

Tulare County
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

news galleryweek

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Tulare County educators, students featured in upcoming ABC30 Children First special



Tulare County Office of Education's Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention (NEOP) program and students from Terra Bella Elementary School and Summit Charter Intermediate Academy will be featured in the latest edition of ABC30's *Children First*, airing Sunday, March 20.

According to Feeding America, the number of children facing hunger in the United States rose during the pandemic from 10 million in 2019 to nearly 12 million children in 2020. As March is National Nutrition Month, ABC30 has chosen to focus the half-hour

special, hosted by news anchors Graciela Moreno and Jason Oliveira, on local programs connecting families with nutritious food and fitness.



NEOP nutritionist Alexandra Rogers was filmed at Terra Bella Elementary conducting a Harvest of the Month lesson for students. The segment focuses on communities in the Central Valley that are “food deserts” – rural areas that don’t have nearby grocery stores with fresh fruits and produce. The segment also includes an interview with Veronica Andrade from Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA), which partners with NEOP to support nutrition education. Through the grant that supports the NEOP program, HHSA recently worked to install a large refrigerated case at a Terra Bella convenience store to give local shoppers fresh produce options.

The special will also feature an interview with Jose Luis Espino, a physical education teacher at Summit Charter Intermediate Academy within the Burton School District in Porterville. Espino inspires his students to take their fitness seriously on and off campus. During the school’s distance learning period last year, Espino created daily exercise videos to get students and family members moving via Zoom.



Also, Valley Children's Hospital doctors will address childhood obesity and dispel myths about what is really in food families may think is healthy. A local chef will offer tips on how to get kids to eat fruits and vegetables, while the Fresno Metro Ministry will teach parents and kids how to change up family meals with healthier ingredients.

The latest *Children First* special, "Family, Food & Fitness," will air on numerous streaming apps this week or on the station **Sunday, March 20 at 6:30 p.m.** For more information on *Children First* and to see past episodes, visit www.abc30.com/childrenfirst.

Photo above:

~ TCOE nutritionist Alexandra Rogers will be featured in an upcoming ABC30 Children First special, entitled "Family, Food & Fitness," which airs Sunday, March 20.

~ As part of its latest Children First special, ABC30 captured students at Terra Bella Elementary enjoying a Harvest of the Month lesson. Dietician Alexandra Rogers introduced students to black beans and salsa, a healthier alternative to refried beans.

~ Juan Luis Espino, left, supervises students doing squats at Summit Charter Intermediate Academy in Porterville. Espino, a physical education teacher, is also featured in the latest Children First story, "Family, Food & Fitness."

Tulare County Science Fair projects selected to advance to state competition



Hundreds of children and family members attended the annual STEAM Expo on Saturday to enjoy hands-on science, technology, engineering, art, and math activities, and to view free shows at the TCOE Planetarium.

Prior to the opening of the Expo, the Tulare County Science & Engineering Fair began with several dozen student exhibits that addressed real-world issues. This year, students in elementary, middle, and high school worked alone or in teams to create 35 projects for the annual fair. Students applied the scientific method to explore issues in Earth and Space Sciences, Life Sciences, Engineering and Mathematics, and Chemistry.



While judges interviewed students about their Science Fair projects, visitors to the STEAM Expo built rockets and hot air balloons, programmed a variety of small robots, engaged in art projects, and learned about native plants and animals from representatives of Circle J-Norris Ranch, the Sequoia Riverlands Trust, and the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. In the planetarium, visitors enjoyed back-to-back showings of the popular program, CAPCOM GO! *The Apollo Story*.

At the end of the day, an awards ceremony was held to announce the winners of the Tulare County Science & Engineering Fair. A complete list of winners is available at tcoe.org/STEAMExpo/fair/results.

The Tulare County students advancing to the California State Science Fair, being held virtually **April 12** are:

Micah Bailey, Miguel Pedraza, and Michael Miralez

Westfield Elementary School, Porterville
Water Has Bacteria

Ella Boiano

Three Rivers Elementary School, Three Rivers
How Low Can You Go?

Aaliyah Paggi

Three Rivers Elementary School, Three Rivers
Color of Egg Yolk

Grace Jenkins

Springville Elementary School, Springville
Blanket Battle

Chevy Biber, Samantha Freed, and Kamlynn Newlin

Westfield Elementary School, Porterville
Soil Erosion

Anthony Andrzejewski, Christopher Hernandez, and Esperanza Salazar

Mission Oak High School, Tulare
Finding the Best Truss Structure for the Lightest Yet Strongest Bridge

Photos above:

TCOE Assistant Superintendent Andrea Perez poses with (l-r) Miguel Pedraza, Micah Bailey, and Michael Mirelez of Westfield Elementary in Porterville. The students were finalists in the annual Tulare County Science & Engineering Fair with their project *Water Has Bacteria*, which will advance to the state competition next month.

