currently maintains a 3.25 GPA and is fully on track to graduate. He is an exemplary model of a respectful, trustworthy learner who leads with integrity and dedication.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Alejandra Segovia

School: Reagan Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Manuel Cobarruvias

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Alejandra Segovia for the Character Counts award in the pillar of Responsibility. Alejandra consistently demonstrates responsibility through her dedication to learning, strong work ethic, and unwavering commitment to personal growth. She takes immense pride in her academic journey and always gives her absolute best effort.

Her impressive growth from Level 1 to Level 4 on the ELPAC reflects her perseverance, determination, and focus on long-term success. Beyond her individual accomplishments, Alejandra is a supportive classmate who willingly helps others, contributes thoughtfully to class discussions, and generously shares her knowledge. Her accountability, positive attitude, and dedication to both her education and her peers make her a deserving role model for our entire school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Aubree Macias

School: Roosevelt Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Amanda Robles

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Aubree Macias for the Character Counts pillar of Responsibility. Aubree's exceptional leadership and dedication are evident in how seamlessly she balances academics, sports, ASB, school clubs like Team Empower, and her role on Grizzly TV—our daily school news program.

As an active member of Team Empower, Aubree plays a vital role in welcoming new learners by providing campus tours, assisting them with setting up their devices, and walking them to class. She takes on every responsibility with confidence, enthusiasm, and a genuine willingness to serve her school community. Her dependability and proactive mindset make Aubree a standout student and truly deserving of this recognition.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Arianna Soria

School: Washington Elementary School, Lindsay

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Daniela Cordova

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Arianna Soria for the Character Counts award in the pillar of Caring. Arianna went above and beyond to make another student feel welcomed and included on our campus. During playtime, she noticed a learner from the AcCEL program and thoughtfully invited her to join in with her friends. Arianna didn't just make a casual invitation; she brought her friends over so the learner felt truly embraced and part of the group.

This simple act of kindness meant so much to the student and brought her tremendous happiness. What makes Arianna's actions even more special is that her care extended far beyond that single moment—the learner continued joining Arianna and her friends to play in the days that followed, creating a lasting sense of friendship and belonging. Arianna showed genuine compassion, inclusion, and care without being asked, making her a wonderful example of what it truly means to demonstrate the core values of CHARACTER COUNTS!.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Rene Garcia-Cazares

School: AcCel Orosi Community Based Instruction Orosi

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Erin Elliott

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Rene for the CHARACTER COUNTS! award. It was hard to choose just one pillar for Rene because he truly exemplifies them all—he is an amazing person who is kind, full of joy, respectful, and responsible.

As a student in our Community-Based Instruction (CBI) program, Rene faces academic challenges with inspiring determination. Though reading and counting can be difficult for him, he is always the very first to volunteer and give his best effort. During our community outings, he has earned complete trust; he is thoroughly reliable and always eager to help with cleaning, sorting, moving items, and shopping. Beyond his strong work ethic, Rene is a wonderful friend who lifts up those around him and constantly strives to make everyone smile. He is a truly special student who brings light, heart, and character to our school every single day.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Elijah Rodriguez Reynosa

School: El Monte Middle School, Orosi

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Lisa Alvarado

Statement:

Last Year, in Language Arts class. Elijah went above and beyond to support another student in his class. He pulled out her chair, included her in group collaborations, helped her understand reading passages, and sat with her during lunch to ask how her day was going. His kindness and thoughtfulness helped her feel included, valued, and connected.

At El Monte Middle School, our Lobos “LEAD,” and the “A” stands for Accept Everyone. Elijah is a wonderful example of what it truly means to Accept Everyone. Through his everyday actions, he shows compassion, inclusion, and genuine care for others. Elijah truly represents what it means to be a Caring Lobo!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Camila Lupian

School: Golden Valley Elementary School, Orosi

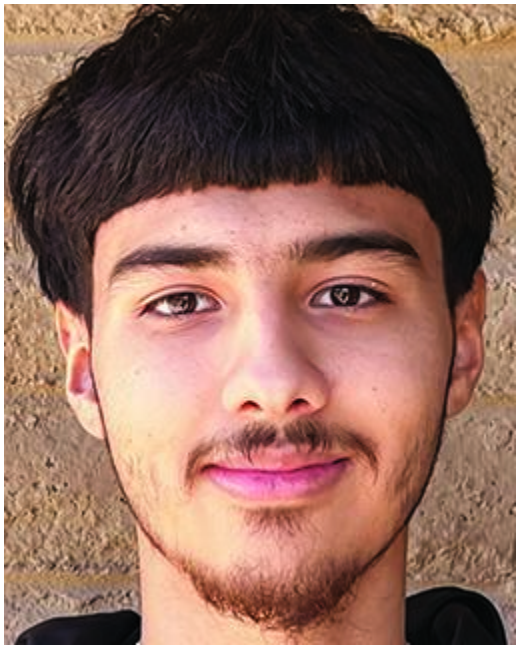
Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Raquel Barragan

Statement:

Camila is a true example of what it means to be caring. She has willingly and lovingly taken on the role of supporting a classmate, helping him navigate the school day with patience, kindness, and grace. During STEM, she holds his hand to reassure him that he is safe and supported. She meets him where he is, encourages his participation, and makes sure he feels included, connected, and valued. Camila's heart of gold reminds us that caring means helping others feel that they belong. Our classroom—and our world—is a better place because of young people like Camila.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Anthony Monodragon

School: Lovell High School, Orosi

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Antonio Diaz and Julia Medina

Statement:

Antonio Diaz: Our school site wants to celebrate Anthony Mondragon for demonstrating what true citizenship, leadership, and perseverance look like at Lovell High School.

Anthony is an incredible leader who has shown that your past does not have to determine your future. There was a time when attending school consistently was a struggle and he was falling behind in his credits. But Anthony made a decision that changed the direction of his life: he decided not only to change his trajectory, but to become someone who could help others change theirs, too.

Today, Anthony attends school every single day with a purpose. He is working hard to catch up on his credits, accomplish his goal of graduating, and continue playing the sport he loves basketball through the end of his high school career. He is not doing this only to make his parents proud; he is doing it to prove to himself what he is capable of accomplishing.

What makes Anthony's growth even more powerful is that he has begun using his experiences to encourage others. Recently, he shared a simple but powerful message with seniors who are still struggling: *"Life is simple, but we make it complicated."* Those words carry meaning because Anthony has lived through the hard lessons behind them. He understands that sometimes the biggest change begins with a simple decision to do better, show up, and take responsibility for your future. Anthony also goes out of his way to encourage and support his classmates, sharing his experiences and reminding others that they, too, have the ability to overcome their challenges and create a better future for themselves.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad

Anthony represents Citizenship because he is not only working to improve himself—he is becoming an example for others. His journey reminds us that making mistakes does not define us. What defines us is what we choose to do after those mistakes.

Julia Medina: I nominate Anthony Mondragon for Character Counts because he is an outstanding all-around student who consistently demonstrates responsibility, kindness, and a strong commitment to his education.

He takes pride in his work, cares about his grades, provides thoughtful and meaningful responses, and makes sure to turn in high-quality assignments. He is also caring and supportive toward his fellow students. He is always willing to help members of his group, actively participates in group and class discussions, and encourages others to be involved. He is an active listener who shows respect for different ideas and perspectives. Most importantly, he consistently brings a positive attitude to class every day.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Brandon Madrigal

School: Orosi High School, Orosi

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Manuela Delgadillo

Statement:

Having had the privilege of teaching Brandon in English last school year, the kindness he consistently showed his peers—and myself—still resonates with me today. Brandon was always willing to lend a helping hand, often stepping up to support others without ever needing to be asked. He was remarkably attuned to those around him, quietly offering help whenever he noticed someone in need.

What stood out most about Brandon was his patience and compassion toward his classmates, especially those who were struggling. His kindness was never performative or done for recognition; it was simply a natural part of who he is. Through his genuine care, he helped cultivate a safe, supportive classroom environment for everyone.

Brandon is the true embodiment of a kind and bright young man. Even though he has moved on from my classroom, the positive impact he left behind remains. He is exceptionally deserving of this recognition.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Kiara Barrera

School: Palm Elementary School, Orosi

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Gabrielle McNealley

Statement:

I have had the absolute pleasure of working with Kiara in Mrs. Capistran's 5th-grade classroom four days a week. Every day when I enter the room, Kiara is always the very first student to transition to our small reading group.

She consistently takes initiative by ensuring that her group members arrive promptly and have all the materials they need to succeed. Whether she is gathering materials for her peers or offering gentle reminders, Kiara always leads with patience and kindness.

Beyond her daily helpfulness, Kiara possesses a rare level of empathy. Recently, during a Total Physical Response (TPR) activity that I was unable to perform, Kiara insisted that we modify the exercise so that I could fully participate alongside the group. For a 5th grader to demonstrate such remarkable forethought, inclusivity, and compassion truly touched my heart. Kiara’s big heart and thoughtful nature make her deeply deserving of this recognition.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: George Quinteros

School: Pixley Elementary School, Pixley

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Xochitl Montelon

Statement:

George Anthony Quinteros consistently demonstrates what it means to be truly responsible. He takes ownership of his learning, approaches his schoolwork with great care, and can always be counted on to do the right thing—even when no one is watching.

George comes to class prepared, follows expectations effortlessly, and takes immense pride in doing his absolute best. Beyond his own academics, he displays responsibility through his daily actions: helping classmates, caring for classroom materials, and acting as a dependable anchor for our classroom community.

George's positive attitude and steadfast commitment to accountability make him an exceptional role model for his peers and deeply deserving of recognition as a Kid of Character.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Elijah Sanchez

School: Pixley Middle School, Pixley

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Kim Shirk

Statement:

Elijah Sanchez truly exemplifies the Character Counts pillar of Caring through his daily acts of kindness toward his peers, campus staff, and the entire school community. Each morning, Elijah greets students and adults alike with a warm hello, instantly making our campus a more welcoming place.

Elijah gives others his full attention, listening without judgment and demonstrating to those around him that their thoughts and feelings truly matter. Whenever he notices a classmate struggling, he proactively offers a helping hand, and when a peer is feeling stressed or having a difficult day, he is quick to offer comforting words of encouragement.

Through these quiet yet meaningful actions, Elijah ensures that everyone around him feels seen, supported, and valued. His genuine heart makes him exceptionally deserving of this honor.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Ameera Cruz

School: Pleasant View Elementary School, Poplar

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Priscilla Domingo

Statement:

Ameera demonstrates outstanding Citizenship through her leadership and dedication to building an inclusive classroom community. Recognizing that a new classmate was hesitant to participate, Ameera took the initiative to welcome them into group activities during recess.

Even when the student felt unsure or reluctant, Ameera remained patient, persistent, and encouraging. Because of her steadfast kindness, her classmate has grown more comfortable, engaged actively in class, and built a wonderful circle of new friends.

Ameera shows us all that true citizenship is about looking out for others, leading with empathy, and ensuring that everyone feels a genuine sense of belonging. She is deeply deserving of this recognition.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Kevin Moreno

School: Alta Vista School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Vanessa Reilly

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Kevin Moreno for this well-deserved recognition. Kevin has been a dedicated member of ASB for several years, and this year, as an 8th grader, he ran for ASB President and won in a landslide—a clear sign that his peers recognize the leadership qualities our staff has watched flourish in him over time.

Kevin is the type of student who sets ambitious goals and works relentlessly to achieve them. He is organized, creative, responsible, and thoughtful. When collaborating with others, Kevin listens carefully and considers his peers' feelings and opinions before making decisions. Whether participating in group projects or planning ASB events, he leads with maturity, respect, and a genuine desire to do what is best for the entire student body. This year, Kevin has truly found his voice, stepping up as a confident leader who willingly shares his ideas and advocates for his fellow students.

