

Students compete in Regional Migrant Speech & Debate Tournament

On Saturday, the Migrant Education Program – Region VIII, held its Seventh Annual Regional Speech & Debate Tournament in the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) Administration Building. Speech & Debate instructional programs were offered in Tulare and Kings county schools beginning in October of last year.



Participating students represented Corcoran High School, Earlimart Middle School, Dinuba High School, and Washington Intermediate School in Dinuba. A total of 22 students competed in the speech category this year.

Region VIII students who received first place trophies included:

Yexalen Barron Penafiel (8th grade, Washington Intermediate School, Dinuba), English Speech

Abel Diaz Lopez (8th grade, Earlimart Middle School), Spanish Speech

Camila Orozco (9th grade, Corcoran High School) English Speech

Edwin Castillo (10th grade, Dinuba High School) English Speech

Alejandra Escareno (10th grade, Dinuba High School) Spanish Speech

Denise Gonzalez Reyes (12th grade, Dinuba High School) English Speech

Historically, regional tournaments were held along with a state competition, which has been on hold since the pandemic. Plans are in place for a state tournament to return during the spring of 2024.

Maestro, Caliber Customs win Best of Show at Slick Rock Student Film Festival



Congratulations to Redwood High School and Spring Valley Elementary School – this year's Best of Show award winners for the Slick Rock Student Film Festival!

Slick Rock was held at the Visalia Fox Theatre last Friday. The two films took home the grand prizes after winning in their respective categories.

Maestro won High School Blockbuster before being announced as the High School Best of Show winner. The film was created by Ian Cook, Tyler Patterson, Tori Patterson, William Youngquist, Ashtyn Cripps, and Micah Stipech of Redwood High School in Visalia.



Caliber Customs won both Middle School General Advertisement and Middle School Best of Show. It was created by Sienna Pulido and Frannie Morris of Spring Valley Elementary School in O'Neals.

This year, Slick Rock received over 440 films in 17 categories from middle and high school students across six Central Valley counties.

Below is a complete list of this year's Slick Rock winners:

- **Best of Show – Middle School:** Caliber Customs, Spring Valley Elementary School (Sienna Pulido, Frannie Morris – General Advertisement)
- **Best of Show – High School:** Maestro, Redwood High School (Ian Cook, Tyler Patterson, Tori Patterson, William Youngquist, Ashtyn Cripps, Micah Stipech – Blockbuster)
- **Animation:** Down the Mountain, El Diamante High School (Sebastian Calvanese-Carter)
- **Blockbuster – Middle School:** Trail of Fortune, Heartland Charter School (Benjamin Embry, Parker Embry, Caden Noorthoek, Judah Noorthoek)
- **Blockbuster – High School:** Maestro, Redwood High School (Ian Cook, Tyler Patterson, Tori Patterson, William Youngquist, Ashtyn Cripps, Micah Stipech)
- **Documentary – Middle School:** USA Flag History, Clark Intermediate School (Matthew Bailey, Matthew Valenzuela, Jude Palumbo)
- **Documentary – High School:** Stray: The Story Behind Animal Shelters, The Center for Advanced Research and Technology (Danielle Lopez Ramirez, Natasha Mach)
- **General Advertisement – Middle School:** Caliber Customs, Spring Valley Elementary School (Sienna Pulido, Frannie Morris)

- **General Advertisement – High School:** *MilkT Society Boba*, Sunnyside High School (Sean Her, Kevin Vang)
- **General Public Service Announcement – Middle School:** *Your Life Matters. Our Lives Matter* Burton Middle School (Marcelina Cabatu, Alexa Quezada, Jaslene Rodriguez, Ezeque Leon)
- **General Public Service Announcement – High School:** *The Chicken Club*, Career & Technical Education Center (Shelby Wood)
- **Music Video – Cover:** *Never There*, El Diamante High School (Leandra Calvanese-Carter, Sebastian Calvanese-Carter, Josslyn Caskey, Lauren Crawford, Thomas Martinez, Isabella Saenz)
- **Music Video – Original:** *Commuovere*, Redwood High School (Beatrice Sanjaya, Eli Bradshaw, Juliet Prosser, Jordan Nguyen)
- **News Broadcast:** *Ranger TV Tyler Stark Story*, Redwood High School (Nikko Gutierrez, Malayna Nieto, Tyler Stark, Daniela Zapien, Ciera Alvarez, Natalie McDonnell)
- **Nutrition and Physical Activity PSA:** *Eat Healthy, Be Healthy*, Redwood High School (Hannah Johnson, Brooklyn Amstutz, Ian Cook, Micah Stipech, William Youngquist)
- **Opioid, Fentanyl, and Marijuana Prevention PSA:** *5 Steps To Stop The Overdose*, West High School (Azariyah Jackson, Natalie Tello, Betsy Leyva)
- **Social Mania: Social Media's Negative Effect on Mental Health:** *Be Safe Be Responsible*, Redwood High School (Hannah Johnson, Tanner Hoffman, Elijah Backlund, Torran Mancour, Brooklyn Amstutz)
- **Sports Highlights:** *Cowhide 67*, Redwood High School (Nikko Gutierrez, Jacob Perch, Grace Hyatt, Eddie Carino, Gabe Alaniz, Natalie McDonnell)
- **Suicide Prevention PSA:** *Nothing Is As It Seems*, Mission Oak High School (Jocelyn Gomez Ontiveros)

