

Tulare County  
Office of Education

*Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools*

# news galleryweek

October 19, 2022

## Tulare County Red Ribbon Celebration set for October 27

The annual Tulare County Red Ribbon Celebration is right around the corner!

The event will be held Thursday, October 27 from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. on the Kids Corral/Toyota

Terrace Area at Valley Strong Ballpark, located at 300 N. Giddings St. in Visalia. The Tulare County Red Ribbon Celebration allows students and families to participate in safe, educational, and fun activities without the use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. In addition, the event will be a showcase of positive choices and opportunities for the youth of the Valley.

The first 200 attendees to arrive at Valley Strong Ballpark will receive a complimentary meal of a hot dog, chips, and soda. Churrolicious and LuLu's Kettlecorn will also be at the event for those wanting to make food purchases.

During the event, attendees will be treated to performances by Golden West High School and Redwood High School ProYouth afterschool dance teams and music from HITZ 104.9. Tickets for raffle prizes will also be handed out during the event with winners announced at random times. Goodie bags and t-shirts will also be given away.

Thirty-two booths will be on-site, including the California Highway Patrol, Visalia Police Department, Tulare County Sheriff's Office, Counter Drug Taskforce, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mending Fences, Community Services Employment Training, Family



HealthCare Network, Tulare County Public Health, Visalia Unified School District, Family Services of Tulare County, and United Way.

The Red Ribbon Celebration is a partnership between the Tulare County Office of Education, the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency, and a myriad of other county and city resources.

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## **Special Services receives five-year outreach grant to support mental wellness throughout the county, partners with CHOICES Programs**



TCOE's Special Services was recently awarded a federal SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration) grant for a new program entitled Project AWARE. The grant will be used to support mental wellness throughout the entire county for the next five years.

Key elements of the grant include support to increase the number of school counselors in Tulare County school districts, and onsite outreach and trainings to students, educators, and communities. The mental wellness outreach activities include substance use prevention/intervention presentations and school safety awareness trainings provided by TCOE's CHOICES Programs.

A third element of Project AWARE is a student-led component. Students will have the opportunity to create conversation-generating video messages, or shorts, about mental health and mindfulness to share on social media.

"We are excited that Project AWARE will provide mental health outreach activities to Tulare County's 100,000 students and 10,000 educators directly through their schools," said Tiffany Stark, the program's coordinator. "The grant will also serve to increase educators' abilities to detect symptoms of mental health, substance abuse, and other disorders."

Project AWARE partners include the California Department of Health Care Services and the California Department of Education, along with local partners Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency, The Parenting Network, The Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council, Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District, and the California Friday Night Live Partnership.

For more information on Project AWARE, contact Tiffany Stark at [tiffanys@tcoe.org](mailto:tiffanys@tcoe.org).

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## Career Technical Education lessons introduced at community schools



Students at Mid-County and Superior community schools are learning a wide variety of vocational skills and lessons this year. Led by teacher Angel Olea, the lessons are incorporating various building trades, including plan development, grading, concrete, framing, irrigation, and electrical. This fall, the lessons will extend to numerous other trades, thanks to curriculum purchased by the schools.

A visit to Mid-County Community School this fall will find students engaged in a variety of projects to prepare for series of new buildings. Last week, students operated a small tractor to move earth from one side of the campus to the site of the new buildings, while others used a vibration plate compactor to level the soil. Next week, the students will erect a shed for their tools – the first of four new buildings. Following the shed, students will create an outdoor coffee vending area to serve employees who work at the adjacent TCOE Doe Avenue site and install two new greenhouses.



