

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

news galleryweek

June 12, 2024

Migrant Journalism Project produces two new editions of *The Migrant Voice*



The amazing Ag Expo!

By: Ximena Delgado and Erick Minguella

Can you imagine what it would be like to attend the largest agricultural event in the world and view hundreds of the most innovative agricultural exhibits all in one place? Well, the Ag Expo in Tulare, California is the perfect place for you!

Our journalism team had the opportunity on Thursday, February 15, 2024, to explore unique ag exhibits, learn information about various organizations, and interview exhibitors about their innovative products at the Ag Expo.

The Ag Expo is the largest outdoor agricultural event in North America with over 1,200 exhibitors and over 100,000 visitors each year. Visitors from 65 different



California, covers parts of the Tulare and King county areas and is made up of the College of the Sequoias community college in Visalia, along with the ten school districts within the boundaries of the college district. Maribel Delgado, who was one of the school's exhibitors, provided us with useful information about the school. We were told that some programs that are offered at the school are Adult Secondary Education, English as a Second Language, Citizenship Preparation, High School Diploma, Agriculture, Automotive and Transportation, Business Pathway, and Computer Science, just to name a few. The best part about these programs is that all of the classes are provided for free! We were also given promotional items to take with us.

Students from the Migrant Education Region VIII Journalism Project produced two new editions of *The Migrant Voice* just in time for summer reading!

Young writers from Heritage Elementary School (Tulare), Kennedy Elementary School (Dinuba), and Jefferson Elementary School (Dinuba) wrote about the World Ag Expo and the many vendors they saw. To view the student's newspaper, click [here](#).

From Hanford's Jefferson Academy and Woodrow Wilson Jr. High School, journalists interviewed the superintendents of Hanford Elementary School District (HESD) and Armona Union Elementary School District, school board members from HESD, the men's and women's water polo coach from Penn State Behrend, a water polo player from Hanford West High School, and a Maná concertgoer. To view the student's newspaper, click [here](#).

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.

Retirees honored for service to Tulare County students and schools

This afternoon, a number of employees who retired during the current school year or plan to retire this month attended a meeting of the Tulare County Board of Education where they were congratulated on their years of service to TCOE.

This year, a total of 43 teachers, administrators, and support staff retired with 1,021 years of service to Tulare County students and school districts.

"Our retirees devoted an average of nearly 24 years each to our programs – from the Early Childhood Education and Special Services to Educational Resource Services," said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. "We appreciate their dedication to the students of Tulare County, including our youngest learners and those with special needs. We wish each of them a happy and healthy retirement!"

Below is a brief summary of each retiree as submitted by their supervisors and coworkers:

2023-24 Tulare County Office of Education Retirees:

(continued below)

Ronni Aguilar, La Sierra Charter Schools, Teacher, 17 years



Ronni Aguilar began her teaching career in 1998 at her alma mater, Woodlake Union High School. She came to work at La Sierra Military Academy (LSMA) in Fall 2007. During her 17 years of working with the Screaming Eagle cadets, she created the Poetry Slam and Art PBL units to help her students who needed a creative outlet. Her favorite project was bringing Woodlake High School's portfolio project to LSMA. Each year, cadets create a digital portfolio, place their best work in it, and sit with a teacher or an administrator to complete their senior exit interview. Her main goal in education was to help her students read and write, attend college, and be successful, contributing members of society. Her greatest memories are watching the "light turn on" when students understood the concepts she was teaching. During her 26-year teaching career, she considers it an honor to have made a difference in the lives of Tulare County students. She plans to spend her retirement in the pool with her grandchildren and travel as often as she can.

Shannon Akers-Cox, Bright Start Program, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, 22 years

Shannon Akers-Cox is being recognized for her 22 years of service to the children and families of Tulare County. After having the personal experience of raising two children with special needs, Akers-Cox developed a passion for helping other parents navigate through the journey of early intervention. She did this for six years as a service coordinator with the Central Valley Regional Center, and then as part of the TCOE Bright Start Parent-Infant Program since 2002.

