

Tulare County  
Office of Education  
*Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools*

# news galleryweek

May 21, 2025

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## Countywide awards, scholarships presented at Pursuing Victory with Honor banquet



On Tuesday evening, TCOE's Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) Program held its second annual PVWH Honors Banquet. At the dinner, announced were this year's Provident-Salierno PVWH Scholarship winners and honored student-athletes who exhibit great character and sportsmanship on and off the field. PVWH is a part of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Program.

The annual Provident-Salierno PVWH Scholarship program awards four Tulare County seniors a \$500 scholarship for their academic achievements and their exemplary character on and off the field.

The four Tulare County senior student-athletes chosen to receive the scholarships this year were:

**Ava Arias**, Dinuba High School. Arias played basketball and will major in psychobiology in college.

**Nathan Christiansen**, Tulare Union High School. Christiansen did swim and water polo for the Tribe. He will attend Vanguard University and major in accounting and biblical studies.

**Alyssa Coelho**, Woodlake Union High School. Coelho played volleyball and will attend California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, where she will major in education.

**Kaylene Magaña**, Lindsay High School. Magaña played soccer and did track for the Cardinals. She will attend the University of California, Los Angeles, and major in business economics.

Later in the evening, 22 students from 13 high schools were recognized as their schools' PVWH Student-Athletes of the Year. Students were nominated for the award by coaches and athletic directors.



Those students were:

**Matthew Guido**, Dinuba High School (football, baseball)

**Emmarie Rico**, Dinuba High School (volleyball, basketball, softball)



**Madison Butterfield**, El Diamante High School (diving)  
**Seriah Reyna**, Exeter Union High School (tennis)  
**Brody Riggi**, Exeter Union High School (track and field)  
**Haylie Tassey**, Farmersville High School (basketball)  
**Janessa Garza**, Farmersville High School (basketball)  
**Ariana Rojas**, La Sierra Military Academy (soccer)  
**David Flores**, La Sierra Military Academy (basketball)  
**Malakai Rodriguez**, Mission Oak High School (basketball)  
**Giada Ortega**, Mission Oak High School (track)  
**Ariel Bermudez**, Monache High School (basketball)  
**Ace Guilliams**, Monache High School (water polo, swim)  
**Adrian Garcia**, Mt. Whitney High School (basketball, baseball)  
**Jonathan Barajas**, Orosi High School (soccer)  
**Kaylie Davila**, Orosi High School (basketball)  
**Ayla Morgan**, Redwood High School (cheer and swim)  
**KaiLee Gilbert**, Tulare Union High School (volleyball, basketball, softball)  
**Makayla McGuire**, Tulare Western High School (water polo, swim)  
**Mathias Sepeda**, Tulare Western High School (water polo, baseball)  
**Felipe Arambula**, Woodlake Union High School (football)  
**Alyssa Coelho**, Woodlake Union High School (volleyball)

At the end of the evening, Dr. Kimberly Watamura from El Diamante High School (Visalia) was announced as this year's PVWH Athletic Director of the Year.



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## Over 400 students receive Seal of Biliteracy through the county office



This graduation season, Tulare County Office of Education proudly celebrates the accomplishments of high school students who earned the California State Seal of Biliteracy. This year, TCOE has recognized 421 students with this prestigious state-level honor.

The California State Seal of Biliteracy recognizes students who have demonstrated proficiency in both English and at least one other language. To qualify, students must meet rigorous criteria. TCOE certifies that each student meets the requirements for the State Seal of Biliteracy.

For English, they must complete all language arts requirements for graduation with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and fulfill one of several academic benchmarks—such as scoring “standard met” on the Grade 11 CAASPP for English language arts, earning a 3 or higher on the AP English exam, scoring a 4 or higher on the IB English exam, or achieving a score of 480 or higher on the SAT’s Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section. English learners must also earn a level 4 on the oral language portion of the ELPAC.



To demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English, students must complete a four-year course of study in that language with a GPA of 3.0 or higher and meet one of the following: pass a world language AP exam with a score of 3 or higher; pass an IB exam with a score of 4 or higher; score intermediate, mid, or above on both the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test and Oral Proficiency Interview; or pass a district-approved language exam at the proficient level or higher.

The achievement of these students reflects their commitment to academic excellence, cultural understanding, and lifelong learning. By attaining advanced skills in multiple languages, they are not only better prepared to navigate a global society, but also serve as role models of perseverance, curiosity, and success.

For more on the State Seal of Biliteracy, visit the CDE's website at [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/sealofbiliteracy.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/sealofbiliteracy.asp).

Photos above:

~ Porterville Unified School District held a ceremony on Monday, May 12 to honor its 255 students who earned a State Seal of Biliteracy.