Kevin's determination shines just as brightly in academics. Since 4th grade, one of his consistent personal goals has been to win our local spelling bee and advance to the TCOE Spelling Bee. Through persistence and hard work, he has achieved this milestone by becoming our school's spelling bee champion three times. Kevin doesn't just set goals—he puts in the daily effort required to make them a reality.

Most importantly, Kevin leads with kindness and integrity. He is widely respected by peers and staff alike because of the way he treats people. His leadership is not defined by a title, but by his dependability, compassion, and willingness to serve others.

It has been an absolute joy to watch Kevin grow from a quiet 3rd grader into a confident, inspiring 8th-grade leader on our campus. His determination, responsibility, and commitment to excellence make him an outstanding representative of our school, and I am honored to nominate him.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Guadalupe Gatica

School: Bartlett Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Valerie Mendoza

Statement:

Guadalupe is a kind and compassionate student who consistently shows genuine care for those around her. She is thoughtful, respectful, and always quick to offer a helping hand whenever a classmate is in need.

Guadalupe's warm heart and uplifting attitude naturally create a welcoming environment where others feel supported, included, and valued. Through her daily actions, she serves as a wonderful example of what it means to lead with empathy and truly care for others.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Ariana Carbajal

School: Burton Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Elvira Sanchez

Statement:

Although Ariana is relatively new to our school and is currently learning English, she continuously goes out of her way to make sure no one feels left out. She warmly opens her circle of friends to anyone in need of connection, leading with constant kindness and encouragement.

Whether helping clean up the room, carrying books and boxes, or sharing words of advice, Ariana is always ready to lend a hand to students and staff alike. Her generosity is evident in everything she does—from sharing snacks and classroom materials to sharing her bright smile with everyone she meets. Through these quiet acts of compassion, Ariana makes our classroom a truly welcoming and supportive community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Axel Tapia Valencia

School: Burton Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Angel Corona

Statement:

When a new student joined our class, Axel immediately stepped up to ensure he felt welcomed and comfortable from day one. Axel personally showed him around campus, thoughtfully explained our classroom routines and expectations, and offered steady support as his classmates adjusted to a new school environment.

Through his genuine kindness, helpfulness, and generosity, Axel showed what it truly means to lead with empathy and make others feel included. He is an outstanding example of what it means to be caring and is deeply deserving of this honor.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Anissa Ruiz

School: Butterfield Charter School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Yaritza Guzman Hernandez and Berenice Martinez

Statement:

Yaritza Guzman Hernandez: Anissa has demonstrated exceptional responsibility and dedication to planning for her future while staying on top of her academic responsibilities. She has taken the initiative to complete college applications, keep track of important deadlines, and stay informed about application openings. In addition, she has gotten a head start on her higher education by taking concurrent enrollment courses at Porterville College. Anissa has successfully balanced her high school coursework, college responsibilities, and personal life while remaining independent and self-motivated. I believe she is highly deserving of this recognition because she exemplifies what it means to be a truly responsible student.

Berenice Martinez: Anissa has demonstrated great responsibility throughout her junior and senior years by balancing concurrent enrollment in community college courses while staying on top of her high school classes. She actively reaches out to her counselors and teachers for guidance as she prepares for university and is proactively seeking scholarship opportunities to support her future goals. As a first-generation student preparing for college, Anissa has proven to be a wonderful, determined, and dedicated student committed to achieving her dreams.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Natalie Hernandez

School: Granite Hills High School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Shelby Lozano

Statement:

Natalie Hernandez is an outstanding Grizzly at Granite Hills High School. Beyond serving as ASB President, she represents our broader community as a PUSD Student Board Member Ambassador and active member of the CVP program, serving others through dedicated outreach and presentations.

Natalie is a prime example of exceptional character in every role she holds. While she easily exemplifies all six pillars, her dedication to networking and building bridges within our school and community truly sets her apart. Natalie's presence at Granite Hills is genuinely uplifting; she consistently puts others before herself and stays deeply involved in campus life. It has been an absolute pleasure to watch Natalie grow into such a selfless, impactful, and inspiring young leader.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Harper Hicks

School: Hope School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Tammy Gobel and Victoria Silva

Statement:

Tammy Gobel: Harper is a great student who is always eager to lend a hand around our school campus. Every morning, she visits the Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten classrooms to see where help is needed—frequently putting chairs down from the tables and assisting with whatever tasks arise. She possesses a genuinely kind heart, serves as a reading buddy for our younger students, and is a true friend to anyone in need.

Victoria Silva: Harper truly embodies what it means to be caring. She is a sweet soul who naturally looks for ways to make others feel included, supported, and valued. Her kindness shines through in everyday moments—offering a helping hand, checking on a friend, sharing materials, and treating everyone with genuine warmth. Harper's gentle and generous spirit brings immense positivity to those around her. The care she shows comes straight from the heart, making her a wonderful example of character. I am so proud to nominate Harper for the Kids of Character Award.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Luka Tinajero

School: Jim Maples Academy Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Sandra Rangel

Statement:

Luka consistently shows genuine care and compassion by being the first to help whenever a classmate is hurt or in need. Throughout the day, he routinely reminds his peers to lead with kindness and treat others the way they wish to be treated.

As a role model in the classroom, Luka goes above and beyond to support classmates who need extra help reading in Spanish, often reassuring them by saying, *"Yo te puedo ayudar, somos una familia"* ("I can help you, we are a family"). His warm heart, helpful spirit, and dedication to building a supportive classroom family make him deeply deserving of this recognition.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Mason Moreno

School: John J. Doyle Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Susana Arteaga

Statement:

Just when you think chivalry has disappeared, along comes a young man who reminds us that the qualities of a true gentleman are still very much alive! Mason Moreno consistently demonstrates kindness, respect, and deep thoughtfulness toward his classmates and teacher alike.

Whether answering the classroom phone, stacking chairs, tidying around desks, or lending a hand to a peer, Mason proactively steps up without ever being asked. His considerate nature, helpful spirit, and polite demeanor make him a standout role model and a true gentleman in every sense of the word.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Teigan Lamb

School: Los Robles Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Beatrice Ochoa

Statement:

Teigan is a positive leader at Los Robles who consistently sets an outstanding example for those around her. She approaches her schoolwork responsibly, actively contributes to class discussions, and consistently puts forth her very best effort.

Teigan builds strong, positive relationships with her peers, treating everyone with kindness and respect. As a dependable team member, she can always be counted on to make good choices and uphold our school expectations. Through her daily actions and respectful leadership, Teigan helps cultivate a welcoming, positive environment where all students can learn and thrive.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Valeria Vargas

School: Monache High School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Jennifer Giannetto

Statement:

Valeria is a young lady who consistently treats every person she interacts with with deep respect. Every day during her mealtimes, Valeria chooses to spend her breaks in the AcCEL classroom at Monache High School—sharing time, space, and quiet moments with her peers.

Rather than showing up only for special events or organized occasions, Valeria chooses to be present in the ordinary, everyday moments of breaking bread and sharing conversation. Through her steady presence, true friendships have blossomed—friendships that have genuinely enhanced the quality of life for several of her classmates. It is profoundly refreshing to see a young person show up every single day and extend respect so naturally, simply because of who she is at heart.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Yonatan Cantor

School: Monte Vista Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Diane Torres and Frances Leyva

Statement:

Frances Leyva: Yonatan is a kind, polite, and deeply respectful student. He consistently treats everyone around him—peers and adults alike—with dignity, consideration, and genuine respect.

Diane Torres: Yonatan Cantor is a wonderful example of good citizenship through his strong work ethic, positive attitude, and willingness to help others. He works hard to support his parents at home yet comes to school each day with a bright smile and a cheerful mindset. Even when things become challenging, Yonatan remains positive, never complains, and continues to give his absolute best. At such a young age, he already demonstrates responsibility, perseverance, and a genuine sense of pride in everything he does. His kindness, determination, and willingness to contribute make him a truly valued member of our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Romina Botello Rodriguez

School: Oak Grove Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator(s): Cecilia Mejia

Statement:

Romina is an exemplary student who consistently follows classroom and school rules inside and outside the learning environment. She is remarkably self-disciplined—knowing when to listen quietly, when to share during class discussions, and always remaining in her assigned space without ever needing a reminder.

As an English learner, Romina shows incredible initiative and maturity. Whenever she needs clarification on an assignment, she proactively asks questions in Spanish to ensure she understands the expectations and can do her best work. Romina's respect for rules, commitment to learning, and positive behavior make her a wonderful role model for her peers.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Zamyr Palacios

School: Olive Street Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Shannel Miranda

Statement:

Zamyr is an incredibly responsible student who consistently comes to school ready to learn and prepared to make the most of each day. What stands out most about Zamyr is his deep understanding of the "why" behind our classroom expectations—he recognizes that our choices and actions directly affect not only our own learning, but the success of those around us.

Zamyr notices when behaviors become distracting or take the class off track, and he thoughtfully reminds his peers to refocus. He makes responsible choices without ever needing reminders from his teacher. Responsibility isn't something Zamyr has to be told to demonstrate—it is something he naturally embodies. Through his maturity, self-awareness, and dedication to learning, Zamyr sets a positive example for his classmates and helps create a classroom environment where everyone can thrive.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Layla Hernandez

School: Pioneer Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Eduardo Lopez-Contreras

Statement:

Although I have only had the privilege of teaching Layla Hernandez for eight school days, she has already made a remarkable impression on me through her maturity, work ethic, and sense of responsibility.

Layla is the type of student who does the right thing even when no one is asking. Recently, our class completed an activity using scissors, glue sticks, and colored pencils. As the bell rang, students understandably hurried to their next class, leaving a few supplies behind. Layla did not rush out with everyone else. Without being asked, she stayed behind and quietly put away the materials her group had left out. It was a small moment, but it spoke volumes about her character. She saw something that needed to be done, took responsibility for it, and helped simply because it was the right thing to do.

That same attitude is evident in the classroom every day. When it is time to read, Layla reads. When it is time to take notes, she takes notes. While I am teaching, she remains attentive—facing the speaker, whiteboard, or screen—and actively engaged in the lesson. She consistently completes her work, takes assignments seriously, and gives her best effort. She also seeks feedback and asks how she can improve, demonstrating that she is not satisfied with simply finishing—she genuinely wants to learn and grow.

What impresses me even more is what Layla does after her own work is complete. Rather than becoming distracted when she finishes early, she looks for ways to assist. She has volunteered to pass back graded assignments, distribute notes and handouts, organize materials, and help me prepare for the next activity. I never have to remind her of expectations; I can fully trust her to follow through.

In just eight days, Layla has demonstrated the kind of responsibility teachers hope to see in every student. She is dependable, respectful, trustworthy, caring, and consistently ready to learn. Her actions make our classroom a better place and set a positive example for her peers.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Camilla Gonzalez

School: Porterville High School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Diana Torres

Statement:

Camilla Gonzalez merits recognition for responsibility because she consistently follows through, leads with maturity, and can be trusted in every role she holds. She balances a 4.4 GPA and college coursework with leadership in ASB, Student Council, Tulare County Credit Union, varsity cheer, and Hype Squad—where she runs meetings and increases student participation. She also handles confidential financial and cash-handling duties as a Student Financial Service Representative. At home, she helps care for her younger twin sisters through homework assistance, meals, transportation, errands, and household responsibilities. Camilla recognizes what needs to be done and can always be counted on to execute it well.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Jehily Landeros

School: Porterville Military Academy Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Hector Medellin

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Cadet Jehily Landeros for the Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! Award. As second-in-command of our cadet organization at Porterville Military Academy, she leads by example through integrity, resilience, responsibility, and compassion. Jehily consistently does what is right, treats others with respect and fairness, and maintains a positive attitude even in the face of challenges. She is dependable, highly productive, and deeply committed to serving others. Ultimately, her leadership and genuine care for her fellow cadets have left a lasting, positive mark on both our school and community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Diego Avalos

School: Roche Avenue Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Abelina Jimenez

Statement:

Diego Avalos demonstrates strong citizenship by being a responsible, respectful, and positive member of our classroom and school community. He follows rules, treats others with respect, and takes pride in doing what is right. Diego contributes in meaningful ways—actively participating, helping maintain an orderly environment, and showing genuine pride in his school. He understands the importance of teamwork and consistently serves as a positive role model for his peers.

