

# news galleryweek

December 20, 2023

## Migrant Education holds clothing giveaway for families, starts ongoing closet program for those in need



Last night, the Migrant Education Program (MEP) invited families they serve to a fun holiday event in the Redwood Conference Center. The purpose of the event was to provide parents and children with free clothing for the cold winter months.

MEP staff and administration identified over 400 individuals they serve in Tulare and Kings counties that need winter clothing. Within three weeks, the program collected hundreds of blankets, coats, jackets, and other clothing items from Tulare County Office of Education employees, schools, and local businesses.



While shopping, families enjoyed traditional music by Evelyn Sarahi y Su Grupo, with Migrant Education’s resource specialist Evelyn Arciniega Leppke singing and playing the button accordion, and area administrator Jason Treviño on bass guitar.





After shopping, families were treated to pan dulce (sweet bread) donated by Panadería Guadalajara and Mi Panadería – both in Tulare. Hot chocolate and coffee were donated and served by staff from two Starbucks locations in Tulare – M Street and Cross Street.



Community organizations donating clothing items included Evergreen Island event venue in Tulare, Z&Z Tax Notary in Dinuba, Save the Children, and Kennedy Elementary School in Dinuba.

Anabel González, MEP director, reports that staff members will deliver clothing items to Migrant families who were unable to attend yesterday's event. Remaining items will be kept in the newly-created Migrant Closet for distribution as needs arise.

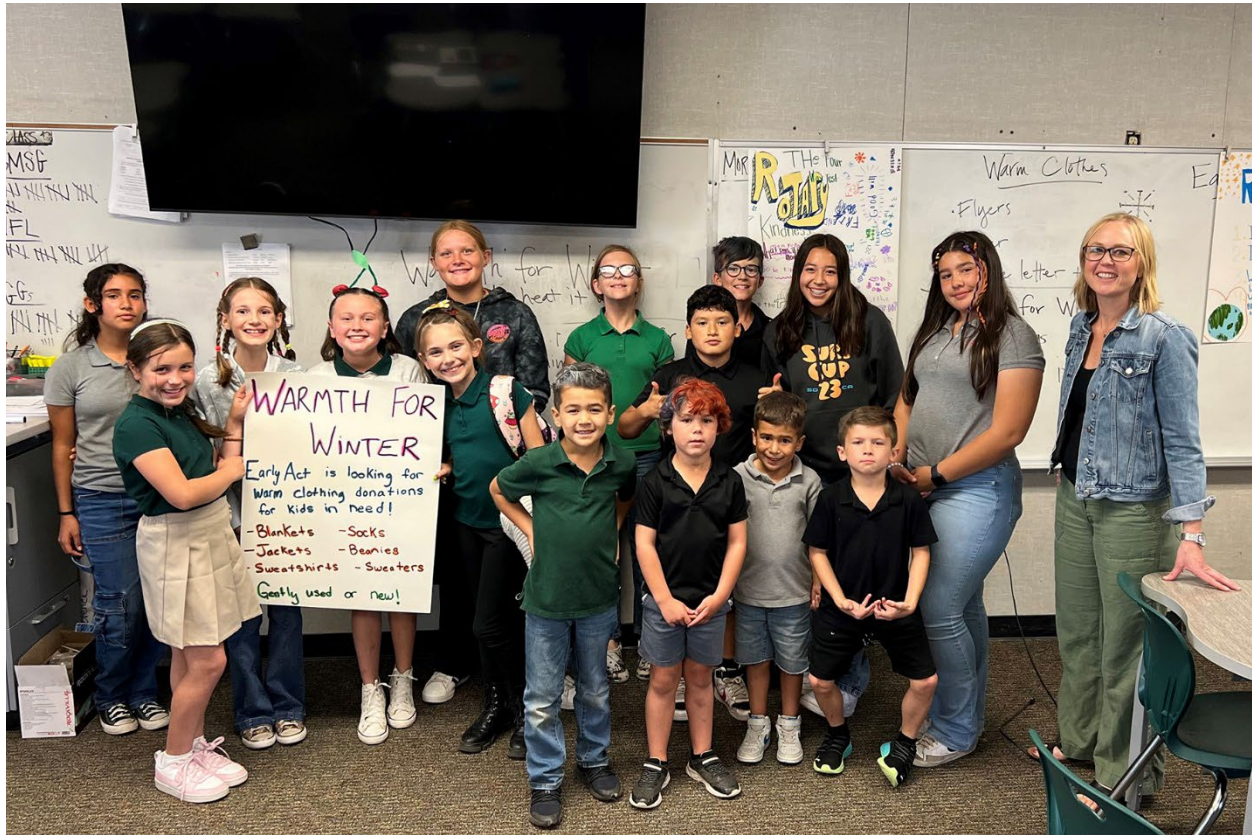
Organizations interested in donating to support migratory families are encouraged to contact Anabel Gonzalez at [anabelg@tcoe.org](mailto:anabelg@tcoe.org).