Lori Allan, AcCEL Program, Teacher, 33 years



Lori Allan started teaching at the AcCEL Program's Yettem Learning Center in August 1991. She then moved to Valley Oak Middle School and Exeter Union High School. Allan has been at Mt. Whitney High School for the past five years. She is the first to compliment a colleague or offer advice. She is organized, energetic, and always thinks of her students. She is constantly looking for ways to help them reach their fullest potential. The Visalia AcCEL students and staff will truly miss her!

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Lydia Alvizo, AcCEL Program, Instructional Assistant, 23 years



Lydia Alvizo has worked for the AcCEL Program in the Porterville area for 23 years, having served students of all ages. She is known for her creative art projects with the students. Alvizo was always kind and well-loved by her students. She plans to enjoy her retirement spending time with her animals, and visiting with friends and family.

Ramona Arevalo, Early Childhood Education Program, Supervisor, 42 years



Mona Arevalo began her work with the Early Childhood Education Program as a teacher's aide and then a teacher. She is currently a supervisor in the Child Development Center in Ivanhoe. She is a positive, active leader in the classroom, always guiding staff on what will work better to serve the needs of children and families. Her calm and supportive approach helps the parents of the enrolled children feel accepted and heard. For her many years of service to the children and families in her centers, Arevalo has been a tremendous asset in the communities she serves.

Angela Benton, Early Childhood Education Program, Supervisor, 32 years



Angela Benton began her career with the Early Childhood Education Program, working as a teacher in 1992 at the Strathmore Child Development Center. After two years, she transferred to the Snowden Child Development Center where she taught for 13 years. She served as a supervisor substitute and worked at the Tipton, Tule, and Doyle child development centers. In 2007, she became the permanent site supervisor at the Doyle Child Development Center and has worked at the Porterville Education Complex (PEC) Child Development Center for the last 12 years. Benton is an active member of her church and frequently participates in visiting nursing homes, providing healing prayers. In addition, she enjoys art in the forms of drawing and coloring. Benton loves being with her family and says that they are a treasure to her.

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Debbie Bradley, AcCEL Program, Instructional Assistant, 35 years



Debbie Bradley's instructional assistant career has consisted of working at the Los Robles site for 20 years and the LB Hill site for 15 years. Bradley is an incredibly hardworking professional with excellent collaboration skills and great classroom management. You cannot teach the amazing skills that she possesses. Her retirement plans include hunting and traveling with her husband during her much-deserved retirement. The AcCEL staff said, "She is the sweetest, most generous, and selfless person. Her staff and students are going to miss her, tremendously!"

Kathleen Briones, AcCEL Program, School Nurse, 26 years



Kathleen has worked as a credentialed school nurse for Tulare County Office of Education for 26 years. She worked in the AcCEL Program, covering the southern portion of Tulare County and, for a few years, the north county area. During this time, she has been able to provide daily nursing procedures for students to attend class, as well as to safely compete at Special Olympics, and attend Special Friends Day at the Porterville Fair, SCICON, and prom. She has also worked with the students in the Porterville College Registered Nursing Program as part of their pediatric rotation, giving them hands-on experiences with specialized nursing procedures. Briones' plans for retirement include lots of relaxing, reading, and travel. She has three sons in various branches of the military (Coast Guard, Air Force, Marines) who are stationed all over the country. She and her husband plan to hop in their car, see the amazing country, and visit their children and grandchildren.

Lydia Castillo, AcCEL Program, Instructional Assistant, 9 years



Lydia Castillo has worked for the AcCEL Program since 2015 and has been at Mt. Whitney High School the entire time. She treats the students as if they are her own children. She is dedicated and is the first one to jump in and offer to do something in the classroom. Castillo enjoys traveling to the beach and watching her grandchildren play sports. She is looking forward to spending more time doing both in her retirement.