Ultimately, Diego's actions reflect the true spirit of citizenship, making him an invaluable part of our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Julieta Torres

School: Santa Fe Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Citlalli Deorta

Statement:

Julieta is a wonderful example of responsibility in our classroom. She comes to school ready to learn, follows routines, and takes pride in doing her best work. Julieta completes her tasks diligently and takes great care of her materials and belongings. She listens carefully to directions and consistently strives to make responsible choices throughout the day. When facing a challenge, she takes accountability for her actions and uses her words to ask for help or support. Julieta's caring attitude, effort, and willingness to learn make her a deserving nominee for the CHARACTER COUNTS! Award for Responsibility. I am so proud of the responsible choices she continues to make each day!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Maleena Ceballos

School: Sequoia Middle School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Lawrence Haas

Statement:

Maleena is a superstar student at Sequoia Middle School! She consistently goes above and beyond to help others, serving as a quiet leader who sets a great example and exemplifies our school culture.

Every morning, Maleena makes her way to the cooking classroom to ask how she can assist. Whether she is folding towels, sanitizing countertops, organizing the refrigerator, or shaping loaves of bread, she steps in with enthusiasm.

The best part of Maleena's willingness to serve is that it has become contagious—her friends now join in and offer to help as well.

Maleena may not fully realize it, but she plays a massive role in creating the positive school culture we enjoy here at Sequoia Middle School!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Carl Maddox

School: Summit Charter Academy Lombardi Campus, Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator(s): Christy Fischer

Statement:

Carl is involved in numerous sports teams throughout Porterville and consistently demonstrates fairness in the classroom, on the playground, and on the field. At school, he takes turns, listens to others' ideas, and makes sure his classmates are included in group activities. For example, if two students want the same classroom job, he helps find a fair way to share it. During sports, he strictly follows the rules, gives everyone a chance to play, and remains honest about every call. Carl shows true sportsmanship by congratulating opponents when they win and encouraging his teammates when they fall short. His actions help everyone feel valued, respected, and included.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Isaiah Baca

School: Summit Charter Academy Mathew Campus, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Natalia Medina

Statement:

Isaiah is an amazing leader and Spanish model in our Dual Program. He is always ready to learn, practice his Spanish, and lend a helping hand to others. He has mastered the routines and responsibilities of a 3rd-grade student, always arriving prepared with his materials and assignments while consistently making time to support his group. Isaiah pours immense hard work into reaching every goal set before him. His kind heart naturally draws others to him, and he easily builds strong friendships. Isaiah is an incredible student, and I am so lucky to have him in my 3rd-grade class this school year!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Alexis Inthasone

School: Summit Charter Collegiate Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Stephanie Collins

Statement:

I would like to nominate Alexis for her dedication and commitment to our Special Resource Preschool students. As a Cross-Age Tutor, Alexis works with children ages 3–5 who have a variety of special needs, consistently showing patience, kindness, and compassion. She takes the time to build positive relationships with our students, supports them through challenging moments, and celebrates their successes, both big and small. Alexis is dependable, caring, and always willing to help. She is an important part of our classroom team and makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our students every day.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Estevan Nunez

School: Summit Charter Intermediate Academy, Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator(s): Yessenia Cruz and Jason Goodin

Statement:

Yessenia Cruz: Estevan Nunez, you demonstrate trustworthiness by being honest, dependable, and true to your word. You can always be counted on to do your best and make good choices, even when things are challenging. Your classmates and teachers know they can trust you to be genuine, treat others with kindness, and persevere. Keep being someone others can count on!

Jason Goodin: Estevan, you have quickly shown what it means to be a SCIA Bear with great character! Your actions and choices throughout 6th grade demonstrate that you care deeply about doing the right thing and being a positive member of our school community.

You demonstrate trustworthiness by being honest and keeping your word. You show respect by treating your teachers, classmates, and staff with consideration. You practice responsibility by taking ownership of your work and making a consistent effort to meet expectations. You demonstrate fairness by following the rules and treating others with equality. Your caring nature shines through your willingness to help others and be a supportive classmate. Finally, you demonstrate citizenship by participating, contributing, and doing your part to make our classroom and SCIA a stronger community.

Estevan, your character is reflected in the way you carry yourself each day. The choices you make and the way you treat others help create an environment where everyone feels valued and included.

Congratulations, Estevan! Keep leading by example and showing what it means to be a kind, responsible, and proud SCIA Bear!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Abby Zepeda

School: Vandalia Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator(s): Kara Martinez

Statement:

Abby exhibits good character by being exceptionally fair. She always plays by the rules, acts with honesty, and ensures she is doing the right thing. When working with classmates, she makes sure everyone is included and has what they need. She willingly shares her supplies whenever someone cannot find their materials. Abby genuinely wants all of her peers to succeed and do their best. She is a wonderful student who deeply values those around her. Way to go, Abby!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Ariana Corona

School: West Putnam Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Elizabeth Cervantes Ramirez

Statement:

Ariana demonstrates outstanding responsibility both inside and outside the classroom. She is an outgoing, involved student who participates in our school's leadership group, performs in our school mariachi, and is always willing to assist our office staff whenever needed. Despite balancing numerous commitments that occasionally require her to miss classroom instruction, Ariana takes complete ownership of her learning by ensuring she catches up on any missed work.

She consistently returns to class focused, prepared, and ready to learn. Ariana does an excellent job balancing her extracurricular involvement with her academic responsibilities, making her a wonderful example of what it means to be a responsible student.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Charlotte Clark

School: Westfield Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Stephanie Carr

Statement:

Charlotte exemplifies respect by consistently treating others with kindness, patience, and consideration. She listens attentively when others speak, uses polite words, and shows genuine appreciation for her classmates' ideas and feelings. Charlotte understands that everyone deserves kindness, and she actively works to ensure those around her feel valued and included. She takes great care of classroom materials and follows expectations because she recognizes the importance of respecting her school and learning environment. Charlotte's thoughtful actions and encouraging words help build a positive classroom where everyone feels welcome and respected.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Kaylee Gonzalez

School: William R. Buckley Elementary School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Vanessa Macias

Statement:

Kaylee comes through our lunch line every day and greets us with a warm, "Hello ladies, how is your day going?" She is the only student who greets us with such genuine care, and her daily thoughtfulness truly touches our hearts. That small act of kindness makes a big difference!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Melanie Aguilar

School: Woodville Union School, Porterville

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Connie Estrada-Tsuboi

Statement:

Melanie took it upon herself to help a new classmate transition smoothly into our learning environment. When she noticed the new student was having trouble adjusting, Melanie stepped in without being asked. She is exceptionally gentle and listens attentively to his needs. She ensures he is always included in all activities and expectations, even making sure he always has a partner.

Melanie even showed her peers how to interact with him to help him feel comfortable and calm during rotation time. At such a young age, she has demonstrated immense kindness, a caring "nurturing" spirit, and a truly generous heart. I am so proud of her!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Samantha Garcia

School: Richgrove School, Richgrove

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Salvador Arredondo

Statement:

Samantha demonstrates outstanding responsibility by consistently staying on top of her academics. She arrives ready to learn, never complains, and puts forth her best effort on a daily basis. Beyond the classroom, she is a dedicated student-athlete as a member of our Richgrove Volleyball Team. Samantha is a true example of what it means to show responsibility every day, and she is my choice for our September Student of the Month Award. It is my absolute pleasure to nominate Samantha Garcia for the CHARACTER COUNTS! Award for the month of September.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Morgan Barnett

School: Springville Union School, Springville

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Ashley Ray

Statement:

Morgan is an outstanding example of citizenship. Whether she is helping at the rodeo, volunteering at baseball games, or supporting her community alongside her family, she is always willing to lend a hand. Her servant's heart, strong sense of responsibility, and dedication to serving others make her a wonderful role model for the pillar of citizenship.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Leah Mikles

School: Harmony Magnet Academy, Strathmore

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Kevin Cruess

Statement:

I would like to nominate Leah for CHARACTER COUNTS! because she is a wonderful student who consistently demonstrates a positive attitude and a genuine willingness to help others. She asks thoughtful questions in class and truly cares about understanding the material.

Today, I placed a few students in Leah's whiteboard group who were struggling and feeling confused about equations. Leah did an exceptional job supporting them. Instead of simply giving them the answers, she took the time to explain the process and guided them so they could learn how to solve the problems themselves.

Having a student you can trust to lead and support a study group is invaluable. Leah is patient, knowledgeable, and always eager to help her classmates succeed. Her ability to encourage others and share her knowledge sets a powerful example of the character we want to see in our students. I am so proud to nominate Leah for this recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Avery Maciel

School: Strathmore Elementary School, Strathmore

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Shelly West

Statement:

Avery is an exceptionally responsible student. She consistently pays attention in class and asks thoughtful questions whenever she needs clarification. She sets a wonderful example for her peers by always following the Bullpup Way, listening attentively, and actively participating in class discussions.

Whenever partner work is assigned, Avery is always willing to work with anyone who needs a partner. Even when paired with someone who requires a little extra guidance, she never gets frustrated—instead, she patiently takes the time to explain the activity and helps them get involved. Avery is an all-around terrific student and a shining example of what it means to be responsible.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Angel Luviano

School: Strathmore High School, Strathmore

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Evelia Alvarez

Statement:

Angel is an exceptional young man who consistently demonstrates kindness, respect, responsibility, and perseverance. Not a day goes by that he does not greet me with a warm smile and a genuine hello. He treats everyone on our campus—both students and staff—with profound respect and kindness. Angel comes to school prepared and ready to learn every day. As he prepares for life after high school, he actively takes charge of his future, never hesitating to ask questions and seek guidance. He is genuinely excited about what awaits him after graduation, and his eagerness to explore the opportunities ahead is truly inspiring.

What stands out most about Angel, however, is his resilience. He has faced many challenges throughout his life, yet he continues to press forward with determination, optimism, and a drive to succeed. Rather than allowing difficult circumstances to define him, Angel chooses to look ahead with hope and purpose. His ability to remain positive, work diligently toward his goals, and believe in future possibilities speaks volumes about his character.

It has been a true pleasure to work with Angel and watch him grow into the remarkable young man he is today. He represents the highest values we hope to cultivate in all of our students, and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this recognition. I am deeply honored to nominate Angel Luviano for this award.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Natalie Pavone

School: Strathmore Middle School, Strathmore

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): George Baker

Statement:

Natalie is a student in my band who showed a strong interest last year in becoming our drum major. I explained that my expectations were high, but I was confident in her ability to lead the SMS Marching Band. Since then, Natalie has grown into the exact leader I hoped she would be.

She handles all the responsibilities that come with being a drum major seamlessly and without hesitation. I can trust her implicitly to lead her fellow band members with confidence, and I know I can rely on her with my key to unlock the band room after our marching rehearsals. Natalie has demonstrated such exceptional responsibility that she is proudly serving as our drum major again this year!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Adrian Hernandez

School: Sunnyside Union School, Strathmore

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Breanna Monreal

Statement:

I would like to nominate Adrian for the Responsibility Award because he consistently demonstrates outstanding accountability in the classroom. He comes prepared to learn, completes assignments on time, follows classroom expectations, and takes full ownership of his actions and education. Adrian can always be counted on to stay focused, make positive choices, and help create a respectful, productive learning environment. His dependable attitude and commitment to excellence make him an inspiring example of responsibility to his classmates.

