

Tulare County
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

news
galleryweek

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La Sierra Military Academy creates new Forestry Pathway



On Monday, La Sierra Military Academy launched its new Forestry Pathway program in partnership with Reedley College. Twenty cadets were accepted into the year-long program. Led by Navy veteran, fire captain, and vocational education instructor Fabian Morales, the pathway is a five-course certification program that prepares students for future career opportunities in either firefighting or forestry.

The cadets participating in the Forestry Pathway are members of the dual enrollment program at Reedley College. Students will study wildland fire technology, careers in natural resources, forestry field studies, and chainsaw operations. Once cadets successfully complete the pathway, they will receive a Red Card Certification through

Reedley College, allowing them to apply for entry level positions with agencies such as CAL FIRE and the US Forest Service.

Instructor Fabian Morales brings a diverse array of field and instructional experience, having served in the United States Navy as a hospital corpsman attached to the Marine Corps. Additionally, Morales has over 20 years of experience in emergency medical services, along with 15



years of fire service. Morales currently serves as a fire captain with the Reedley Fire Department. Over the years, he has taught CPR and a variety of medical and emergency response courses through the college and the Valley Regional Occupational Program.

CHARACTER COUNTS! Week continues this week, largest number of participating schools to date

This week is CHARACTER COUNTS! Week! The Tulare County CHARACTER COUNTS! office reports that over 5,300 students from 173 schools will be honored. Teachers, parents, and other community members nominated the students to be recognized in the program's 30th annual celebration.

"We have reached a new milestone this year with 173 Tulare County schools participating in CHARACTER COUNTS! Week," said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. "It is encouraging to see increased school participation over the 30 years that we have held this event."



The CHARACTER COUNTS! Program reviewed nominations and selected a top honoree and six finalists for each of the Pillars of Character to be profiled in the Visalia Times-Delta/Tulare Advance-Register this week. A story about the students who best represent the Pillars of Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship is in the newspaper each day.

These top honorees and finalists will also be celebrated at the annual Provident/Salierno Family Foundation Awards ceremony on November 4.

For ideas on how to celebrate CHARACTER COUNTS! Week (October 19-25), visit charactercounts.org/character-counts-week.

Excellence in Education Award winners honored



This morning, 35 extraordinary Tulare County educators and school employees were honored at the 31st annual Excellence in Education Awards – an event co-hosted by EECU. The awards breakfast was attended by nearly 300 colleagues and family members to honor the nominees, finalists, and winners in three categories – Administrator/Manager of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and School Employee of the Year. In the spring, a committee of Tulare County business and education leaders individually reviewed and scored each nominee to determine the winners, who were announced in March.

At the conclusion of the event, the category winners posed for a picture with EECU President/CEO Beth Dooley and Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. The winners are (left to right) Administrator/Manager of the Year Andrew Woodley (Porterville Unified School District), Teacher of the Year Heather Silva (Alpine Vista School, Tulare), and School Employee of the Year Joanna Woodyatt (Rocky Hill Elementary School, Exeter).

“The winners share a desire to give students the tools they need to be successful, both academically and socially,” Hire said. “It’s a pleasure to celebrate the winners, finalists, and nominees, who represent Tulare County education so well.”

To read more about the nominees, finalists, and winners, and to see the videos created about the winners, visit tcoe.org/Awards.

Student-athletes honored at Fall PVWH Downtown Visalia Kiwanis Awards



In partnership with the Downtown Visalia Kiwanis, TCOE’s CHARACTER COUNTS! Program celebrated this fall’s Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) student-athletes on Tuesday.

The Downtown Visalia Kiwanis recognizes student-athletes, nominated by their

coaches, each season for their sportsmanship. The awards included a certificate, patch, and lawn sign that reads "An Athlete of Character Lives Here."

Below are statements from each student's coach, which are edited for brevity.

Central Valley Christian High School

Emma Mihalcin – volleyball: Emma has a positive attitude toward life and has been a great leader for our team. Emma has proven to be a trusting teammate and friend. As a captain for our team, her teammates look up to her to communicate with us as a coaching staff. Emma has been very honest with us and her teammates. She has proven to be reliable to her teammates by honoring her commitment to lead the team.

