

Tulare County
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

news galleryweek

May 11, 2022

Slick Rock Student Film Festival at the Fox Theatre Friday



The 2022 Slick Rock Student Film Festival – Central California’s largest student film competition — returns to the Visalia Fox Theatre on Friday, May 13. The festival will begin at 9:00 a.m. with 200 middle and high school films screened back to back until approximately 3:30 p.m. The films being screened received a “Premiere Cut” designation and were selected for the honor from 330 films entered by students from 44 Central Valley middle schools and high schools.

At 5:15 p.m., students who played a central role in producing Slick Rock “Premiere Cut” films will walk the red carpet into the theater. The awards ceremony will begin at 6:15 p.m. The public is welcome to attend the screenings and the awards ceremony is free.

“I encourage the public to drop by the Fox Theatre Friday to catch some of this year’s entries,” said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. “In many cases, the

students are producing professional-level films, learning valuable skills that will help them in careers that require creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.”



Middle and high school students in the six south Central Valley counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, and Tulare were eligible to compete in the festival. Middle school students (grades 6-8) could enter films in six categories, while high school students (grades 9-12), had a choice of 12 categories.

Slick Rock is generously supported by the Tulare County Suicide Prevention Task Force, ABC30, EECU, and Tulare County HHSA Programs (Operation Prevention; Tobacco-Free Coalition; and the Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services).

A Premiere Cut screening schedule will be available at tcoe.org/SlickRock on Thursday, May 12.

Photos above:

~ A scene from “Before They Get You,” an entry in the Middle School Blockbuster category by students from Heartland Charter School.

~ A scene from “Choose Life,” an entry in the Opioids, Fentanyl, and Marijuana Prevention Public Services Announcement category by students from Redwood High School.

Migrant Journalism Project returns with five new editions this spring



Last week, the Migrant Education Region VIII Journalism Project launched the first of five new editions of *The Migrant Voice*. Students from six Dinuba-area elementary schools attended a reception at the TCOE Planetarium & Science Center to receive copies of their newspaper, hot off the press.

Four additional editions are being printed this month featuring the work of migrant students in numerous other Tulare and Kings county school districts. The journalism program began in the fall of 2015 with the first edition of *The Migrant Voice* published in February 2016.

The articles written for the first 2022 edition stemmed from a field trip the Dinuba students took to the World Ag Expo in February. The articles highlight several innovative new products, including the Wheel Burro – a robotic harvest transport – and DCC Waterbeds – waterbeds for cows. The edition also features interviews with vendors at the Expo.

The Migrant Journalism Project was created as an English language development tool. Through the process of interviewing people, migrant students gain confidence in their abilities to research, speak, write, and communicate their stories.

To see past copies of *The Migrant Voice* and chronicle the development of this state-recognized program, visit tcoe.org/MigrantEd/MigrantVoice. For more information, contact Anabel González at anabelg@tcoe.org.

Tulare County students do well at National History Day – California state competition



Two Tulare County students received special commendations at the National History Day – California competition last week.

Angelina Castellanos, a student at Dinuba High School, was given an honorable mention award in the Senior Individual Performance category for her project, *Lewis Hine: The Debate of Child Labor and the Diplomacy that Followed*.

Tanner Narahara, an eighth-grade student at Ridgeview Middle School in Visalia, won the Dr. Larry W. Sheffield Young Historian's Award for his project, *America's Grave Injustice: The US Sacrifice of Japanese Americans for National Security*.

Finalists in the National History Day – Tulare County competition were selected in February. Nearly 40 projects were chosen as finalists, making them eligible to advance to the state competition. For a list of National History Day – Tulare County finalists, visit tcoe.org/HistoryDay/results.

Photo above:

~ Angelina Castellanos is pictured performing at National History Day – Tulare County. Angelina received an honorable mention for her project, Lewis Hine: The Debate of Child Labor and the Diplomacy that Followed, at the National History Day – California competition last week.

Visalia students recognized for Pursuing Victory with Honor



In partnership with the Visalia Kiwanis, TCOE's CHARACTER COUNTS! Program celebrated this spring's Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) student-athletes at a lunch last week. The Visalia Kiwanis 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.

