



Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship

2009 BONNER CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Ahwahnee Middle School (670 Students 7th and 8th Grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93710
Tel: 559-451-4300
Principal: Lisa DeLeon

Ahwahnee Middle School has established programs that promote core ethical values in a safe and caring environment. The slogan that students hear each morning, "Warriors, be the one to make a difference," embodies our vision that each student can make a contribution to make the world a better place.

To kick off the school year, we have a Welcome Back Assembly with character education skits presented by the leadership class. Students are given a positive start to the year and encouraged to participate in school activities, academics, and sports with the focus to "Be the best you can be".

Campus culture goals are established through review of the Healthy Kids Survey and the Search Institute's "40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents" with a strong emphasis on character education. Our vice principal holds a focus group quarterly with students to evaluate goals and determine if we are on target with student needs.

Students are reminded regularly of good character in the morning announcements and activities. All faculty members have "Step-Up" cards to randomly give to students who step up and show good character. These cards enable students to step up to the front of the lunch line and are highly prized.

Students are nominated monthly by teachers for the Warrior Pride Award. The Warrior Pride Award recognizes good behavior, hard work and a student's ability to exemplify the character trait of the month.

Ahwahnee has a leadership class that is centered on character education. Students provide service to staff, teachers and students throughout the year and as one student said, "We have fun doing it." Students are taught lessons from the Josephson Institute of Ethics Curriculum. Each character trait is defined, explored and discussed and continually reinforced. Students then create and organize activities for the student body that foster character development.

One of our meaningful activities is our "Commit to Character Week". Each student signs an individual contract that emphasizes each of the 6 pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Students color and decorate the contracts and they are posted in the office for the community to see.

Each year we have assemblies to emphasize good character, respect, and anti-bullying. Last year Fresno State Basketball Coach, Steve Cleveland, was a keynote speaker and encouraged students to put forth their best effort and "touch all the lines." Roosevelt School of the Arts Improv Group, "Space -4-Rent", came and performed skits to teach tolerance and ethical behavior to all students.

Our case manager, social worker, and academic counselor cheerfully greet students each morning and they teach at-risk classes on tolerance, behavior and study skills along with other faculty members, coordinate the mentorship for our Peer Mediator Program. This program, in conjunction with Fresno State, provides training in conflict resolution.

Last year Ahwahnee was honored to be selected as the Fresno Unified Environmental Magnet. We have a gardening class that helps to beautify our campus and provides vegetables for our cooking class. Our deaf and hard of hearing students are responsible for a worm farm. Students learn to recycle at lunch as they sort items for the compost pile or recycling bins as they dispose of their lunch refuse. We also have the club "The Green Machine" that recycles classroom bottles and cans weekly.

Service in the community is emphasized on campus. We participated in the Denim Drive for Habitat for Humanity. We were able to recycle much needed denim for insulation. Also we participated in a Canned Food Drive and gave over a thousand cans to our local agency "Stone Soup". Leadership students visited the elementary schools and enjoyed reading to the first graders on "Read Across America Day". In February and March students will participate in The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Pennies for Patients Program.

We have many sports teams at Ahwahnee and coaches work hard to instill the importance of academics and sportsmanship with our athletes. Standards for being an athlete are strictly upheld. In order to participate, a student must maintain a "2.0" average and have good citizenship. Each semester we honor students at a sports award banquet. Emphasis is placed on performance and improvement. Students are nominated for the "Pursuing Victory with Honor Award" at the end of the year. We also have an active intramural program at lunchtime that mandates good sportsmanship to participate.

We celebrate scholarship each quarter with an assembly or breakfast. We also honor our students who maintain perfect attendance. All students receive certificates, recognition and special coupons.

Character education is addressed throughout the curriculum. We have a safe and caring campus where students are valued. One wonderful indicator that we are making strides in character education was expressed by a new staff member this week. She said, "Every time I come to the office and a student is entering at the same time, the student politely holds the door open for me."

I sure appreciate that kind of respect." We truly believe that by investing in kids we can teach them that everyone can succeed and make the world a better place.