What makes Adrian's growth truly remarkable is the complete turnaround in his attitude from the start of junior high to now in the 8th grade. He has written passionately about his desire to graduate, stay focused, and achieve his goal of staying on the right path. Every day, Adrian arrives on campus ready to participate, ready to work hard, and ready to succeed.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Julian Lilis Martinez

School: Monson-Sultana Joint Union School, Sultana

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Jaqueline Montejano

Statement:

Julian is a student who never allows any circumstance to hold him back from succeeding academically, being a good friend, treating others with respect, and demonstrating deep care for those around him. He consistently embodies fairness, truthfulness, and what it truly means to be a stellar student.

Recently, Julian showed remarkable alertness and responsibility while waiting in the front office to be picked up due to an illness. He noticed a young primary student walk out of the office without first notifying a staff member. Although the little girl's mother was waiting just outside the door after signing her out, Julian immediately recognized the safety concern. Despite feeling unwell, he got up from his chair to keep a watchful eye on her, trailing behind while actively signaling to catch my attention. Julian's quick thinking, vigilance, and genuine concern for a younger peer reflect his outstanding character.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Eli Blackmon

School: Saucelito School, Terra Bella

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Michelle De La Rosa

Statement:

Eli Blackmon exemplifies Citizenship at Saucelito Elementary by actively serving his school and leading his peers. As a 7th grader, he goes far beyond basic expectations by serving as the FFA Officer Team Reporter, where he helps plan school events and represents Saucelito with immense pride.

Eli leads by example in everything he does. He maintains a 4.0 GPA, models outstanding sportsmanship in athletics, and brings positive energy to the classroom. His peers truly enjoy his presence, and he is a loyal friend who constantly lifts up those around him. Through his dedicated service, academic excellence, and encouraging spirit, Eli does far more than his share to make Saucelito Elementary a better place for everyone.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Henry De La Fuente

School: Tipton School, Tipton

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Janet Uresti

Statement:

Henry is a wonderful student. While he loves to participate and chat in class, he has also become a truly responsible helper who takes great care of his classmates. We have several students in our room who needed additional support, and during the first few weeks of school, I relied heavily on Henry to help guide them to the restroom or the office. Though it may seem like a small gesture, his assistance meant the world to our classroom. I deeply appreciate all of his help, effort, and kindness. He is so deserving of being recognized as our Student of the Month!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Bryan Lopez

School: Traver Joint School, Traver

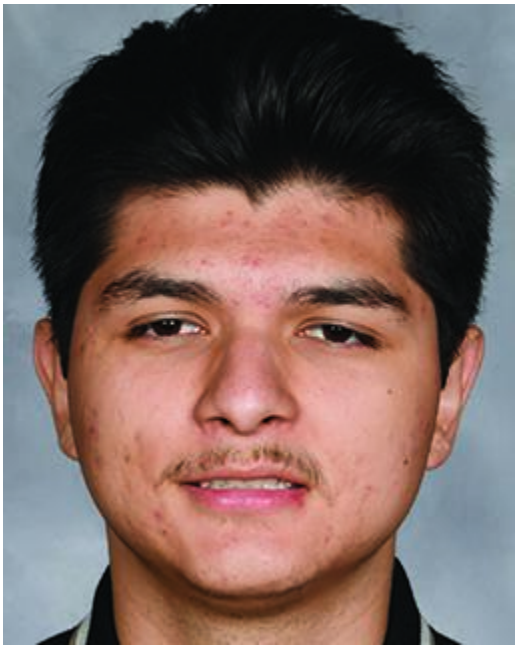
Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Linda Navarro

Statement:

Bryan Lopez has always been a quiet, deeply caring student. Whenever help is needed, he is more than happy to step up and lend a hand—always with a warm smile on his face.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Israel Sanchez

School: Accelerated Charter High School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Sara Zakarian

Statement:

Israel is a model student at ACHS! Since arriving on campus last semester, he has excelled in all of his classes, earning straight A's and catching up on his credits to stay on track for high school graduation. Last year, he delivered an incredible speech for our 10-year anniversary celebration, and this year he serves as our Student Board Representative.

Israel possesses excellent communication and public speaking skills, making a lasting impression whenever he addresses a group. He always represents ACHS in the best possible light and is the epitome of a Titan Hero—demonstrating Honor, Effort, Respect, and Overcoming Obstacles in his daily life. He truly makes the ACHS community a better place, and I am honored to know this exceptional young man!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Kevin Castillo

School: Alice G. Mulcahy Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Kristen Cabrera

Statement:

Responsibility is about taking ownership of your actions, setting goals, and following through—and Kevin has demonstrated remarkable growth in all of these areas this year. He has stepped up as a dedicated student, taking full charge of his coursework and working extra hard to achieve good grades.

What stands out most is his proactive communication with his teachers; Kevin never waits to fall behind, but instead takes the initiative to ask questions, seek feedback, and stay consistently on track. Keep up the great work, Kevin!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Ethen Gutierrez

School: Alpine Vista School, 5-8 Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Jennifer Espinoza

Statement:

Ethan exemplifies the pillar of responsibility by always doing what is expected of him and taking care of his duties. He actively listens to others, follows classroom rules, and takes accountability by admitting when he makes a mistake. Ethan consistently tries his best and can always be counted on to finish his work. These actions show that Ethan is dependable, trustworthy, and deeply cares about doing the right thing.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Magdalena Arambula

School: Alpine Vista School, K-4 Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Lolita Costa

Statement:

Magdalena is such a kind and caring student. She constantly looks out for others on the playground, always being the first to run over and make sure a classmate is okay if they fall. Whenever a friend is crying, Maggie is right there to offer a comforting hug. Keep being your wonderful, kind, and caring self, Maggie!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Kamira Stephens

School: Buena Vista School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Haylee Donohew

Statement:

I nominated Kamira Stephens for the Character Counts pillar of Responsibility because she is the kind of student every teacher and staff member can truly count on. Kamira consistently demonstrates responsibility through her actions, her strong work ethic, and her ability to complete tasks flawlessly without needing reminders.

When given a responsibility, Kamira ensures it is done correctly and with a positive attitude. She takes immense pride in being dependable and following through. What sets Kamira apart even further is her proactive nature—when she notices something around campus that needs attention, she takes the initiative and simply handles it. She understands that true responsibility means recognizing a need and taking action.

Kamira frequently asks teachers and after-school staff how she can support them, always willing to lend a helping hand. Big or small, every task is met with her characteristic dedication and positive spirit. Beyond her helpfulness, Kamira is a fantastic role model for her peers. She shows that responsibility extends beyond completing schoolwork—it is about integrity, dependability, and doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

Her maturity, leadership, and proactive spirit make her an indispensable part of our school community. Kamira Stephens truly embodies the pillar of Responsibility, and I am incredibly proud to nominate her for this well-deserved recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Gabriel Gaxiola Hernandez

School: Cherry Avenue Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Cynthia Morales

Statement:

I am proud to nominate Gabriel for the Kids of Character Award. Gabriel is an exceptional student who consistently demonstrates hard work, perseverance, responsibility, and a positive attitude toward learning.

Gabriel works tirelessly to improve his English language skills. His dedication paid off when he successfully passed the ELPAC test—a remarkable achievement that reflects his commitment to his education and his willingness to challenge himself.

Gabriel is also an extraordinarily responsible student. He never misses an assignment and consistently submits his work on time, always giving his absolute best effort. His strong work ethic and determination serve as an inspiring example for his classmates.

Gabriel truly embodies the qualities of a student of character. His perseverance, dependability, and commitment to personal growth make him immensely deserving of the Kids of Character Award. I am so proud of all that he has accomplished and excited to see his continued success in the future!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Iziah Scott

School: Countryside High School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Elizabeth Castaneda

Statement:

Iziah is a stellar model of what it means to be a responsible young man. Whenever he is absent, he takes the initiative to ask for his missing assignments and make up his work right away. He has even gone so far as to email me first thing in the morning to let me know he would be out sick. His proactive communication and dedication to his education are truly impressive and demonstrate outstanding responsibility!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Kennedy Crawford

School: Cypress Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Wendy Colson

Statement:

Last year in our TK classroom, Kennedy truly shined when it came to the pillar of Caring. She has such a kind and compassionate heart! Kennedy was often the very first to notice when a classmate was feeling down or needed extra support, always ready with a kind word, a warm hug, or a word of encouragement to brighten their day. She also made a point to check in on her teachers every single day, asking, “How are you doing?” and always offering a sweet, thoughtful comment.

Even this year, Kennedy continues to shine with that same caring spirit. Whenever she sees her teachers from last year, she makes sure to stop by, say hello, and check in. It is so special to see how her compassion extends far beyond the classroom, touching the lives of everyone around her wherever she goes!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Cannon Garcia

School: Frank Kohn Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Elaine Schroyer

Statement:

Cannon is the perfect definition of the character pillar of Citizenship. He consistently goes above and beyond to make our school community a better place for everyone.

In the classroom, Cannon is always quick to offer a helping hand to his peers whenever they need support. His dedication extends well beyond our room—he volunteers daily in our school garden and frequently steps up to assist teachers across campus. Cannon treats everyone with kindness and takes true pride in contributing to our school. Thank you, Cannon, for your outstanding citizenship and school spirit!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Oren Braudrick

School: Garden Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Macie Mimnaugh

Statement:

Oren is an outstanding example of what it means to demonstrate strong character every day. He is one of the kindest and most caring students I have had the pleasure of teaching, consistently showing deep compassion toward his classmates and a genuine willingness to help in any way he can. Whether someone needs assistance with an assignment, encouragement when they are struggling, or simply a friend to lean on, Oren is always among the first to step up.

What makes Oren especially deserving of this recognition is that his kindness is entirely authentic. He never seeks attention or applause for his actions; he helps simply because he truly cares about the people around him. He is thoughtful about how his words and actions affect others and consistently treats both classmates and teachers with profound respect.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: GianaRae Ramirez

School: Heritage Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Jillian Hanson

Statement:

Gigi has an incredible, caring heart paired with a bright and positive attitude. From the beginning of the school year, I knew I could trust her to collaborate with anyone. Whenever I assigned her to work with different partners or groups, Gigi consistently brought the same hardworking mindset, patience, and encouraging spirit to every peer.

What has truly stood out is the way Gigi interacts with a special needs student in our classroom. Gigi is remarkably thoughtful and intentional, gently guiding the student whenever they need support. She partners with them seamlessly, asking engaging questions to encourage their participation, and genuinely celebrates their accomplishments whenever they succeed. Gigi's empathy, inclusion, and kindness make her an incredible role model, and I am proud to nominate her for this honor!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Emery Jacobo

School: Liberty School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Jill Kelly

Statement:

I am so proud to nominate Emery Jacobo for the Character Counts Award for Caring. She has such a kind heart and genuinely finds joy in helping others, often being the first to notice when a classmate is struggling and stepping in with patience, kindness, and encouragement.

What makes Emery so special is how she supports her peers. Rather than simply giving away an answer, she motivates them, guides them, and helps them believe in their own abilities. Her classmates respond so positively to her gentle and supportive nature because they know she truly wants them to succeed.

Her excitement and enthusiasm for helping others is wonderful to watch—you can see the pure joy it brings her when a classmate understands a concept or feels successful through her encouragement. Emery is a beautiful example of what the Caring pillar looks like in a first-grade classroom, making our room a kinder, happier place simply by being herself. I am incredibly proud of her!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Brian Hooks

School: Lincoln Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator(s): Richard Sotelo

Statement:

When students begin the school year, I usually have to keep a close eye on recess activities and work closely with students to help them build true sportsmanship. Brian, however, started the year already demonstrating the qualities of a natural leader.