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Linda Corral, AcCEL Program, School Secretary, 23 years



Linda Corral began working as a school secretary for the AcCEL Program in the north county area in 2001. Her supervisors have described her as loyal, reliable, intelligent, and dedicated. They have expressed their utmost confidence in her ability to handle situations in their absence. She is a strong leader and knows everything there is to know about the functioning of an AcCEL site. Corral has paperwork completed and in the hands of her administrators before they ask for it. She always meets deadlines and follows procedures. TCOE has been blessed to have her as an employee for so many years.

Debbie Deathriage, Maintenance & Operations, Maintenance Worker, 24 years



Debbie started working with the TCOE in 1999 as a custodian at the Doe Avenue facility, where she worked the night shift. She then transferred to the Mooney location where she continued her duties faithfully and without complaint. She has always been a respectful, very loyal, and dedicated employee who is willing to help wherever she is needed. The Maintenance & Operations staff appreciate her 24 years of hard work and commitment to TCOE and congratulate her on her new adventure in life, "Thank you, Debbie. You will be missed."

Elvira Decena, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher Assistant, 31 years



Elvira Decena was hired to work in the Early Childhood Education Program (ECEP) in 1993. In her years of service, Decena worked as a classroom toddler teacher assistant and preschool teacher assistant. She enjoyed working with the children at the Richgrove Child Development Center. Decena also enjoys spending time with her family. The Early Childhood Education staff said, "Thank you, Elvira, for dedicating yourself to the children and families of ECEP for 31 years!"

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Azalia Dimas, Early Childhood Education Program, Supervisor, 24 years



Azalia Dimas was hired by the Early Childhood Education Program in 2000 and has worked as a teacher and center supervisor. Dimas retired from the Woodlake Child Development Center. She enjoyed being creative in her work with the children and encouraged her teaching teams to do the same. The Early Childhood Education staff said, "Thank you, Azalia, for dedicating yourself to the children and families of ECEP for 24 years!"

Regina Dysart, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher, 30 years



Regina Dysart heard about the Head Start Program and decided to apply for the head teacher position. Over the next 30 years, she worked at the Sundale Child Development Center and Clinite Child Development Center. Dysart served as a mentor teacher for the Early Childhood Education Program and for the lab students at College of the Sequoias. She enjoyed working with the program's children, families, and supporting all teaching staff.

Oleida Encinas, Bright Start Program, Early Intervention Assistant, 33 years

Oleida Encinas is being acknowledged for her 33 years of service to the children and families of TCOE. Encinas initially worked as an Early Start instructional assistant before becoming an early intervention assistant in 2005. She has been a part of the Bright Start Parent-Infant Program since August 1990.

Hope Flores, AcCEL Program, School Secretary, 28 years

Esperanza "Hope" Flores is being recognized for her service to Tulare County Office of Education as a program secretary for the AcCEL program. Flores began her time with AcCEL in the Porterville area before transferring to Tulare. She has been more than the program secretary, but the true heartbeat of Tulare AcCEL. She often comes in early to make sure classrooms are appropriately staffed and stays late to ensure her work is completed to the highest standards. Flores is always willing to assist staff whenever needed and will go above and beyond for students and families. Her ability to multitask is truly a remarkable gift and to be commended. The AcCEL Program staff said, Flores "makes the program world go 'round with all she accomplishes in a day, and she will be missed! Happy retirement, Hope! Enjoy all the camping and reading possible! You deserve it!"

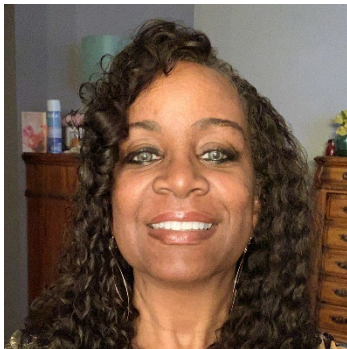
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Alicia Jackson, Early Childhood Education Program, Eligibility Specialist, 25 years



Alicia worked as an eligibility specialist for Connections for Quality Care for 25 years. She was always very patient and understanding with her clients and would find ways to help them above and beyond what the office might have available. She would think outside the box and search for help in other departments or agencies. Jackson cared for her coworkers in the same way and would make them feel special daily with fun treats or gifts on their birthdays. She would be the first to help staff if needed and step up to a challenge, willing to try something new.

