

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.

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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!

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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.

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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.

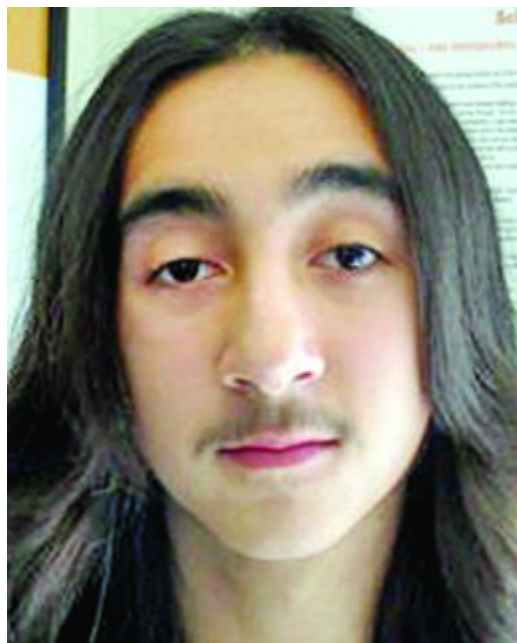
Every day, Andrew brings warmth to those around him. I teach in two distant classrooms, and daily, Andrew walks with me between them, asking how I am doing and offering to carry my things. These small gestures reflect a much bigger truth: Andrew truly notices people.

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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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!

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Student Name: Henry De La Fuente

School: Tipton School, Tipton

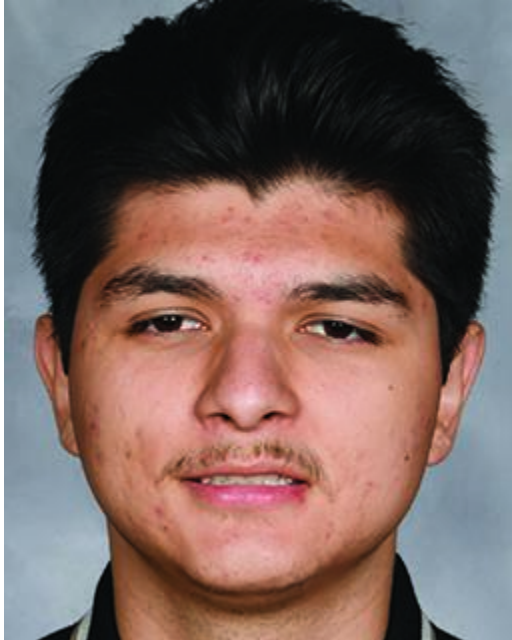
Pillar: Caring

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!

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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!

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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!

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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.

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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.

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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!

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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!

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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.

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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!

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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!

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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!

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Student Name: Omar Beltran

School: Maple Learning Center Tulare

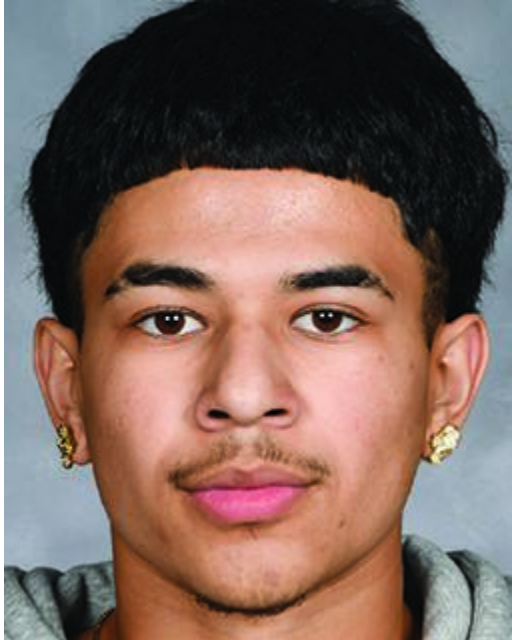
Pillar: Caring

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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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!

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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.

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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!

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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!

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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!