Central Valley Christian High School

Allison Reed — girls track and field: “Allison Reed exemplifies what it means to have great character in the classroom and on the track....As a captain, she has shown quiet leadership by caring for teammates and being responsible each and every day. Allison does a great job of seeing how teammates are doing and giving them a word of encouragement. She is also very respectful and helpful, willing to help however she can whether that's putting high jump bars back on at a meet or packing up after a track meet. Allison is respectful of opponents and officials and congratulates her fellow competitors. She truly exemplifies the values of respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.”

Theodore Smalley — boys track and field: “Theodore Smalley is a great athlete, student, and person who personifies all six of the Pillars of Character. He is the first to congratulate a teammate or opponent on a great race, and also the first to encourage someone who had a disappointing race or is struggling with the workout. Teddy is respectful and responsible. He doesn't take a short cut and is a great leader who encourages others to follow his example. Teddy will often lead the pole vaulters and jumpers through their workouts when the coach isn't present. The CVC track and field program will miss Teddy's positive attitude and responsibility next year as he moves on to college.”

El Diamante High School

Marley Thompson — girls swimming: “Marley Thompson is an amazing student athlete who has changed the culture of our swim team at El Diamante High. She comes to practice every day, prepared, ready to work hard, and most importantly, with an infectious positive attitude. Over the course of her four years and especially though the pandemic, she never wavered in her commitment to the team, her goals, and excellence in everything she does...She makes everyone around her feel valued, included, and a part of the team. She is the first one to celebrate her teammates' successes. She is a joy to be around, and it has been an honor to watch her grow into such an outstanding young woman.”

Michael Gandola — boys tennis: “Michael Gandola is a student-athlete of the highest character. He demonstrates respect to his coaches, teammates, and his opponents. As the top player on our team, Michael models good sportsmanship on and off the court. In the absence of on-court referees or umpires, tennis opponents must know the rules and sometimes make difficult choices. Michael shows respect for the traditions of the sport in everything he does. He competes fairly. Michael Gandola wins with grace and loses with dignity.”

Golden West High School

Araceli Velasco — girls track and field: “Araceli demonstrates every category of the ideal student-athlete person of character. She is incredibly respectful to everyone she

meets and is the first to congratulate others on their accomplishments. She is a leader by example and is one of the last to leave practice every day. She does this all while maintaining exceptional grades academically. She is involved in multiple clubs on campus, and still manages to be successful and committed to them all. Araceli is incredibly caring towards those around her, never hesitating to help a teammate work on a skill. She lives every aspect of her life with the goal of excellence, while lifting up those around her.”

Saul Figueroa — boys track and field: “Saul has grown to be an exceptional leader for Golden West track and field, earning the title of captain for this season. He is reliable, respectful to teammates and competitors, and outworks his competition each and every day of practice...He also is the best kind of teammate — encouraging them to work hard, caring about their personal struggles, and helping them make good decisions. Saul shows excellent character by respecting all of his teachers, coaches, teammates, officials, and competitors...Saul’s personal sacrifices outside of school have enabled him to understand the commitment level needed to be successful in life.”

Mt. Whitney High School

Veronica Schnuelle — girls track and field: “Veronica has been a member of the volleyball teams for all four years and played basketball for two years. Veronica is the first person on the track team to welcome new athletes to the team. I have heard many times of athletes saying that when they came out for track and didn’t know anyone, Veronica was the one who welcomed them and showed them what to do. Veronica also shows respect for her opponents by helping them if they need help, and cheering for them while they are competing...She enjoys helping with the leadership of the team, giving team talks, and correcting athletes’ behaviors that are not living up to the standards of the program.”

AJ DeLeon — boys track and field: “AJ has played football and done track for all four years of high school. AJ was selected this season because of his level of caring for his teammates...If there is a teammate who is falling behind, AJ is one of the first athletes to encourage and help them. If there are athletes who don’t know others on the team, AJ will greet them and help them feel included. Besides caring for his teammates, he is very focused on his own performance. He often will ask questions of his coaches on ways that he can improve. He not only takes advantage of every opportunity to cheer for his own teammates, but he will also cheer for athletes from other teams...”

Redwood High School

Dominic Nguyen — boys tennis: “Dominic is a two-year varsity member of the Redwood tennis team who demonstrates leadership and sportsmanship. Dominic is one of the most mature student-athletes I have encountered in over 20 years of coaching. When we lost a close playoff match to Centennial, several parents and their coach complimented us afterward on how dignified Dominic and our team was.