He is an exceptional athlete who naturally stands out among his peers, but what truly deserves recognition is the leadership and character he displays during sports activities. Brian actively ensures that teams are fair so everyone can enjoy the game with integrity. If someone gets tripped up or hurt, he immediately stops playing to help them up, and if they need further care, he personally walks them to the nurse's office.

These are qualities that usually take significant time, guidance, and scaffolding to build in young students. Brian already embodies them effortlessly, leading by example and showing incredible heart both on and off the field.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Katalina Rizo

School: Live Oak Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator(s): Danielle Perryman

Statement:

Katalina "Kat" is one of those rare, exceptional students who truly transforms a classroom. She is mature beyond her years and possesses a deep understanding of the learning process. Kat is highly motivated and approaches her work with intentionality, genuinely engaging with the material because she knows, in her own words, "it will make her smarter."

Kat is never afraid to try, fail, and revise her work when needed. She never makes excuses; instead, she takes complete accountability for her learning and views every challenge as a valuable opportunity to grow. She is a true role model for both her peers and teachers alike. Having such an amazing young lady in class is an absolute joy, and I am certain she will be a standout leader in whichever career path she chooses to pursue!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Fernando Oliva

School: Los Tules Middle School, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Braeden Alberstein

Statement:

Fernando has been an outstanding student and representative in the Los Tules Band. He is always on time, accepts feedback gracefully, makes a sincere effort to correct mistakes, and treats everyone around him with the utmost respect and humility.

As Brass Captain on our leadership team, Fernando has gone above and beyond to serve the ensemble. Whether he is loading the band trailer, setting up snack stations at performances, or patiently helping fellow students learn their notes on the trombone, his dedication is unwavering. Fernando consistently steps up to do the right thing, paving a trail of success and leadership that serves as an inspiring path for all other band members to follow!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Cassey Yanez

School: Maple Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Kayla Frank

Statement:

Cassey is the true definition of responsibility! She consistently goes above and beyond in everything she does, both inside and outside of the classroom. Cassey can always be trusted to make good choices, follow directions, complete her assignments, and take care of classroom responsibilities. She never waits to be reminded to do the right thing; instead, she takes initiative and actively looks for ways to be helpful.

Cassey takes great pride in her work and always gives her absolute best effort. She is dependable, organized, and mature, setting an incredible example for those around her. Whether helping a classmate or completing classroom tasks, Cassey consistently shows that she can be counted on. Her willingness to go the extra mile makes her truly deserving of this award. Cassey, your hard work, dedication, and responsibility make a positive difference every single day!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Omar Beltran

School: Maple Learning Center Tulare

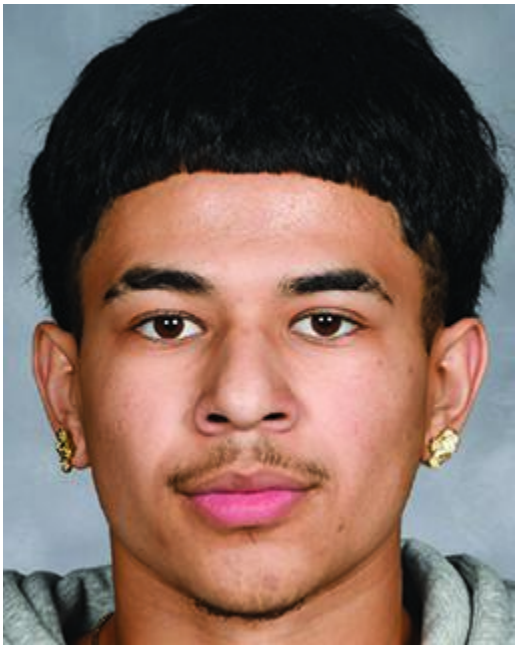
Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Denise Lozano

Statement:

Omar consistently demonstrates respect and kindness toward everyone around him. He is a wonderful friend who comes to school each day happy, positive, and full of laughter. Omar shows respect toward his teachers, staff, and peers alike, genuinely enjoying the company of those around him. His joyful personality and friendly nature make him a bright, wonderful part of our MLC Center!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Dominic Andrade

School: Mission Oak High School, Tulare

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): John Chambers

Statement:

Dominic Andrade is a student I have had the honor of teaching in our new Building Construction and Trades program at Mission Oak High School. In a course that challenges students to step outside their comfort zones and master complex hands-on skills—from building structural components to applying industry practices—a strong willingness to learn, adapt, and persevere is essential. Dominic consistently exemplifies these traits.

He demonstrates outstanding responsibility by being exceptionally dependable, taking full ownership of his learning, and using his time effectively. Dominic willingly takes direction, learns from mistakes, and tackles challenges head-on rather than giving up when something is difficult.

What stands out most about Dominic is his determination and clear sense of purpose. He has set a personal goal of graduating early to begin actively pursuing his future career plans. That level of motivation, foresight, and personal accountability is deeply inspiring. Dominic embodies the core values of our CTE program: responsibility, strong work ethic, and determination. I am immensely proud of his growth and look forward to seeing the great things he accomplishes as he builds his future!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Abel Casalman

School: Mission Valley Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

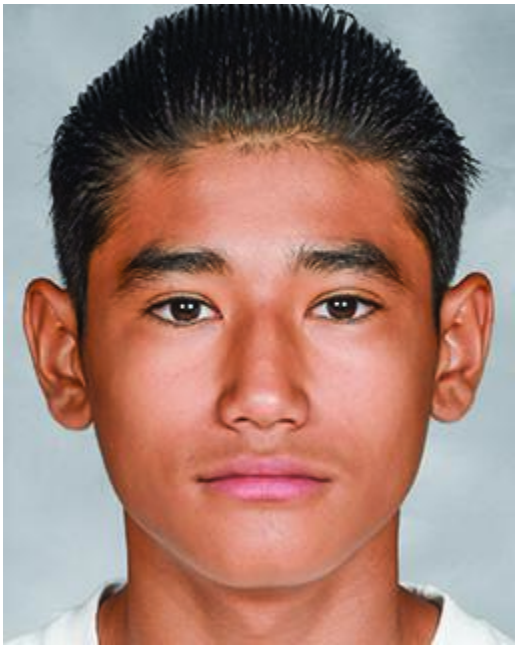
Nominator(s): Stacey Whitfield

Statement:

Abel has quietly made a wonderful place for himself in our classroom community. He keeps his own area clean daily and is always ready to lend a helping hand to his peers whenever they need it.

When he signed up for a classroom job as part of the "clean up crew," he took full ownership of the role—regularly participating and thoroughly completing his duties with a great attitude every single day. Abel's dependability, thoroughness, and quiet dedication to serving his classmates make him a fantastic model of Citizenship!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Alan Suarez

School: Oak Valley Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Margaret DoCanto

Statement:

Alan consistently carries a warm smile and demonstrates genuine respect and kindness toward both staff and his peers. He is always willing to lend a helping hand around the classroom—whether that means stacking or unstacking chairs, helping a classmate locate a textbook, or stepping in whenever someone needs assistance.

One moment that particularly stands out occurred during a cross-country meet. Alan noticed a classmate who was struggling to finish the course. Rather than focusing solely on his own race time, Alan chose to slow down and pace himself alongside his classmate, ensuring the student could cross the finish line with dignity, support, and encouragement. By willingly putting someone else's needs ahead of his own, Alan showed incredible heart, sportsmanship, and character. He is a truly remarkable student and a wonderful role model for us all!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Timothy Mireles

School: Palo Verde Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Olivia Delgadillo

Statement:

I would like to nominate Timothy for the Pillar of Caring. While he excels in all areas of character, this pillar best captures his defining quality—his genuine, heartfelt willingness to help others.

Throughout last school year, Timothy consistently offered assistance at the student store without ever being prompted. This year, I observed him stepping up to help a teacher clean up after a school dance, once again entirely on his own initiative. What stands out most is that Timothy extends this thoughtful helpfulness to everyone—fellow students and staff alike.

His selfless character is truly admirable, and he embodies the kind of person who makes our school community stronger. Timothy, keep up the excellent work—the world needs more people like you!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Robert Pompa

School: Pleasant Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Bobby Holland

Statement:

Robert has been an outstanding student in PE over the last three years! He is consistently kind to others and serves as a perfect model of a student who always does the right thing.

Robert approaches every class with a mindset of treating those around him with unwavering respect, and he is always exceptionally polite and respectful to his PE teachers. He routinely goes above and beyond when it comes to actively listening and following instructions. I proudly nominate Robert for the Kids of Character Award in Respect—he is truly deserving of this honor!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Alia Garcia

School: Roosevelt Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Elvia Meza

Statement:

Alia Garcia beautifully embodies the 3 Rs—she is consistently respectful to everyone around her and exceptionally responsible with both her personal space and learning tasks. She stays well-organized, arriving each day determined to meet her goals.

Alia builds strong, positive relationships across the classroom through her excellent listening skills and collaborative spirit. She is a wonderful model of Citizenship, consistently following classroom rules while encouraging her peers to stay on task and make positive choices. Her contributions to classroom discussions are always thoughtful, making insightful connections to our lessons. Always eager to volunteer and lend a helping hand, Alia is a joy to teach and a valuable member of our school community!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Anahliyah Holguin

School: Sierra Vista Charter High School, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Sydney Armstrong

Statement:

Anahliyah is a student who consistently shows up on campus as the absolute best version of herself. Throughout this year, she has demonstrated inspiring maturity, growth, and resilience.

Despite past academic setbacks and personal challenges, Anahliyah possesses a unique strength to overcome obstacles while remaining true to who she is. She treats adults and peers alike with unwavering politeness, warmth, and respect. Anahliyah's strong character, perseverance, and positive attitude make her a truly deserving nominee and a wonderful role model for our school community!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Emmett Sozinho

School: St. Aloysius School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Scott Smith

Statement:

Emmett is a remarkably kind and caring student who demonstrates outstanding character both inside the classroom and out in his community. He consistently takes initiative to serve others—regularly bringing in his neighbors' trash bins and spending his weekends picking up litter along nearby streets, often filling two to three bags of trash in the process. Emmett's dedication to keeping his neighborhood clean and helping those around him makes him a shining example of Citizenship and Caring. He truly makes our community a better place, and I am so proud to nominate him!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Brantley McPhetridge

School: Sundale Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Monica Avila and Madison Chavez

Statement:

Monica Avila: Brantley truly embodies all the pillars of character. He is trustworthy and chooses honesty, even when it is difficult, while remaining respectful, caring, and fair to everyone around him. Though he is a talented athlete, what stands out most is his deep understanding of teamwork—he never makes the game all about himself. Instead, he celebrates victories and learns from losses alongside his teammates, ensuring everyone who wants to participate feels included and valued. Brantley is humble, kind, and a steadfast source of support and encouragement. I am so proud of Brantley and the wonderful example he sets for those around him!