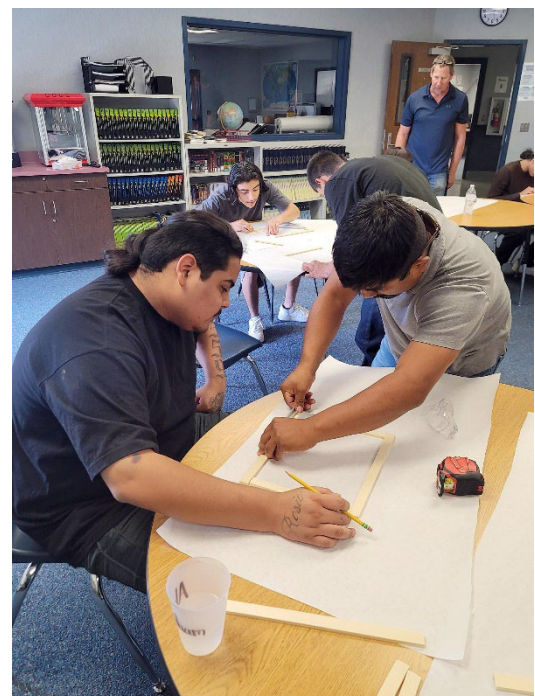
Olea began teaching the Career Technical Education (CTE) lessons at both sites in January 2022, having worked for the past six years as a truancy officer at Mid-County and later as a CTE teacher at the Juvenile Detention Facility. Joseph, a senior at Mid-County, appreciates the new curriculum. “This was completely new to most of us; it’s amazing what we’ve been able to learn,” he said. “Mr. Olea has been amazing too. He really cares for us.”



Last spring, students at Mid-County cleared an area of the site that shares a fence line with the Doe Avenue Complex. With Olea’s guidance, the students constructed a variety of beautiful ground level and raised garden containers. The students planted various vegetables and, in the process, received hands-on lessons in plant science and irrigation system design. “Once the planters were complete, we had neighboring TCOE employees and parents stop to ask if they could buy a container, or if we would make one for them,” smiled Matt Lee, Mid-County’s lead teacher.

Lee reports that the construction trades will be augmented by design work. “Mr. Olea is already showing our students how to read and draw plans,” he said. “In the near future, we hope they will be doing their own designs utilizing Tinkercad, which will also integrate with our new 3D printer.”

Impressed with students work last spring, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire and Special Services administrators Tammy Bradford and Sarah Hamilton encouraged the idea of Mid-County students developing a coffee and snack service operation similar to the Redwood Center Café operated at the Mooney administration building. This fall, Lee anticipates the new MC Café will open with coffee and fresh-baked pastries from the Mid-County kitchen. On select mornings each week, the items will be available for purchase by employees and visitors to the Doe Avenue Complex.



Community school teachers will supplement Olea’s construction trades lessons with a hybrid online/hands-on career curriculum known as Paxton/Patterson College & Career Ready Labs. First used in partnership with Tulare County Probation for students served at the Juvenile Detention Facility, the Paxton/Patterson labs include units on careers in health

science and construction. Olea reports that the curriculum can be used during wet winter days, with each unit taking about 10-15 weeks. For each trade, the labs include information on additional training students may need to obtain and where they can find it in Tulare County. Senior Matt, who has enjoyed learning to drive the tractor and build the garden beds, is looking forward to the Paxton/Patterson lab on plumbing.

“Plumbing is the area that really caught my attention,” he said. “Plumbing and electrical, too.”

“Our goal in introducing CTE to the community school students is to create interest,” Lee said. “We want these students and those we serve in the future to see the possibilities they have to do what they love and to make a good living at it.”



Photos above:

~Mid-County Community School students are pictured engaged in a variety of construction trades to complete garden containers, a shed, and other projects. Under the direction of CTE teacher Angel Olea, the students are gaining experience they can use in pursuing employment once they complete their high school or adult school programs.



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## Former TCOE employee, Marilyn Ornelas, honored with WIB Innovators by Design award



Marilyn Ornelas, a former eligibility specialist assistant for TCOE, was honored last Wednesday with an Innovators by Design award in the Youth Services category. She received her award at the Innovators by Design luncheon, which is sponsored by the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County (WIB). The award is given to those who have shown innovation, perseverance, and the ability to accomplish big goals during the last program year.

Ornelas participated in the WIB's Youth@Work program, which helps disconnected young adults secure employment and education that will help launch their careers. TCOE's Services for Education & Employment (SEE) is the Youth@Work service provider in the Porterville area.

After graduating from California State University, Monterey Bay, Ornelas was unable to start her career after being told in multiple interviews she needed more experience for the jobs she had applied to. As a last resort, Ornelas went to a Porterville staffing agency, which referred her to SEE and the Youth@Work program.



Ornelas was enrolled and began working with case manager Sandra Pina, who encouraged her not to settle for any job and reflect on what she really wanted to do. Wanting to help others like herself, Ornelas was in luck since SEE needed assistance with intake and eligibility. From that, Ornelas was able to gain work experience at SEE's Visalia office. When a full-time eligibility specialist assistant job opened in August 2021, Ornelas applied and was hired. She made the job her own by creating and refining processes for a more efficient and better Youth@Work customer experience.