Hundreds of family members enjoyed hands-on science and technology activities at the STEAM Expo, which was held in conjunction with the Science & Engineering Fair March 12.

Burton Middle School opens Little Library through Readership Project



Burton Middle School hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony last Friday for their new Little Free Library, also known as a Little Library. The library was made possible through the TCOE-led Readership Project, which was funded by a California Department of Education Comprehensive Literacy Development Grant.

Research found that adding books to home libraries increases reading achievement, Readership co-lead Jenean Bray said. The Readership Project builds literacy by providing books for family and community events. With Little Libraries, everyone in the community can have access to books 24 hours a day, all year.

“Through the Little Library at Burton Middle School, we hope to inspire a love of reading, build community, and spark creativity by fostering neighborhood book exchanges,” said Bray.

Students Daphne Phillips and Jazmin Rose Regaspi painted Burton’s Little Library and were both proud to be a part of the special project. Phillips painted the [left side](#) with people holding hands around the Earth while Regaspi painted a bulldog – the school’s mascot – on the [right side](#). “It’s a really big statement because it’s going to be on this school for a really long time. So it was really a fun experience to be a part of that,” Phillips said.

The goal of Readership is to build school capacity for effective literacy and comprehensive English language development for English learners. This includes opportunities to develop instruction for biliteracy and primary literacy. Readership’s mission is to increase reading achievement by cultivating and promoting literacy that engages adolescents to become self-motivated, avid readers and writers influenced and inspired by personal and cultural perspectives through authentic experiences with books.





There are over 40 Little Free Libraries in Tulare County. To find a Little Free Library near you, visit littlefreelibrary.org.

For more on what Readership is and does, check out this [video](#).

Photos above:

~ Students and teachers cheer as Burton Middle School principal Casey Rangel cuts a red ribbon during a ceremony for the opening of the school's Little Free Library.

~ Little Free Libraries encourage book sharing while giving communities access to books 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Tulare students recognized for Pursuing Victory with Honor



In partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Greater Tulare, TCOE's CHARACTER COUNTS! Program recognized this winter's Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) student-athletes at a breakfast last week. The Kiwanis Club of Greater Tulare recognizes student-athletes, nominated by their coaches, each season for their sportsmanship. The awards included a certificate, a PVWH pin, and a lawn sign that read "An Athlete of Character Lives Here."

Below is a list of the Pursuing Victory with Honor award winners along with a quote from their coaches.

Mission Oak High School

Jennifer Rios – girls wrestling: “Jenny is a varsity wrestler who took third in the Southern Valley Championships which consists of 43 different schools. She's a leader by example and says a lot without saying much – a remarkable young lady. Not only is she a great wrestler, but she is also an incredibly hard worker. She pushes herself at practice every day and maintains a 4.0 GPA.”

Gurbir Thandi – basketball: “Gurbir has gone far and above what is expected of him as a student-athlete. He is respected by his team and serves as a team captain. He is responsible and a leader on the court and in the classroom. Gurbir also serves as a (teacher’s assistant) in the (Intervention Resource Classroom) IRC classroom at Mission Oak where he is an excellent peer mentor and role model for our most at-risk students. Gurbir would like to come back to Mission Oak after college and be a teacher.”



Tulare Union High School

Reese Baldwin – girls wrestling: “She's a humble, quiet leader who works hard and is very respectful. In her first year wrestling, she won EYL and made it to the Masters tournament. She is responsible on the mat and in the classroom where she has a 4.6 GPA.”

Jadon Cordova – boys wrestling: “Jadon is a multi-sport athlete with a 4.3 GPA. He is a captain and state qualifier. Jadon is an honest person who is dedicated to hard work and amazing leadership on and off the mat. He gives all he has to Tulare Union in everything he does.”

Tulare Western High School

Abigail De La Torre – girls wrestling: “Abigail is a first-year wrestler who improved every day, wanted to work harder for herself and her team, and looks forward to coming back next year. She has been a very respectful and caring young lady. She always worked hard during practice and looked out for her fellow wrestlers. She is a very supportive and thoughtful person.”

Anthony Resendiz – boys wrestling: “Anthony is always the first at practice and the last to leave. He is the definition of ‘Pursuing Victory with Honor’. He always has a great smile and is eager to learn. Anthony is a respectful, responsible young man who is a joy to be around.”

Photos above:

~ Tulare PVWH award winners pose for a photo following a breakfast honoring them.

~ Jennifer Rios is a PVWH award winner.

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