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## TCOE program graduations begin this week



Tomorrow, 17 young people from AcCEL classes in the Porterville area will be the first to graduate from a Tulare County Office of Education program this school year. This year, TCOE schools and programs will hold six promotion or graduation ceremonies.

May 22 at 10:00 a.m.

### **Porterville Special Education Program**

Burton School District Burkey Center, 2440 West Henderson Avenue, Porterville

May 28 at 10:00 a.m.

### **Visalia and North County Special Education Program**

TCOE Redwood Conference Center, 6200 South Mooney Boulevard, Visalia

May 29 at 9:00 a.m.

### **La Sierra Military Academy Middle School Promotion**

1735 East Houston Avenue, Visalia

### **May 29 at 7:00 p.m. La Sierra Military Academy and Independent Study Program High School Graduation**

1735 East Houston Avenue, Visalia

May 30 at 5:00 p.m.

**University Preparatory High School Graduation**

Visalia Fox Theatre, 308 West Main Street, Visalia

June 3 at 10:00 a.m.

**Tulare Special Education Programs** Claude Meitzenheimer Community Center, 830 South Blackstone Street, Tulare

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## **Kiwanis Club of Greater Tulare holds its final student-athlete recognition event**



The breakfast recognition for Tulare high school student-athletes, held this week, was a special one, because it was the last for the Kiwanis Club of Greater Tulare. The club, which will be closing this year, has partnered with TCOE's CHARACTER COUNTS! program to recognize Pursuing Victory with Honor (PVWH) student-athletes since the 2009-2010 school year.

Kevin Covert, a member of the club and assistant superintendent of curriculum, technology, and assessment at Tulare Joint Union High School District, shared that the club hosted a total of 44 breakfasts, honoring 264 Tulare student-athletes. To illustrate the impact former honorees are making on the community, Covert invited two men who were honored in the first year of the program – Julian Hernandez and Brian Milanesis.

Hernandez was a baseball player at Mission Oak High School. He shared that he is now the athletic director and physical education teacher at Pixley Middle School – a position he has held for the past seven years. He is married with two young boys.

Brian Milanesio was a swimmer and water polo player at Tulare Western High School. Today, after 10 years of working in private business, Milanesio has decided to pursue his teaching credential to give back to Tulare's youth. Married with one child, he currently coaches water polo at Tulare Western High School.

"Kiwanis Club of Greater Tulare has been a tremendous partner in celebrating good character in our students-athletes," said Kelley Petty, CHARACTER COUNTS! Coordinator. "We have appreciated their unwavering commitment to model what a good sportsmanship recognition program looks like!"

The spring sports PVWH honorees from Tulare high schools are:

### **Mission Oak High School**

#### **Alexa Whitener, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, girls swim**

Coach Ashlyn Moya said, "Alexa joined us as a shy freshman and blossomed into a confident, compassionate leader. She treats everyone — teammates and opponents alike — with kindness and respect. A true role model, Alexa exemplifies all Six Pillars of Character in everything she does. Her integrity, dedication, and heart have left a lasting impact on our program."

#### **Fernando Toledo, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, boys track**

Coach Bryson Beavers said, "Fernando is the heart of our program — a student-athlete who leads with integrity and respect. As team captain, he lives our motto: "Family, Respect, Greatness." He works hard, uplifts others, and embodies the Six Pillars of Character every day. Fernando truly is the poster child for what it means to lead by example."

### **Tulare Union High School**

#### **Emily Treadwell, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, girls swim**

Coach Stephanie Edwards said, "Emily has been selected for this award for her outstanding character and leadership during the 2025 swim season. She consistently demonstrates responsibility, fairness, respect, trustworthiness, caring, and citizenship. Emily goes above and beyond to support her teammates and elevate our program — she truly embodies the Six Pillars of Character in all she does."

#### **Ezra Martinez, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, boys golf**



Coach Andre Martinez said, “I’m proud to introduce my son, Ezra, a dedicated member of the TUHS golf team. Humble and hardworking — traits he gets from his mom — Ezra is a valley champion, though he’d never boast about it. He’s grown into a remarkable young man, known for his fairness and leadership on the course. Others naturally look up to him.”

## **Tulare Western High School**

### **Carly Herrera, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, girls track**

Coach Jordan Perry said, “Carly has been part of our track family since she was a little girl. Now in high school, she shines with kindness and encouragement. Always uplifting her teammates, she’s like a mother duck to a group of freshmen — guiding them with her loving, supportive heart. Carly truly is a bright light on and off the track.”

### **Julian Montoya, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, boys track**

Coach Jordan Perry said, “Julian’s determination and goal-driven mindset helped him conquer the hurdles — literally and figuratively. He not only achieved his personal goals but also became a mentor to his teammates. Balancing a demanding schedule, Julian stands out as a responsible student-athlete, always leading by example and inspiring others with his perseverance and dedication.”

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