Madison Chavez: Brantley demonstrates strong Citizenship by consistently making meaningful contributions to our classroom community. He follows expectations, takes full responsibility for his actions, and recognizes that every student plays a vital role in our collective success. Brantley's positive approach, teamwork, and readiness to do his part show a mature understanding of what it means to be a responsible, active member of a community. He is truly deserving of this recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Tt X. Zepeda-Sanchez

School: Tulare Tech Prep High School, Tulare

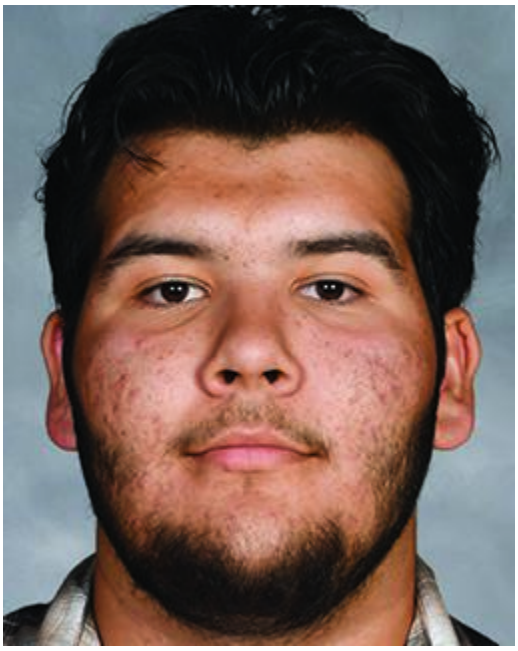
Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Silvia Sausedo

Statement:

Tt is a truly responsible and dedicated student. She arrives at class ready to learn and consistently completes all of her assignments with care. Whenever she misses class, she takes immediate initiative to request her make-up work and ensure she stays fully caught up. Tt's strong work ethic, personal drive, and commitment to academic excellence make her a fantastic role model and a wonderful candidate for this recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Roque Martin

School: Tulare Union High School, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Liliana Avila, Kathy Colvin, and Ms. Martinez

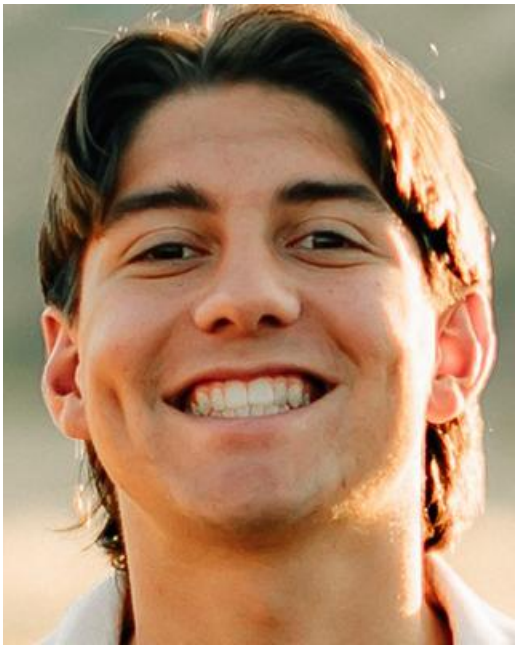
Statement:

Liliana Avila: Roque Martin exemplifies what it means to have HEART. He works tirelessly to meet four-year college eligibility requirements, fully determined to be college-bound. Roque consistently demonstrates kindness, respect, and leadership—always greeting staff and peers, checking in on others, and supporting new or struggling students. Balancing his commitments as a football player, wrestler, front office TA, and lunch cart employee with a positive attitude, Roque is an exemplary student and a proud representative of our Tulare Union Tribe!

Ms. Martinez: Roque consistently displays the pillar of Caring through his everyday actions. He goes out of his way to offer thoughtful help to his peers, teachers, and school staff, always looking for ways to support those around him and make a positive impact in our school community.

Kathy Colvin: Roque Martin demonstrates the Character Counts pillar of Caring through his ongoing kindness, helpfulness, and consideration in the library. He is always willing to lend a helping hand and treats everyone around him with patience and respect. Roque plays a vital role in creating a welcoming, positive environment, showing how deeply he cares about his peers and his school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Gage Junio

School: Tulare Western High School, Tulare

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Tou Lor

Statement:

In my 18 years in education, Gage stands out as one of the most genuine, down-to-earth, and respectful students I have ever known. Academically, Gage excels across all of his classes. He is actively involved in school life, playing varsity sports since his freshman year and enthusiastically participating in dress-up days and lunchtime activities.

Above all else, Gage is simply one of those rare students who goes out of his way to greet others and be a good human being. He possesses the courage and integrity to speak up whenever he sees someone being mistreated. While this level of maturity is typically seen in seniors, Gage has displayed these remarkable qualities from the moment he first walked onto campus as a freshman. He is a truly outstanding young man!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: June Reynoso

School: Waukena Joint Union School, Tulare

Pillar: Caring

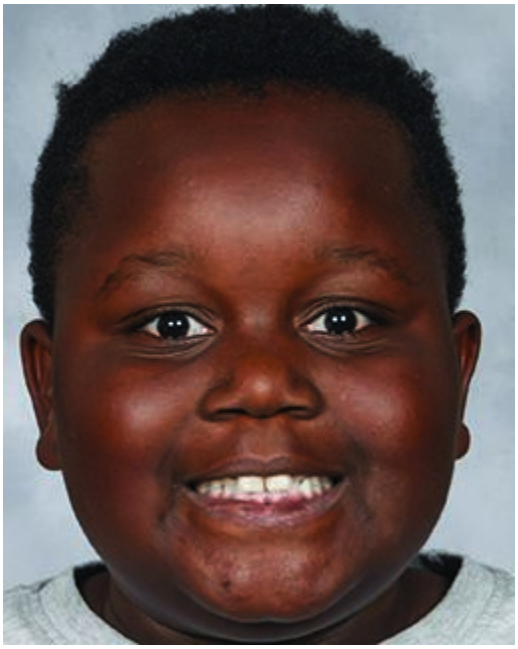
Nominator(s): Jennifer Tenhet

Statement:

June is an absolute sweetheart who consistently demonstrates the pillar of Caring through her kindness, generosity, and helpful spirit.

A wonderful example of her character happened recently when a classmate with special needs was having a difficult day. June gently walked over, reached out her hand, and helped the student up from the floor, saying kindly, "It's okay, I will help you back to your seat." Holding their hand, she slowly guided her classmate back and helped them sit down. It was such a humble, compassionate, and beautiful gesture. June is a magnificent example of empathy for her peers and a true blessing to our classroom!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Zaymir Jones

School: Wilson Elementary School, Tulare

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator(s): Jill Martin

Statement:

Zaymir is an amazing student who consistently demonstrates what Fairness looks like in everything he does. He treats others with respect and kindness, deeply understanding the importance of treating everyone with equity and consideration. Zaymir serves as a wonderful role model for his peers, consistently making positive choices and encouraging others to do the same.

He approaches each day with a bright attitude and strives to give his absolute best effort in all tasks. Zaymir's respectful nature, strong character, and steadfast commitment to doing what is right make him truly deserving of this Character Counts recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Kaylani Alvarez

School: Annie R. Mitchell Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Hannah Mendoza

Statement:

Kaylani is a young lady who truly embodies all six character traits, but the pillar of Respect shines through in everything she does each day. She consistently demonstrates respect not only toward her classmates and teachers, but also toward herself—understanding the true value of hard work and a good education.

I can always count on Kaylani to be doing exactly what is expected of her 100% of the time, a standard of integrity that her peers recognize and admire. She is a shining example of character and a true role model for our school community!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Emma Hernandez

School: Blue Oak Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Fairness

Nominator(s): Mr. Johnson

Statement:

Emma is a wonderful, hardworking student who brightens our classroom every day. She consistently makes an effort to play fair and treat all of those around her with kindness, equity, and respect. Emma's dedication to sportsmanship and inclusion makes her a fantastic role model for her peers. Great job, Emma—you are so deserving of this recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Nichole Cortes

School: Charter Home School, Academy Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Lincy Ramirez

Statement:

From the beginning of the school year, Nichole has consistently demonstrated responsibility, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to her education. As a virtual student, she truly understands the importance of staying on top of her asynchronous assignments while actively participating in live classes. She regularly completes her work on time and takes the initiative to check in with her teacher to ensure nothing is overlooked.

Nichole also demonstrates remarkable responsibility with her attendance. Although enrolled in the afternoon class, she independently joined a Thursday morning session without being asked, adjusting her schedule because her brother attends the in-person program that afternoon. Her proactive mindset, independence, and dedication make her an outstanding role model for virtual learning!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Jay'cion Holliday

School: Conyer Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Lyndsay Gentert

Statement:

Jay’cion is one of the most caring and kind students I have ever had the privilege to teach. During a medical emergency in class, Jay’cion remained remarkably calm and took immediate action to get help for his teacher. In the days that followed, his thoughtful nature truly shone as he continuously checked in—asking if I was resting, making sure I had enough water, and asking how I was feeling.

Throughout the year, Jay’cion consistently encourages his classmates to behave and treat their teachers with kindness. He is a shining example of compassion in action, with a heartfelt care and respect that extends naturally to peers and adults alike. Jay’cion has a rare gift for making those around him feel truly seen, cared for, and valued, making him deeply deserving of this honor!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Makai Sharma

School: Cottonwood Creek Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Mariah Botello

Statement:

Every day, he makes our classroom a kinder, more welcoming place. He consistently checks in on a classmate who needs extra academic support, patiently guiding them through challenges without simply giving away the answers. He extends that same thoughtful assistance to his group and to students throughout the entire room.

He treats classmates and adults alike with genuine kindness and respect, always displaying wonderful manners and deep empathy. By working hard and leading by example, he empowers those around him to feel supported and capable. He is a true model of Character Counts, and I am so grateful to have him in our class!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Bellarose Marquez

School: Creekside Community Day School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Leonardo Castillo

Statement:

Bella merits the distinction for being an exceptionally caring student because she is always looking out for others. She thoughtfully considers how those around her may feel and empathizes with their situations, regardless of how different they might be from her own.

An attentive listener, Bella treats both staff and students with unwavering kindness. Her generosity is remarkable—if she has something to share, she treats it as though it belongs to everyone. She is always the first person in the morning to ask others about their weekend and how their day is going. Bella's bright personality and warm spirit bring light to our entire school community!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Salvador Matthew Salinas

School: Crescent Valley Public Charter School, II Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Danielle Griffiths

Statement:

Matthew is hardworking, honest, compassionate, and truly kind. He consistently demonstrates exceptional courage and resilience in the face of adversity—character traits that will undoubtedly serve him and his community well into the future. It is an absolute privilege to watch him grow, and I cannot wait to see all that he accomplishes next. Congratulations, Matthew! This recognition is well deserved!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Ezekiel Lovci

School: Crestwood Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Kasey Nip

Statement:

Ezekiel began his TK year learning the structure and routines of life as a student, and his growth since then has been truly extraordinary. Over the course of the school year, he has developed remarkable leadership skills and stepped up as a wonderful role model in the classroom. Ezekiel is always eager to lend a helping hand to his teacher and support his peers. His journey and positive influence make him an outstanding candidate for this Character Counts recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Aubree Lopez

School: Crowley Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Ricardo Gil

Statement:

Aubree exemplifies Trustworthiness through her steadfast honesty and dependability. Teachers and classmates know they can rely on her completely, whether she is entrusted with important classroom responsibilities or delivering materials to school staff.

In class, Aubree is always on task, engaged, and ready for the next assignment. She actively participates in discussions and often helps clarify concepts for students who are struggling. Without being asked by a teacher, she gladly steps up to assist her peers with their tasks—showing an unwavering commitment to doing the right thing even when no one is watching. Aubree is a stellar example of character in action!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Milo Garza

School: Denton Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Megan Garza

Statement:

Milo possesses a naturally caring and thoughtful heart. Even at just five years old, he pays close attention to how others are feeling and goes out of his way to ensure no one feels sad or left out. He notices and values kindness in others, often describing school friends simply as “the nicest kid,” showing a remarkable early appreciation for how people treat one another.