Landen Forsyth – cross country: Landen Forsyth is an ideal recipient of this award due to his outstanding character and excellence as a student-athlete. Landen has worked hard over the past four years to become the capable runner and virtuous person that he is today. Landen is disciplined and uncomplaining, which sets a tremendous example for his teammates. He also has a gift for treating people with kindness. As such, he is both a capable leader and humble follower.

El Diamante High School

Madison McKensie – volleyball: Madson Mackenzie is an amazing young lady who has served the volleyball program well for the past four years. Maddy has led by example and guided her teammates to a very high level of play the past two seasons. Maddy embodies what PVWH is. She has never worried about her stats. She has always wanted to make a difference for her teammates and make the El Diamante volleyball team the best it can be.

Sophia Benevento – golf: Sophia displays the qualities of a high-class role model. She is an individual who excels both on and off the golf course. Balancing school, athletics, and her active participation in El Diamante's ASB club, she consistently demonstrates maturity and positive character traits. She has served as our team captain for the past two years and has been an outstanding example for the underclassmen she mentors each day at practice.

Golden West High School

Sidney Yanez – volleyball: On and off the court, Sidney leads by example through her unwavering commitment to teamwork, integrity, and respect for the game. Sidney's trustworthiness and sense of responsibility make her a dependable teammate who always gives her best effort. Her fairness ensures every practice and competition is played with honesty and grace. She treats coaches, teammates, and opponents alike with kindness and respect, embodying the spirit of true sportsmanship.

Beau Swanson – boys water polo: As a junior with an impressive 4.0 GPA, Beau is a two-time captain at Golden West. He commands the respect of his teammates with an undeniable work ethic. His team-first focus exemplifies the exemplary comportment requisite to elevate our squad. Aside from being one of the best on-the-ball defenders in the EYL, Beau plays the difficult position of center on our offense. He is astute, inquisitive and loyal: quite a young man.

Mt. Whitney High School

Joslany Magana – cross country: Joslany exemplifies the true spirit of a student-athlete. She also played tennis this fall, making her a successful dual-sport athlete. Joslany's ability to excel in both academics and athletics, coupled with her outstanding character, positions her as an inspirational leader and a true asset to her school community. Joslany never lets us coaches down. She always shows up to practice with a great attitude and smile, ready to put in the miles, then head off to tennis practice.

Stephen Fabian – cross country: Consistently putting in the work at every practice, Stephen has shown tremendous responsibility and commitment to the team. In addition to his improving race times, Stephen has been a caring and positive force, always offering encouragement. By balancing a demanding athletic schedule with a 4.2 GPA, he proves the importance of being a student-athlete, through admirable sportsmanship and great citizenship. Stephen sets a high bar for excellence both on and off the course.

Redwood High School

Emma Hernandez – golf: Emma is one of the most dedicated student-athletes I have ever coached in 10 years. She can have days of stress and adversity, but she faces that with confidence in her attitude and tenacity. She is the defending EYL champion.

Andres Nino – cross country: Andres Nino was selected because of his deep level of care, selflessness, respect, and great citizenship toward each person on the team. Andres is the heartbeat of the team. At every race, his teammates can count on him as a source of motivation and unwavering support. A natural leader who works hard and gives his all to his team, Andres remains a great representative of our program.

Marvin Lopez wins state Trailblazer Award

Last week, Marvin Lopez was presented the Trailblazer Award by the California Association of School Counselors (CASC). The honor is presented annually by CASC to an individual whose innovation, courage, and leadership have forged new pathways in school counseling. Recipients are nominated by their peers and chosen by an independent panel.

Lopez, director of the California Center on Teaching Careers, was recognized for his vision to create the program's Optimum School Counselor Residency in Rural Settings (OSCRRS) the first school counseling residency program in the nation, which CASC notes is, "paving the way for broader systemic change."

OSCRRS is a countywide Pupil Personnel Services Credential program in partnership with Fresno Pacific University and school districts in Tulare and Kings counties. Residents who complete the clinical fieldwork and the course units, offered through Fresno Pacific University, earn a Master of Arts in School Counseling with a Pupil Personnel Services Credential in School Counseling, authorizing them to work as a credentialed school counselor.

Under Lopez's leadership, the OSCRRS program has doubled the number of residents it serves, creating a larger pipeline of counselors to serve Central Valley schools.



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