After serving over 1,000 young adults during her one-and-a-half-year tenure with SEE, Ornelas was armed with the experience and confidence to apply for a job that aligned with her degree and her goal. Today, she is counseling teenagers at Pioneer Middle School in Porterville, a job she is very passionate about.

Ornelas said the Youth@Work program was a “lifesaver,” and realized that what she thought was a struggle turned out to be a “beautiful stepping stone along the way.”

For more on Ornelas, watch her finalist video [here](#).

To learn more about the SEE program, visit [www.tcoe.org/SEE](http://www.tcoe.org/SEE).

Photos above:

*~ Marilyn Ornelas, a former eligibility specialist assistant for TCOE, was honored last Wednesday with an Innovators by Design award in the Youth Services category.*

*~ From left to right: employment services coordinator Darlene Tyndal, employment benefits specialist Benny Rivera, former eligibility specialist assistant Marilyn Ornelas, friend Brianna Galindo, and mom Norma Ornelas.*

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## Around the County

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### Dinuba academy pathway recognized as Linked Learning Gold



The [Construction Management Academy](#) pathway in the Dinuba Unified School District was recognized as Linked Learning Gold at an event Tuesday afternoon in Dinuba. Gold certification represents the highest quality standard for Linked Learning pathways and means that Dinuba Unified is excelling at increasing equity and preparing students for both college and career. The pathway is the first to become Gold Certified in Central California.

Linked Learning Gold pathways integrate academics aligned to college-ready requirements with sequenced, high-quality career technical education, work-based learning, and comprehensive student supports. Gold certified pathways provide the highest quality experience that young people need to graduate from high school ready for college, and prepared to fully participate in the economy and civic life.

Research shows that when districts implement Linked Learning with fidelity and achieve Gold, students have higher rates of engagement and higher graduation rates than their peers at traditional high schools.



For coverage of the event, check out KMPH FOX26 video and story [here](#).

For more on Linked Learning pathways and certifications, visit <https://www.linkedlearning.org/>.

Photo above:

~ The Construction Management Academy pathway in the Dinuba Unified School District was recognized as Linked Learning Gold at an event Tuesday afternoon in Dinuba. Photo Credit: KMPH FOX26

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## Mission Oak High School hosts Unified Sports kickoff game



In cooperation with Special Olympics Northern California, the Mission Oak High School athletic department hosted its first Unified Sports event on Wednesday. According to the Special Olympics [website](#), Unified Sports joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

Wednesday's event was a “kickoff” soccer match featuring Unified Partners and Mission Oak athletes. The Mission Oak Unified team was comprised of players from the Mission Oak boys and girls soccer teams and Mission Oak students with special needs. The entire campus was invited to come out and support. They had the opportunity to meet the Unified Athletes, all under the umbrella of sportsmanship. The event was about inclusion and acceptance for all, and was a great opportunity for all students to demonstrate true sportsmanship.

“What (Mission Oak soccer players) have done for our kids it's greatly appreciated,” said one parent. “Keep doing the great things you are doing. This meant the world to not just our students but to their families. We are so proud of you all for making their day and...year. And thank you too, on behalf of our kids, to (Mission Oak athletic director, Osama) Hamid for making this special game and day (possible). This game made happy memories for parents, families, and especially our kids.”

Hamid said the school plans on having similar events with track and field, and basketball later this year with the ultimate goal of forming a Unified team to compete with other Unified schools.



Photos above:

~ Mission Oak High School boys and girls soccer players gave medals to participants in the kickoff Unified Sports soccer match at Mission Oak on Wednesday.

~ Mission Oak High School boys and girls soccer players, along with other athletes, helped out at the kickoff soccer match.

Around the County is a regular feature of TCOE's News Gallery Week. To be considered for this section, Tulare County districts are encouraged to share major student, school, and district achievements and high-resolution photography with Rob Herman, communications director, at [robh@tcoe.org](mailto:robh@tcoe.org).

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To receive the News Gallery Week, sign up [here](#), or contact Jennifer Fisher at [jenniferf@tcoe.org](mailto:jenniferf@tcoe.org) or (559) 733-6172.