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Baird Middle School (605 Students 5th-8th Grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93704
Tel: 559-451-4310
Principal: Janetta McGensy

"Baird Middle School-A Magical Place Where Children Thrive" is just one of many tiled art projects so beautifully visible on the walls, gardens, and classrooms at our school. Our mascot is an Explorer, an Explorer finding his "way" in the world. Over time, our character education plan has come to be known as The Baird Way. We consider it to be so important, we conduct a three-day camp in the summer for all students new to Baird in order to help them literally and figuratively find their way around campus.

A more recent addition to our curriculum was the decision to become an AVID school. AVID is a national program that sponsors Advancement Via Individual Determination, an intense program of preparing students to succeed in college.

The AVID program helps students learn to become responsible for their own learning. They work directly with college tutors, tour college and university campuses, and show evidence of their learning through documentation of their learning as amassed in their individual binders, a sort of portfolio of learning.

Our eminently qualified staff share unique and varied life experiences with students and offer them opportunities to transcend the traditional classroom work through clubs, electives, and activities such as: art, crochet, French, gardening, guitar, History Day, knitting, literature, Math-o-Rama, quilting, Science Olympiad, solar cooking, Student Council, surfing, writing, woodworking, and a variety of athletic pursuits.

At Baird, character education begins as soon as students step off the bus. There is a staff member there to greet students and to make sure their shirts are tucked in and that they are not chewing gum. A second check is at the classroom door. Teachers quickly learn their students' names and greet them as they enter class. The reinforcement of the old standbys, "please," "thank you," and "excuse me," are held in high regard. Our morning announcements begin with a reminder about our "shirts tucked in" policy and end with a final thought or inspirational quote for students to consider as they begin their day. Through consistent attention to the common courtesies from grades five through eight, we have found over time that students easily comply with these standards and present themselves as ready to learn.

Each of the four grade levels handles character education in a way that best meets and appeals to students. One example is in the seventh grade. When the monthly character focus is announced,

fairness, for example, each homeroom teacher takes a few moments to directly teach the concept of fairness. He or she might share a few examples of their own before asking students to include a few more. Once everyone understands how to apply the concept to their choices and behaviors at school, the teacher announces that they will receive Character Counts! Bucks when a teacher observes them demonstrating this trait. Students write their names on the Character Counts! Bucks and place them in a large tub. At the end of the month, there is a Character Counts! rally, where teachers don crazy hats, glasses, and costumes and play music related to the celebration. Teachers draw winning Bucks from the tub and pass out gift cards to Jamba Juice, Starbucks, or Edward's Theater. Students are applauded for their value to the school in exhibiting the quality of fairness and encouraged to continue their focus on the other qualities as well.

Academic Study Time is offered each morning during the 20 minutes before school begins. If a student needs to use a computer, finish work, ask for missed assignments, or get help, he or she may go to an open classroom to use this time for that purpose. Students are expected to follow a code of conduct in each classroom (rules) such as the three B's: Be punctual; Be prepared; Be courteous.

Our campus is clean, especially with the addition of more recycle bins. There are also separate recycle bins for paper and plastic/cans in the classrooms. Students learn about "going green" in their science and agriculture classes and act responsibly when it comes to disposing of their trash. Students have all participated in creating grade-level garden or patio areas, so they take pride in keeping the campus clean.

Character education is addressed at Baird throughout the curriculum. Across all grade levels, students observe and learn about virtue and character through the choices characters make in stories and books. In history and social studies, students learn from the past that good character counts toward positive results.

After the 9/11 assault on America, our Student Council proposed we create a plaza to memorialize peace and tolerance, to acknowledge the wrongdoing in the world, but also to offer hope and courage in mending whatever challenges or troubles may come. Today that plaza is one of the highlights of a stroll about the campus. Community artisans created sculptures recognizing the Holocaust, the Japanese Internment, the Armenian Genocide, and the 9/11 Terrorists' Attack. Students use the area to socialize, as an extended classroom, and to visit more formally on the anniversary of each event.

Over the years, many students have stepped forward to show they care about others. We have collected items for Shoeboxes for Soldiers, served soup at Poverello House, sold Kids' Day newspapers for Valley Children's Hospital, created commercials for the SPCA, starred in a bus safety video which was shown throughout the district, sponsored debates between the mayoral candidates in our cafeteria. Through these activities, standing side-by-side with caring adult, students have built trust, become trustworthy, learned what it means to have integrity, and formed their own paths toward responsible citizenship.