Charlotta Jarman, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher, 34 years



Charlotta “Yvette” Jarman started working for Tulare County Office of Education, Early Childhood Education Program in 1989. Jarman worked for a number of childcare facilities, which included the Teenage Parenting Program as a toddler teacher; La Sierra Center, where she worked with preschool children; Woodville Child Development Center; and finally at the Fairview Child Development Center. Jarman built lasting relationships with families that she served and with her coworkers. The program staff said, “Yvette will be missed as we wish her well on her new journey.”

Karen Lee, AcCEL Program, Instructional Assistant, 20 years



After 20 years of dedicated service, Karen Lee is retiring, leaving behind a legacy of reliability, trustworthiness, and punctuality. Known for her unwavering commitment and dependability, Lee has been a cornerstone of the team at Yettem Learning Center, always delivering her best with integrity and precision. Her punctuality and consistent presence have set a standard for excellence, and all who had the privilege of working with her will deeply feel her absence. As she embarks on this new chapter, the staff celebrates her remarkable career and the positive impact she has made over the years.

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Debra Lockwood, Educational Resource Services, Library/Media Supervisor, 8 years



Debra Lockwood was always ready to lend a hand and was up for any challenge. Lockwood was the supervisor of ERS Library/Media Services. She retired from the position in August and has had a few months to settle into retirement. As leader of Library/Media Services, she supported library technicians across Tulare County. Lockwood also worked closely with the ERS Readership team to develop book collections and support the grant work. Additionally, she worked closely with the Student Events team to make Reading Revolution a successful event every year. Lockwood let the needs of district libraries guide her work. The ERS staff said, "We miss you at ERS and appreciate your years of service with TCOE."

Corinna Lopez, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher, 30 years

Corinna Lopez's adventure with the Tulare County Early Childhood Educational Program began when, at three years old, her parents enrolled her in preschool at the former Baily Child Development Center (CDC) in Visalia. At four years old, she transferred to the North Visalia #1 site for preschool. As a young mother, Lopez enrolled her children at Fairview CDC and North Visalia #1, where she began volunteering as a parent. After her first child graduated preschool, she was hired as a teacher assistant and, a few months later, became the preschool teacher of North Visalia #1. In her 30 years with the program, she worked at three different sites as a preschool teacher and received a Bachelor of Science in human services from the University of Phoenix. She now enjoys spending time with her mother. Her oldest son is an opera singer and sings backup for Disney and other movie studios. She has two other successful children and grandchildren.

Maryellen Macias, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher Assistant, 17 years

Maryellen Macias was hired as a teacher assistant for the Early Childhood Education Program (ECEP) on November 11, 2006. Macias began her journey at the Tipton Child Development Center (CDC), before working in the Senaida Garcia CDC, the London CDC, and the Porterville Educational Complex CDC. Macias loved working with the children, especially with the hands-on activities. It gave her much pleasure when the children got excited about their projects and what they were able to achieve. She gained a sense of wellbeing knowing she had a part in their learning process and development. Maryellen has a generous heart. She was always donating things for the children to enjoy. Maryellen is a thoughtful, caring person who has been greatly missed since her retirement. The ECEP staff wish her the best in her retirement.

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Yolanda Mejia, AcCEL Program, Instructional Assistant, 24 years

Yolanda Mejia has been an instructional assistant for the AcCEL program since September 1999. She is dedicated to the students in the program. A teacher in a class she was assigned to said, “Yolanda was the type of person who seemed to have 40 hours in the usual 24-hour day because she got so much accomplished.” She loved her students and always had a smile on her face. She enjoyed sharing her cooking talents with the staff and students where she was assigned. Mejia always went the extra mile in everything she did.

