

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

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Dinuba students help residents get over \$483,000 back in tax refunds



Last year, 157 tax returns were filed by Dinuba High School Accounting students. This year, the students completed 415 tax returns and put over \$483,000 worth of refunds back into the pockets of local taxpayers.

In partnership with CSET (Community Services Employment Training), Dinuba students went through a three-week rigorous tax training program through the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program. The VITA program, sponsored by the IRS, offers free tax help to low-income taxpayers, people with disabilities, and limited English-speaking taxpayers who cannot afford tax services and need assistance preparing their tax returns.

During February, March, and April, John Celum's classroom was turned into a tax preparation center three days a week for a couple of hours after school. These young, dedicated students prepared taxes after school with giving back to their community in mind. There were 19 students who committed to staying after school or going to the Cutler CSET office on Saturdays and preparing tax returns. They did this under the supervision of their CSET mentors and Mr. Celum, who reviewed and checked their work for accuracy before any tax return was submitted to the IRS.

"These students have created a great partnership within the community that allows students to learn real-life job skills, then use those skills to do real-life work experience, and be able to give back to their community at the same time - a true win-win," said Saul Magaña of CSET.

Photo above:

~ Dinuba High School Accounting students were recognized for their work at a Dinuba Unified School District school board meeting. They were also recognized for their citizenship by the TCOE CHARACTER COUNTS! office. The students filed 415 tax returns for local taxpayers, resulting in over \$483,000 of tax refunds.