Milo’s compassion shines in everything he does. At the golf course, he thoughtfully offers extra buckets of golf balls to other children so they do not go to waste. He asks to pray before dinner and regularly checks to see if those around him are doing okay. While these may seem like small moments, together they reveal a child of extraordinary character—kind, generous, and deeply attentive to the well-being of others. Milo has a very big heart for such a young boy, and he is a truly deserving nominee for this recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Kyaunah Le

School: Divisadero Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Juniva Bojorquez

Statement:

Kyaunah Le is an exceptional student who consistently demonstrates outstanding academic performance, currently holding one of the highest grades in class. She is highly attentive, remains diligently on task, and frequently enriches our learning environment by actively contributing to class discussions. Additionally, her readiness to assist her peers makes her a true asset to our school and an absolute pleasure to have in class!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Emila Romero

School: El Diamante High School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Jessica Cervantes

Statement:

Having the opportunity to coach Emilia Romero has allowed me to see the remarkable person she is both on and off the basketball court. Emilia is someone I know I can trust and depend on completely—whether in the heat of a game, during practice, or as a supportive teammate. She is honest, responsible, and possesses the maturity to hold herself accountable even when it is not easy.

What I appreciate most about Emilia is the deep trust she inspires in those around her. Her teammates know they can rely on her because she leads through her actions, keeps her word, and consistently puts what is right for the team first. Having a player who represents our program with such unwavering integrity is truly special, and Emilia is immensely deserving of this honor!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Luke Jackson

School: Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Lindsay Rose

Statement:

Luke is an incredibly caring and helpful presence in my 3rd-grade Math Enrichment class at ERCLC. Serving as a 6th-grade student volunteer, Luke consistently demonstrates remarkable patience and kindness when guiding younger students, particularly those who require extra support. He willingly works one-on-one with them, offering warm encouragement and helping them grasp math concepts without ever making them feel rushed.

Luke proactively jumps into our math games and activities with minimal direction, always eager to lend a hand wherever he is needed. His kindness, consideration, and genuine willingness to serve others make a profound difference for my students while helping our classroom run seamlessly. Luke is a true role model and a wonderful reflection of the pillar of Caring!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Keira Mariana Montelongo Vences

School: Four Creeks Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Jessica Lopez

Statement:

Mariana is an absolute star, possessing a quiet kindness that leaves a powerful and lasting impact on those around her. I have watched Mariana consistently welcome my students with warmth, positivity, and complete respect.

During think-pair-share activities, she engages effortlessly—remaining patient and encouraging even when a student may be distracted. She celebrates their small wins, praises their efforts, and includes them as equal members of the class. Through her leadership, Mariana sets a high standard: she is always on task, ready to work, and eager to help. By demonstrating such genuine acceptance, she has inspired her classmates to welcome my students without hesitation. Mariana is a true leader in Mrs. Ariana Diaz's classroom and a shining example of character in action!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Emerie Lara

School: Golden Oak Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): HenryAllen Ralston

Statement:

Emerie is the absolute heart of our classroom when it comes to integrity, embodying what it means to be trustworthy every single day. For Emerie, trustworthiness isn't something she turns on and off—it is simply who she is. She is genuinely honest, dependable, and true to her word in everything she does. Whether working independently, collaborating with a partner, or moving around campus, I never have to worry about Emerie; I know without a doubt that she will choose to do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

What makes Emerie truly stand out is how much her classmates rely on her. In group work, she is the partner everyone wants because she always pulls her weight, listens carefully, and keeps her promises. Beyond academics, Emerie is a safe harbor for her peers—she keeps confidence, speaks kindly of others, and stands up for her classmates, earning their complete trust through her fairness, respect, and constant kindness.

As her teacher, Emerie is the student I can hand any important task to, knowing it will be handled with absolute care and honesty. If something ever goes wrong, she possesses the courage and maturity to speak the truth right away—a level of character that is rare and wonderful to see in a third grader. Emerie makes our classroom community stronger, safer, and kinder just by being in it, modeling true trustworthiness through her quiet strength and loyalty. I couldn't be prouder of her, and she is beyond deserving of the Character Counts Award for Trustworthiness!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Felix Ortega

School: Golden West High School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Joy Rubio

Statement:

Felix's character and personality naturally draw people to him—he is truly a bright light on the Golden West campus. Recently, when I needed support with an underclassman who felt disconnected from our school and student body, Felix stepped up without hesitation to make them feel welcomed and valued as part of something bigger.

Even adults on campus recognize his positive impact based on the wonderful things students share about him, which speaks volumes about the depth of his character. Felix actively inspires and empowers underclassmen to build their own leadership skills to make Golden West a better place for everyone. He is a true Trailblazer and a shining example of character in action!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Jacob Ibarra Orozco

School: Goshen Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Celeste Garcia

Statement:

Jacob is an amazing leader both inside and outside the classroom, consistently demonstrating Responsibility and initiative by stepping up to help without ever being asked. He anticipates what needs to be done and can always be counted on to set a positive, respectful example for those around him.

Whether leading his table group, participating in discussions, assisting a classmate, or helping me, Jacob approaches every task with an eager and positive attitude. His leadership comes naturally—he does the right thing simply because of who he is, never for recognition. His classmates look to him as a trusted role model because he is dependable, respectful, and always willing to do his part. Jacob makes our classroom a better place every day, and I am incredibly proud to nominate him for the Kids of Character Award!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Jayden Lujan

School: Grace Christian School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Joanne Cook

Statement:

I am pleased to nominate Jayden for the pillar of Caring in recognition of his genuine willingness to help others and his outstanding leadership. Jayden serves as a wonderful example to younger students—regularly helping clean up after lunch, assisting peers with technology, including students of all ages in recess soccer games, and treating everyone with utmost respect.

Teachers can always count on Jayden to step up and lend a helping hand whenever needed. His vibrant, positive attitude permeates our entire campus, and it is clear that his peers look up to him as a role model. We are so proud of Jayden and cannot wait to see all that he accomplishes this year and in the future!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Valentina Maldonado Sanchez

School: Highland Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Jaiden Davis

Statement:

Valentina truly deserves to be recognized because she is kind to everyone! She is always the first person to step up and play with a friend or partner up with a classmate who needs support.

Valentina models Respect every day at school, setting a wonderful example for her peers on how to treat others with warmth and consideration. She is an absolute joy to have in our school community, and her positive heart makes her a wonderful role model for all!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Juan Rojas

School: Houston Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Marsela Diaz

Statement:

Juan is a caring and compassionate student who has come so far, and he truly deserves to be recognized and celebrated for the incredible growth he has shown. He consistently demonstrates kindness toward others and serves as a thoughtful, supportive friend to his classmates.

Juan's positive progress, caring heart, and steadfast commitment to being his best make him a shining example of character and a student who is truly deserving of this award!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Antonia Mikhael

School: Hurley Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Andre Navarrette II

Statement:

Antonia models Responsibility at Hurley Elementary by taking full ownership of her learning and consistently striving for academic excellence. She takes immense pride in her work, embraces new challenges, and inspires those around her through her dedication. As a collaborative leader, she thoughtfully guides group discussions and supports her classmates with utmost respect and kindness.

Beyond the classroom, Antonia shows exceptional leadership in both Science Olympiad and Orchestra. Her humility, warmth, and supportive nature make her universally loved and admired by her peers. Antonia is a shining example of character in action and truly deserving of this recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Giovanni Martinez Ramirez

School: La Sierra Military Academy Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Gabrel Castro

Statement:

Since day one, this student has gone above and beyond to demonstrate what it means to care for others and his school community. He is responsible, respectful, kind, and always eager to lend a hand. Whether participating in school activities, volunteering at county events, or regularly checking in with staff to see how else he can support, his dedication to serving others is remarkable.

He treats both peers and adults with genuine respect and consistently goes out of his way to help new students feel welcomed on campus. In the classroom, he takes great pride in his academics, asks for guidance when needed, and continually seeks opportunities to grow. His caring spirit, humility, and willingness to serve make him a stellar representative of Character Counts!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Anora Ford

School: Linwood Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Lisa Kruger

Statement:

Anora truly has a heart of gold! She is always the first person to offer a reassuring hug to a classmate who is upset, or step up to help a peer who is hurt or feeling unwell. Since a very young age, Anora has been a steadfast source of comfort for a fellow student navigating anxiety, willingly stepping in as a partner to help them through challenging moments. She does all of this completely on her own initiative—being a compassionate caretaker is simply second nature to her.

Beyond her actions, Anora brings a deep, sincere empathy to her everyday interactions. When she asks someone, "How are you doing?" or "How is your day going?", she pauses and listens intently because she truly cares about the answer. Anora is a wonderful example of the pillar of Caring, and our school community is so fortunate to have such a thoughtful, kind-hearted student!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Isaac Sanchez-Chavez

School: Manuel F. Hernandez Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Raquel Renteria

Statement:

Isaac brings a contagious energy that models Respect in action, voice, and learning. Simple words like "thank you" and "may I" highlight his everyday manners, while his active engagement with peers and classroom routines shows just how deeply he values our learning environment.

In everything he does, Isaac brings a welcoming smile and a positive attitude. He is a delight to know and a true inspiration for our school community. Go, Isaac!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Bella Garcia

School: Mineral King Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Rob Loer

Statement:

Bella is an amazing student who consistently exceeds expectations both academically and in her overall character. The moment she finishes her own assignments, she immediately steps up to help her peers understand their work—she is truly like having a mini-teacher in the room!

Bella is always remarkably respectful, follows all classroom rules, and serves as a stellar model for others on how to behave. She takes full ownership of her learning by completing all classwork and homework, often going above and beyond what is assigned. Kind, hardworking, and a friend to everyone, Bella Garcia is an absolute pleasure to have in class and could not be more deserving of this Character Counts recognition!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Avery Stueve

School: Mountain View Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Erika Headrick

Statement:

From Day 1 of second grade, Avery Stueve has consistently demonstrated what it means to be a model of Responsibility. She always does what is expected and serves as a fantastic role model for her peers.

At Mountain View, we show Mustang P.R.I.D.E. even when things get tough, Avery shows incredible determination, staying focused and making good choices even when others around her may struggle to follow the rules. It takes real courage to do what is right simply because it is right every single day. Thank you, Avery, for being such a responsible second grader and setting such a wonderful example!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Kaisley Akin

School: Oak Grove Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Paula Sbardella

Statement:

Kaisley is an extraordinary example of caring. Since the beginning of the school year, she has shown remarkable compassion toward another classmate with special needs. Every day, she greets him warmly, encourages him, praises his good choices, helps him with his lunch and snacks, and ensures he gets where he needs to go safely. At recess, she plays with him and patiently encourages him to join in with others.

No one asks Kaisley to do these things—her kindness comes naturally. Her genuine empathy, patience, and compassion are remarkable for a second grader, and she serves as a beautiful example of how one child's kindness can make a profound and meaningful difference in another's life!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Alaia Rodriguez Sandoval

School: Pinkham Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Tina Garner

Statement:

Alaia is a wonderful example of Respect in our first-grade classroom. She consistently shows kindness and consideration to everyone around her by using whole-body listening whenever a teacher or classmate is speaking. Alaia demonstrates polite manners every day, always remembering to say "please" and "thank you," and is quick to include others during recess and group activities. Her positive attitude and ability to value everyone's differences make her a fantastic friend and a joyful, respectful leader in our school community!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Javier Leon Velazquez

School: Redwood High School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Angelica Jauregui

Statement:

Throughout his time at Redwood High School, Javier has consistently treated everyone around him with genuine kindness and respect. He listens attentively, speaks thoughtfully, and never hesitates to offer encouragement to those who need it.

Whether welcoming a new student, supporting a classmate having a tough day, or simply holding the door and greeting people by name, Javier's respectful nature shines through in everyday moments. He leads by quiet example rather than seeking attention—showing that true respect means valuing others' feelings and treating people the way he himself would like to be treated. Javier is a true role model and deeply deserving of this recognition.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Zoey Arreola

School: Ridgeview Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Justine Monroe

Statement:

Zoey is one of the most trustworthy students I have ever had the privilege of teaching. Her honesty, integrity, and strong character shine through in everything she does. As Student Council President, she easily earned the trust and respect of both her teachers and peers through her dependability, responsibility, and consistent follow-through on every commitment.