Gene Mendes, CHARACTER COUNTS!, Character Education Facilitator, 26 years



As a CHOICES facilitator for 22 years and a CHARACTER COUNTS! facilitator for four years, Gene Mendes has held an unwavering dedication to empowering youth. Throughout Mendes’ tenure at TCOE, he has accumulated nearly a dozen certifications in youth advocacy – from substance abuse prevention to leadership. He has trained, facilitated, and mentored thousands of youth to become leaders of tomorrow. From coordinating conferences at the state level to teaching curriculum in a rural school classroom, Mendes’ ability to work with students and adults has made him an invaluable asset to the Tulare County Office of Education. During his four, short years with the CHARACTER COUNTS! team, Mendes has created new initiatives that further impact sportsmanship through youth leadership in our county. Mendes has created not one, but two, annual student-athlete sportsmanship conferences — one for high school and one for middle school. Mendes has recruited a student-athlete advisory council, which to date sits at 25 student-athletes from all over Tulare County. He has mentored this council to facilitate these all-day conferences with professionalism and meaningful content.

Tammy Milligan, Educational Resource Services, Staff Development & Curriculum Specialist, 5 years



Tammy Milligan’s journey in the world of education began in 1989, and for the next 35 years, she fostered a love of reading in students across various age groups. Her career began in her hometown of Orosi, where she taught first and second grades, and served teachers as a bilingual resource teacher. She spent 16 years with the Visalia Unified School District and four years as principal for Lincoln Elementary School in Lindsay. Milligan shared that the past five years at TCOE have been a period of immense personal and professional growth for her. Partnering with Jenean Bray in the Readership Project proved to be a transformative experience. Learning about motivating adolescent readers with authentic and relevant books became a highlight of her career. Witnessing teams of teachers embrace new practices and ignite a passion for reading in their students was incredibly rewarding for

her. The opportunity to empower young minds and cultivate a lifelong love of reading has been the greatest privilege of her career.

Marlene Mitchell, Bright Start Program, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, 18 years



Marlene Mitchell started as a special education teacher for the AcCEL Program in 2005. In 2013, she became an early childhood special education teacher for the Bright Start Parent-Infant Program in Porterville. Mitchell served Bright Start families for 11 years. The Bright Start staff shared that her friendly presence and the patience she possessed with children and families will be missed.

Maria “Lourdes” Molina, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher Assistant, 22 years



Lourdes Molina served as a teacher assistant at the Granite Hills Child Development Center (CDC). She began working in the education field at Pixley Elementary School as a kindergarten assistant before transitioning to the Granite Hills CDC in February 2002. Molina is a person with many qualities; she is kind, very patient, loving, and charismatic with a beautiful smile to share with everyone. She is also very intelligent. She and her husband, Rigoberto, have two children, both graduates of California State University, Fresno who work in education. Molina and her family are Dodgers fans. She enjoys watching Mexican soap operas, going for walks, and reading books.

Sonia Piña, AcCEL Program, Instructional Assistant, 9 years

Sonia Piña has worked as a special education instructional assistant in Tulare AcCEL for over nine years. She has worked in various districts, including Earlimart, Pixley, and Tulare Joint Union High School District to provide supervision and support for students with moderate-to-severe needs. The AcCEL staff wish her a happy retirement!

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Elva Ramirez, Early Childhood Education Program, Eligibility Specialist, 41 years



Elva Ramirez is an eligibility specialist at Connections for Quality Care. Ramirez began with TCOE as a teacher and then a site supervisor in Head Start centers before transitioning to the Doe Avenue office to be a project specialist with the State Migrant Program, working with childcare providers. In her current role as an eligibility specialist, she works with families from the Alternative Payment Programs. Ramirez has also helped staff with their professional growth hours as a professional growth advisor. Ramirez cares about the people around her and is helpful in developing ideas outside of the box to make their jobs and tasks easier.