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

For more information on Slick Rock and to see the winning films, visit www.tcoe.org/SlickRock/Winners.

Photos above:

~ A scene from *Maestro*, the High School Blockbuster and High School Best of Show winner. It was created by Ian Cook, Tyler Patterson, Tori Patterson, William Youngquist, Ashtyn Cripps, and Micah Stipech of Redwood High School in Visalia.

~ A scene from *Caliber Customs*, the Middle School General Advertisement and Middle School Best of Show winner. It was created by Sienna Pulido and Frannie Morris of Spring Valley Elementary School in O'Neals.

Reading Revolution competitions held for elementary and middle school teams



This month, Tulare County students participated in the annual Reading Revolution event held at TCOE's Redwood Conference Center. Over 180 students from 26 schools took part in the elementary division, while another 100 students from 14 schools were part of the middle school division.

Reading Revolution is a fun competition designed to promote literacy and the joy of reading for students in grades 4-8, regardless of their abilities. The goal of the event is for students to experience a variety of quality literature and nonfiction, while increasing reading comprehension, and promoting collaboration and teamwork.

Students prepared for the competition by reading from the same core list of book titles given to them in August. Elementary school students read from 14 book titles totaling nearly 3,500 pages. Middle school students read from 12 book titles totaling over 3,500 page. During the competition, teams of two, three, or four students answered questions in a variety of formats and with varying levels of difficulty.

“The books students read each year come from a variety of genres,” said Debra Lockwood, Educational Resource Services library media supervisor. “Readers see themselves in some books while others offer a view to the world outside their own

experiences. The book list also includes at least one nonfiction book and a graphic novel, all with a balance of male and female protagonists.”



2023 READING REVOLUTION WINNERS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MORNING COMPETITION

First Place Team: Royal Readers, Denton Elementary School, Visalia

Second Place Team: Book Ropers, Shannon Ranch Elementary School, Visalia

Third Place Team: The R.E.A.D. (Ravishing Enthusiastic Awesome Dreamers), Manuel F. Hernandez Elementary School, Visalia

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AFTEROON COMPETITION

First Place Team: IRS (International Reading Society), Westfield Elementary School, Porterville

Second Place Team: The Mind Readers, George McCann Catholic School of Visalia

Third Place Team: The Night Readers, Oak Grove Elementary School, Visalia

MIDDLE SCHOOL COMPETITION

First Place Team - Keepers of the Books, Oak Grove School, Visalia

Second Place Team - Read: Off the Page, Sequoia Union School, Lemon Cove

Third Place Team: The Lion, The Witch, and The Reader, George McCann Catholic School of Visalia

Complete results can be found at tcoe.org/ReadingRevolution/results.

Elementary and middle school teachers interested in participating in the 2024 Reading Revolution program are encouraged to contact Paula Terrill at paula.terrill@tcoe.org.

Photos above:

~ Elementary school students are pictured participating in the Reading Revolution “Full Circle” event. Students work together to answer multiple choice questions about the books they have read over the course of the school year.

~ The “Keepers of the Books” team from Oak Grove School in Visalia won first place in the middle school division of Reading Revolution, held May 12.

Around the County

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.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Promoting mental health awareness on your campus is a proactive and positive way to start a conversation and show support for students and their families. Throughout the month of May, we will share information from [this](#) [handout](#) that includes strategies to create a positive mental wellness culture at your school and at home, as well as resources to support mental health and wellness.

Is Your School Prepared to Support a Student in Need of Mental Health Support?

Here are five steps to consider:

1. Have an Open-Door Policy
2. Utilize a Screening Tool
3. When in Doubt, Refer Out!
4. Increase Awareness, Decrease Stigma
5. Display Crisis Hotlines

For more information on these tips, click [here](#).



Editor: [Robert Herman](#), Communications Director

Contributors: Nayirah Dosu, Marlene Moreno, Jennifer Fisher, Anabel Gonzalez, Kathleen Green-Martins, Paula Terrill, Kelley Petty

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