Centennial's athletic director wrote 'Following our matches today, Redwood #1 player Dominic Nguyen, who played two tough matches against Brett, came up to him to ask to take a picture with him. What a great kid! How humble. What a great kid!'"

Nizhoni Kears — girls track and field: "Nizhoni Kears is a three-year member of the Redwood track and field team who constantly demonstrates strong leadership qualities and a high-level of citizenship. I quickly noticed her natural ability to earn the trust and respect of her peers. She leads by example in all that she does and her level of commitment, sportsmanship, dedication, perseverance, and selflessness to her teammates and to our program have been just some of the reasons why she has become such a respected leader on our team. Ultimately, I believe that the genuine trust that she earns from her teammates is due to her strong morals and good overall character."

Around the County

Hope School District, Harmony Magnet Academy, Olive Street School, and Palm School receive state award



In late April, Hope School District (Porterville), Harmony Magnet Academy (Strathmore), Olive Street Elementary School (Porterville), and Palm Elementary School (Orosi) were [announced](#) as 2022 California Pivotal Practice (CAPP) Award Program winners by the California Department of Education (CDE). The CAPP award is newly created and being used in place of the California Distinguished Schools (DS) Program. It celebrates schools and districts that implemented an innovative practice during the 2020–21 school year, when California required schools to offer distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statewide, CDE honored 727 schools and 121 school districts for their demonstrated efforts to support students in four target areas: Student Engagement, Distribution of Technology, Nutrition Services, and Social Emotional Well-Being of Students. CAPP Award winners completed an online application highlighting an innovative practice in one of the four target areas that was implemented during the 2020–21 school year. It is anticipated that the CDE will transition back to the California DS Program in 2023.

Hope School District was the lone Tulare County school district to receive the 2022 CAPP District Award with a target area of student engagement. Hope is located in Porterville and serves students in transitional kindergarten to eighth grade.

“Receiving the award was a huge honor for our staff,” said Hope Superintendent/Principal Melanie Matta. “We have worked very hard to ensure students continued to receive a quality education through the pandemic. Our test scores proved how hard we worked and that we were relentless about having minimal-to-no learning loss. Our staff never gave up, didn't complain, and made sure every student had access to everything they needed to be successful, despite the challenges we faced with student and staff quarantines and personal losses due to COVID.”

“Our parents trusted us to do the work and supported our choice to get back to the new normal as soon as we could. I couldn't be more proud to be leading Hope School and look forward to continued student achievement!”

During the pandemic, Hope worked hard to keep their students engaged and it paid off. The district reported a 90% student engagement rate and that test scores – for meeting or exceeding standards in English language arts and math – improved. “In order to be successful, our teaching staff had to be committed to our goal, to do everything we can for our students to achieve,” the district stated in its report.

In an effort to ensure their students and parents were getting everything they needed, Hope provided Chromebooks and hotspots to all students, and had meals available for those who wanted them. The district made sure that students' educational, nutritional, and social and emotional needs were always met. In doing so, they created an environment that — when schools were allowed to reopen on a case-to-case basis — saw all but one student back in class at Hope.

Throughout the county, schools stepped up to serve their students and many of them saw positive outcomes from their efforts.

At Palm Elementary School, their focus on a “Core Four” of technology platforms – Google Classroom, Seesaw, Screencastify, and Zoom — “allowed teachers the tools they needed to deliver effective instruction, in turn allowing students to have access to a quality learning experience,” the school reported. Google Classroom and Seesaw were familiar resources for students, while Zoom and Screencastify enhanced the abilities of students, teachers, and colleagues to learn, teach, and communicate with each other.

Along with empowering students and staff through technology, Harmony Magnet Academy found other ways to support their students. The school implemented grading policy changes, did wellness checks and home visits, and created a social emotional hotline. Harmony also established a senior Saturday school that “established intervention for meeting graduation requirements and college transition,” the school reported.

Like many schools across the county, Olive Street Elementary School made sure its students and families had access to the internet so students could continue to learn. The school also worked with AmeriCorps staff to identify and help students who needed additional assistance, and held themed days to keep students engaged.

As program winners, the above-mentioned district and schools will receive a certificate from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond and the 2022 California Pivotal Practice Award Program flag that can be displayed at their schools.

Photo above:

~ Hope School District staff pose for a photo. Superintendent/Principal Melanie Matta said the entire staff was essential to the district being selected a 2022 CAPP District Awardee.

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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.