Maria Rosales, Bright Start Program, Early Start Instructional Assistant, 26 years

Maria Rosales started as a records clerk with the TCOE Early Childhood Education Program (ECE) in 1997. She later became a family service worker with ECE in 2001. Rosales became an Early Start instructional assistant for the Bright Start Parent-Infant Program in 2002, serving Bright Start families for 22 years. The Bright Start staff congratulates her on her retirement.

Rosa Rosales, Early Childhood Education Program, Eligibility Specialist, 25 years



Rosa Rosales is an eligibility specialist with Connections for Quality Care and has worked in this role for 25 years. Rosales has actually worked with TCOE programs periodically for almost 35 years, starting as a translator for Home Base and as an educator. Rosales is always willing to help her coworkers with any task and genuinely cares about them. Rosales has been committed to her job and works hard at helping the families in her caseload.

Christine Serna, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher Assistant, 30 years



Christine Serna was the first teacher assistant to open up the London Child Development Center. The children enjoyed being around Serna because she was always very joyful and full of life. A bilingual speaker, she was able to communicate with all the children in their language. Serna always gave children the extra support whenever she knew that they needed the help. Because she was here so many years, she was able to see some of her children come back as adults and bring their children into the center. Early Childhood Education staff said, "Christine will truly be missed by all children and staff."

Maria “Manuela” Silveira, AcCEL Program, Teacher, 37 years



Manuela Silveira began as a special education teacher for the moderate-severe program in 1987 at the Maple Learning Complex (MLC) in Tulare. After teaching one year at MLC, she taught in a special education classroom at Maple Elementary School in Tulare for the next 36 years. In May 2021, Silveira was the recipient of the Excellence in Education Teacher of the Year Award. AcCEL staff call her the “gold standard in teaching.” Her commitment, love for her students, and loyalty to her work is beyond admirable and commendable. Silveira leaves behind a footprint and a legacy that will benefit generations to come. “We will miss you, Manuela, but know that your heart will live on through us, and we hope to make you proud,” staff members said.

Catherine Spring, AcCEL Program, Instructional Assistant, 23 years



Cathy Spring’s love of students is apparent to anyone who has worked with her. Spring was always willing to do what was needed with a big heart and enthusiasm. She had great ideas and talents to contribute to any classroom. Her love of art had students enjoy their time with her even more as she worked with them on their lessons. The staff at LB Hill Learning Center said, “We hope the best for her in the next phase of her life, and her smile and contagious laughter will be missed.”

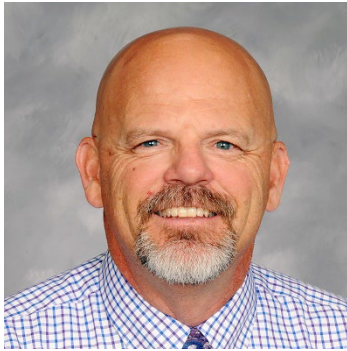
Bruce Storer, Information Systems, Director, 2 years



Bruce Storer served as TCOE’s director of Information Systems starting in June 2022. He served in this role until he retired from TCOE in December 2023. Storer previously served as coordinator of Information Systems for the Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) for over 10 years. Prior to his service to KCSOS, he was the Systems and Operations manager at Modesto City Schools for 14 years. Bruce lives in Bakersfield with his wife, Mary. He and his wife are proud parents of two adult sons and four grandchildren.

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Eric Thiessen, University Preparatory High School, Principal, 13 years



Eric Thiessen began his career at Tulare County Office of Education as a science teacher at University Preparatory High School (UPHS), before serving as the principal for the last nine years. Staff appreciated his support and trust in doing what was best for students. During his tenure as leader, UPHS was awarded California Distinguished School twice, recognized as one of the top performing schools in the area.