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## Around the County

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## Sycamore Valley Academy creates Tulare County's only EarlyAct Club



This fall, Sycamore Valley Academy (SVA) in Visalia created the county's very first EarlyAct Club – an elementary-age club of Rotary International. SVA's EarlyAct Club is not only the only one in Tulare County, but the entire Rotary district, which includes 60 clubs in Fresno, Monterey, and Tulare counties.

Sponsored by the Visalia Sunset Rotary Club, the SVA EarlyAct Club chose as its first major community service project, "Warmth for Winter," – a clothing drive for children. The items the club collected last week will be donated to Family Services of Tulare County.

Through EarlyAct, students decide which local and global community service projects they will develop. Through service projects, they increase their awareness and knowledge of their community and the world. EarlyAct also engages students in character-building activities and prepares them for leadership roles to identify and develop projects that benefit their school, local, and global communities.

Educators interested in learning more about how to create an EarlyAct club are encouraged to contact SVA club advisor Janell Geiger at [jgeiger@sycamorevalleyacademy.org](mailto:jgeiger@sycamorevalleyacademy.org).



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## Tulare County Association of Governments hosts art contest, awardees gifted bikes



The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) hosted its annual Walk & Roll Art Contest and remarked that it was a great success.

Every year, when the art contest opens, all Tulare County students are welcome to create artwork that inspires active transportation and clean air efforts. The winners of the contest win a free bicycle and safety gear, along with a poster of their winning artwork and certificates. The contest coincides with National Walk & Roll to School Day where students are encouraged to walk, ride a bicycle, skate, or use alternate modes of transportation that are active and low emission to get to school if it is safe to do so.

This year, TCAG received over 100 pieces of artwork and all of them were fantastic. It was difficult for TCAG to narrow down the Winner's Circle. However, due to very generous sponsorships received from 4Creeks, VRPA Technologies, and QK Inc., TCAG's partner Visalia Cyclery was able to provide seven bicycles (which includes lifetime services) for the winners. This meant seven students were chosen as the winners. They were presented with their bicycles, safety gear, posters, and certificates at the TCAG board meeting on December 11.





The winners' grades and schools are:

- Kindergarten, Roosevelt Elementary in Tulare
- 2nd Grade, Tipton Elementary in Tipton
- 3rd Grade, Castle Rock Elementary in Woodlake
- 4th Grade, Three Rivers School in Three Rivers
- 5th Grade (two winners), Three Rivers School in Three Rivers
- 12th Grade, Oroshi High School in Oroshi

TCAG also recognized the efforts of a teacher who went above and beyond for this year's contest. Michelle Murray-Raper is in her first year as a visual and performing arts teacher at Tulare City School District, which has over 700 kindergarten students. She presented the contest to her students by facilitating discussions about real ways to help with air quality. Murray-Raper then encouraged the use of student's imagination in their artwork after reading *How Will I Get to School This Year?* by Jerry Pallota and David Biedrzycki. The results of this artwork were beautiful and fun ways to get to school, such as, riding on a zillion butterflies, swinging on a gorilla, riding a tortoise, etc. TCAG appreciated the extra effort made by Murray-Raper and presented her with a recognition at their December 11 board meeting.



“This year’s art contest was incredible, and TCAG appreciates all of the teachers and parents who helped their students submit artwork to be considered,” TCAG stated. “The Walk & Roll Art Contest will continue and schools will be notified next year when the contest opens again in the fall. TCAG wants to give a huge ‘Thank You!’ to all the participants, sponsors, partners, and teachers who made this year such a success!”

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