Zoey holds herself to high standards and repeatedly makes choices that reflect her strong personal values. Her quiet strength, sincerity, and genuine care for others make her someone everyone can count on—a true role model whose positive attitude and bright smile light up any room.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Annabelle Gonzalez

School: Riverway Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Kristen Brown

Statement:

Annabelle truly represents what it means to be caring. She possesses an incredible heart for others and is always seeking ways to uplift those around her. What makes her stand out is her initiative—she never waits to be asked. The moment she notices someone in need of help, encouragement, or support, she quietly steps in without hesitation.

Annabelle generously gives her time and attention, consistently putting the needs of others before her own. Her kindness is genuine, selfless, and constant. She is the kind of student who makes everyone around her feel valued and cared for, and our classroom is a better place because of her.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Ellie Camacho

School: Royal Oaks Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Ray Cartagena

Statement:

Ellie has served in Student Leadership for two years and has continuously excelled in this role. Having her as a student this year, I see her leadership skills in action every single day. She has a natural gift for making everyone around her feel welcome, often bringing smiles to her peers with her signature "dad jokes."

Recognizing her exceptional character, Ellie was nominated to represent Royal Oaks as a district-level student representative on the Superintendent's Advisory Committee. She is remarkably responsible with her academics—never missing an assignment and ensuring that any work not completed at school is diligently finished at home. Ellie is a fine example of good citizenship and a fantastic role model for our class and our entire school.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Berkley Towne

School: Sequoia High School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Salud Cobarruvias

Statement:

Berkley, a senior at Sequoia High School, truly defines the pillar of Responsibility. As a standout leader in ASB, she assists teachers with managing the campus school store during break and lunch—mastering budgeting, customer service, and time management skills.

Her exceptional reliability earned her the role of weekly bulletin reader, and she consistently drives campus engagement by structuring monthly themes and crafting school-wide announcements. Polite, respectful, and deeply dedicated, Berkley maintains a strong 3.47 GPA and leads by example every single day.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Autumn Williams

School: Shannon Ranch Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Monica Pasquini

Statement:

Autumn is not only an outstanding scholar, but she is also a model of honesty and trustworthiness. When she found two SPURS tickets on the floor, she immediately chose to do the right thing and turned them in rather than keeping them for herself.

Her integrity and strong character were so impressive that I decided she had truly earned the right to keep the tickets. Autumn is a positive, dependable student who consistently makes great choices and serves as a wonderful example for her classmates. I am so proud of the scholar she is!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Ezequiel Reyes

School: Sierra View Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Laura Mohs

Statement:

Ezequiel “E.Z” as we call him, is one of the most responsible students I have ever taught. He navigates a medical condition with a level of maturity and responsibility that is well beyond his years—knowing exactly when he can manage things independently and precisely when to ask for assistance.

Through it all, E.Z. maintains a positive attitude and handles every situation with a warm smile on his face. His resilience, self-advocacy, and bright spirit make him a joy to have in class and an incredible role model for our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Jackson Wileman

School: St. Paul's School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Malia Matsuo

Statement:

Jackson has been a model student throughout his time at St. Paul's School. He is a welcoming friend to new students, consistently strives for excellence in academics, sports, and extracurriculars, and even organized a school-wide collection to recycle old and worn-out crayons.

In my robotics elective, Jackson proved himself as a standout leader, guiding his team all the way to the regional competition. He consistently goes above and beyond to represent his school, family, and self with pride and positivity. Jackson is a deeply caring and responsible member of our community, making him truly deserving of this recognition.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: JR Zaragoza

School: Stone Corral School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Dolores Gonzalez

Statement:

JR Zaragoza is a remarkably respectful student who consistently upholds our school's expectations. During lunchtime, he waits patiently to be dismissed from the cafeteria and follows directions with ease.

He plays fairly with his peers, shows genuine respect toward classmates and adults alike, and responds wonderfully to guidance. JR is also deeply involved in sports, where he shines by demonstrating outstanding sportsmanship, fairness, and teamwork. His positive attitude and respectful nature make him a wonderful role model for our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Cadence Brooks

School: Sycamore Valley Academy, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Dave Whitmore

Statement:

Cadence goes out of her way every morning to ensure that all students on Sycamore Valley Academy's campus feel cared for and supported. She actively seeks out new students to make them feel welcome, gently helps TK students walk to their classrooms when they are feeling scared, and makes a point to be a comforting friend to anyone who arrives on campus looking sad. Cadence truly embodies what it means to be a Sycamore Valley student, and her compassionate leadership makes our entire school community a better place!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Charles Deniston-Sheets

School: University Preparatory High School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Josh Curtiss

Statement:

Charles demonstrated exceptional character and courage when he witnessed a classmate being spoken to with unkind words. Rather than remaining a passive bystander, Charles immediately stepped in to advocate for his peer, telling the offender, *"Hey friend, that is not the way we talk to our friends."* By standing up for others and promoting kindness in our school community, Charles serves as an inspiring example of courage, citizenship, and respect.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Lennox Clark

School: Valley Life Charter School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Leticia Sullivant

Statement:

Lennox exemplifies true Trustworthiness. We can always depend on her to be honest and keep her word, no matter the situation. For example, when our class has a substitute teacher, Lennox can be trusted to explain classroom procedures and rules clearly so her peers stay accountable and keep the day running smoothly.

When misunderstandings arise among friends, Lennox helps resolve conflict not by taking sides, but by being an honest, neutral voice of truth. She faithfully honors her commitments and lives out our class mission statement every single day. I am pleased and privileged to nominate Lennox for trustworthiness—she thoroughly deserves this honor!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Lily Carter

School: Valley Oak Middle School, Visalia

Pillar: Respect

Nominator(s): Claudia Navarro

Statement:

I would like to honor Lily Carter for consistently demonstrating respect and genuine acceptance toward everyone. Although quiet, Lily treats others with deep dignity and actively ensures that everyone feels welcome and included.

What makes Lily especially deserving of this recognition is the remarkable ability to look beyond differences and appreciate each person for who they are. Lily's positive attitude and authentic acceptance help create a warm, inclusive environment for all, making an outstanding example of respect and kindness in our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Landon Einsele

School: Veva Blunt Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Trustworthiness

Nominator(s): Holli Elliott

Statement:

I am pleased to nominate Landon Einsele for the Character Counts Award in Trustworthiness. Landon consistently demonstrates honesty and integrity through his actions and decisions. He makes responsible choices, stands up for what is right, and sets a positive example for his classmates.

Landon's commitment to doing the right thing makes him a student others can depend on and look to as a true role model. As his teacher, I am especially proud of the courage he shows in standing up for what is right. His strong character, steadfast honesty, and everyday integrity make him someone everyone can trust, leaving a deeply meaningful impact on our entire classroom community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Carter Meza

School: Washington Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Elizabeth McKercher

Statement:

This student is a great student all around—always sharing, friendly, responsible, and consistently looking for ways to help others.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Mila Salazar

School: Willow Glen Elementary School, Visalia

Pillar: Caring

Nominator(s): Kathia Mora

Statement:

Mila consistently demonstrates the Character Counts pillar of Caring through her unwavering kindness, generosity, and deep respect for others. She is always eager to lend a helping hand, offer words of encouragement, and genuinely look out for everyone in her classroom community.

Mila approaches her education with equal dedication—taking great pride in her learning, striving to complete her work accurately, and always giving her absolute best effort. She willingly steps up to volunteer and lead, naturally serving as a role model through her daily choices and humble example. Mila's kind heart, thoughtful nature, and generous spirit make her an outstanding model of what it truly means to care for others.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Alex Tafoya

School: Castle Rock Elementary School, Woodlake

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Carolina Serna

Statement:

Alex is a self-directed learner who consistently manages his time effectively, turns in high-quality assignments on or ahead of schedule, and takes proactive initiative without ever needing reminders. He approaches each school day fully prepared and engaged—arriving equipped with all necessary materials, listening actively during lessons, and contributing thoughtful insights to class discussions.

Beyond his personal academic dedication, Alex serves as an outstanding peer role model. He keeps his workspace neatly organized, reliably upholds classroom expectations, and actively helps foster a focused, positive, and supportive learning environment for his classmates.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Alina Hernandez

School: Francis J. White Learning Center, Woodlake

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Erin Tierce

Statement:

Alina Hernandez is an exceptional example of what it means to demonstrate true Responsibility. Each day, she arrives at school prepared, organized, and eager to learn—often being the very first student to the carpet each morning with a bright, positive attitude. The moment she sits at her desk, her tools are out and she immediately dives into her work with focus and diligence.

Alina's sense of responsibility also shines in how she cares for others. She thoughtfully and respectfully reminds her teacher and classmates when tasks need to be completed, and she can always be counted on to do her part and lend a helping hand.

Her dependability extends far beyond the classroom as well; Alina takes immense pride in helping her mother and caring for her younger brother at home. Even at a young age, she understands the deep value of being reliable, prepared, and kind. Alina's maturity, organization, and willingness to serve others make her an outstanding role model, and I have no doubt she will continue to accomplish great things and make a positive difference wherever she goes!

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Barbara Garcia-Velasquez

School: Woodlake High School, Woodlake

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Lisa Perez

Statement:

Barbara is an outstanding student whose character shines through in everything she does. Now in her fourth year in the dance program, she serves as an exceptional leader in our CTE Advanced Folklórico class, consistently choosing to do what is right and treating everyone around her with warmth, kindness, and respect.

Barbara balances an extraordinary schedule with unwavering dedication—working exceptionally hard to maintain excellent grades while competing on both the WHS Lady Tigers wrestling team and a competitive traveling team. Beyond her own drive for excellence, Barbara possesses a rare leadership quality: she naturally inspires those around her to reach higher and do their best. Through her responsibility, caring heart, and respectful spirit, Barbara sets a high standard for her peers and stands out as a true role model in our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Maddox Castellanoz

School: Woodlake Valley Middle School, Woodlake

Pillar: Citizenship

Nominator(s): Misty Correa

Statement:

Maddox has been an outstanding member of the Woodlake Unified community over the past three years, eagerly embracing every opportunity and making a lasting, positive impact both inside and outside the classroom.

His achievements reflect a remarkable dedication to excellence across disciplines. As a key member of the Woodlake Robotics Team, he helped qualify the team for championships in both Boston and Long Beach—earning prestigious awards and official recognition from the School Board. On the field, he demonstrated exceptional athletic talent and sportsmanship, earning a well-deserved spot on the inaugural All-Star baseball team in 2025.

Beyond these accomplishments, he consistently models what it means to be a true leader. He proactively steps up whenever he sees an opportunity to make a difference, offering a helping hand without ever needing to be asked. Leading by example through responsibility, integrity, and a genuine commitment to supporting those around him, he represents Woodlake with immense pride and serves as an inspiring pillar of our school community.

Tulare County Office of Education
CHARACTER COUNTS! Week 2026
Visalia Times Delta 2-Page Ad



Student Name: Adam Rodriguez

School: AcCel Yettem Learning Center, Yettem

Pillar: Responsibility

Nominator(s): Debbie Michaelian

Statement:

Adam Rodriguez is an exceptional young man who truly exemplifies the Character Counts pillar of Responsibility. He consistently does what is expected of him, holding himself to high standards in everything he undertakes.

Adam approaches every challenge with perseverance, a strong determination to succeed, and an enthusiastic willingness to learn. His dependable work ethic and commitment to personal growth make him a fantastic role model for his peers and deeply deserving of this honor.