Mary Torres, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher Assistant, 25 years



Mary “Cookie” Torres is many things – extremely giving, smart, confident, and a leader. She has worked at both the Maple Child Development Center and the Senaida Garcia Child Development Center. Torres took her role seriously – working to get her center’s children prepared for kindergarten. Staff commended her for being invested in the program, always coming up with ideas to make the children’s learning experience a memorable one. She wanted to make sure the children learned their basics before leaving and going on to kindergarten. To this day, parents she had in the past will come up to her and tell her how grateful they are and what an impact she had on their child.

Karon Valdivieso, Court/Community Schools, Principal, 16 years

During her years with TCOE, Karon Valdivieso was first a teacher in the Court/Community Schools program, and later principal of the Court School. Valdivieso loved working with this challenging population of students and always spent her days in the classrooms supporting both the students and teachers. She made sure that the students were engaged in rigorous academic lessons and she also liked to introduce them to different activities, such as cooking. It was very important to her that students were working to complete credits so that they earned a high school diploma. Valdivieso worked hand in hand with the Probation Department to coordinate services and activities in the very busy facility. Upon her retirement, she and her husband, Steve, are looking forward to traveling and spending time with their children and grandchildren.

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Fredna Van Dellen, Visually Impaired Program, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, 17 years



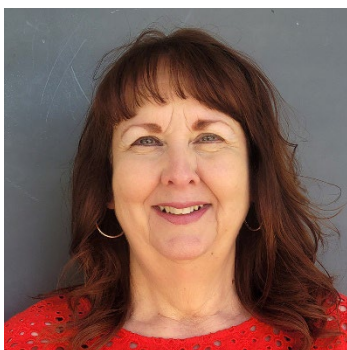
Fredna Van Dellen served as a teacher of the visually impaired (TVI) as part of the Special Services team. Prior to her career as a TVI, Van Dellen was a general education teacher at Sequoia Union Elementary School for several years. Van Dellen's creativity and innovation have elevated services for students who are blind or visually impaired. She has provided specialized instruction including Braille, adapted materials, and assistive technologies, working with several school districts within the county including the Tulare and Porterville areas. Van Dellen designed and implemented a sensory learning room at LB Hill Learning Center to provide students who have multiple disabilities, including visual impairments, access to adapted materials within a fun and student-centered environment. Special Services staff said, "Thank you, Fredna, for living out the Core Values of the Tulare County Office of Education."

Ofelia Vasquez, Early Childhood Education Program, Home Educator, 29 years



Ofelia Vasquez is an extraordinary educator. She has empowered many families in the Home Base program by encouraging them to go back to school to further their education and the education of their children. Vasquez is such a great educator that many families in Tulare have requested to have their children enrolled with her! She is loved by the families she served and well respected by her coworkers. Children, families, and staff will truly miss her, but know she will continue to make an impact in whatever she does next.

Regina Vasquez, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher Assistant, 30 years



Maple Child Development Center staff shared that Regina Vasquez is the type of person who will give you the shirt off her back. "It will be a somber moment when she walks out of that gate for the very last time," they said. Vasquez represents many of TCOE's Core Values. She has built trusting relationships not only with coworkers but also with the families in the program. Her dedication and commitment to serve families for 25 years is admirable. "Thank you for all that you have done for our families and coworkers, but most important of all, the children you have provided for in the past and in the present," staff said.

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Karen Anne Williams, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher Assistant, 6 years



Karen Williams has been with the program since 2018. She is very passionate about working with children, who loved to play with her out in the playground and in the classroom. She was flexible and worked at many sites as needed, including the Porterville Child Development Center. Program staff shared that Williams was a lot of fun to work with and that she will be missed as she is on her way to grand adventures.

Katherine Wills, Early Childhood Education Program, Teacher, 31 years



Katie Wills retired from the Fairview Child Development Center. She is remembered as a nurturing teacher who used lots of humor and laughs. She was fond of joking around with the children, but was a great teacher and team player, incorporating plenty of learning activities. The Early Childhood Education staff says, "Thank you, Katie, for all the years of service you provided to the children, the families, the staff and the program. It was great working with you."

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

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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.