We set out to create a school that reflected what society could be, a vision of tolerance, achievement, commitment, and hard work. The foundation of that very tall order lay in building

and growing character and virtue in our students. Our high California Standards Test scores indicate that the students have indeed achieved academic excellence, but it is the pleasure of their character and company is what we savor.

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Live Oak Middle School (701 Students 6th-8th Grades)
Tulare City Elementary School District, Tulare, CA 93274
Tel: 559-685-7310
Principal: Paula Adair

"The Right Place at the Right Time" has been Live Oak's school motto and driving inspiration since it was established in 1989. The well-being and development of the whole child are major goals of every highly rigorous academic offering and myriad of social events available to students. The center of every lesson and event is character.

On the walls [of our Multipurpose Room] are banners of honor where responsible student's names are displayed. Those there have achieved honor roll status academically. On the back wall are student's names that are achieving million-word reader status. Monthly newsletters contain information about the pillars of character, ways to achieve character and those who are achieving in one-way or another. Parent conferences are another avenue Live Oak staff uses to communicate the importance of character. Monthly night meetings are conducted for the Live Oak Community to promote education topics grounded on the Character Counts! Pillars and the parent-training program called Passport to Success.

To ensure our staff is addressing all levels of students through equity and caring qualities, a team provides mentoring weekly, both socially and academically, to a group of fragile (ARI-Academic Review Intervention) students. Teachers take students as classroom aides in order to mentor them. At times, the school counselor selects specific students to work in the student store so they can be mentored. Modeling the 6 pillars of character is our greatest strength at Live Oak.

The student Leadership Class develops, as a final project, a Fifth Grade Academy to prepare incoming Grizzlies for their middle school experience. From the Tulare Union High School Counseling Department, leadership students receive some training in how to organize large group activities, which coincide with the Link Crew program. They organize tours, introduce teachers, and put on skits of school rules and regulations for how to be a successful Grizzly, teach a dance and a cheer. During the student orientation, school Administration welcomes parents. This project allows students to put into practice what they understand of the 6 Pillars of Character.

The beginning of the school year 160 students composed of 7th /8th grade AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) and Leadership students received Effective Teens Leadership In Action Training from the Premier Company. This student achievement workshop uses Sean Covey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, to assist teens in developing their personal

leadership skills. All 8th grade language arts core classes read and discussed *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* the first few weeks of school.

Live Oak staff has utmost respect for others and treats every incoming student as a future success story. Student needs are realized and addressed from the very outset of the educational experience on the Live oak campus. Special academic placements are made for both needy and GATE students and accommodations arranged for the particular needs of the student.

Recognizing that bullying is a problem in our society, Second Step, Violence Prevention education is provided by all sixth grade teachers. As an extension of this process, the school counselor uses this curriculum in small group counseling, and in training 6th through 8th graders as Peer Mediators, to help provide conflict resolution.

Live Oak is fully committed to seeing all students achieve exemplary character. This cannot happen unless students are willing to contribute in meaningful ways to the school community. Student leadership activities promoting respect, responsibility and good citizenship include a Live Oak Student Council. Student council members elected by their peers organize "Say Yes to Life" (anti drug and alcohol) activities during Red Ribbon Week and throughout the year. They promote school spirit through noontime activities and dress up days.

Every student who is responsible and qualifies is encouraged to join the California Junior Scholarship Federation. Members of CJSF are actively involved in community service and tutoring. The club gives a scholarship every year to a former Live Oak student who is graduating from high school. The school newspaper and yearbook celebrate the school culture and promote school spirit, respect for school and good citizenship.

To expose our students to the importance of service learning and giving back to your community, the Live Oak student body donates toys for less fortunate children in Tulare through the Toys for Kids program sponsored by the Tulare Police Department. They also organize an annual canned food drive. Further, for the last nine years, students at Live Oak have created the Tulare Activity Directory as a Service Learning Project. The directory catalogs every club and event available to young people in the community, and is used by many agencies throughout Tulare (Social Services, Tulare Police Department, Youth Services Bureau, Tulare Chamber of Commerce).

Since receiving the Virtues and Character Recognition Award in 2007, some program changes have been put into place at Live Oak Middle School. Some of our efforts for enhancing character development include:

Operation Start On Time This is a full staff involvement program. Teachers are at the classroom greeting students as they arrive. When the bell rings door is shut and locked. All students out on campus are collected and taken to the office. In addition, any student that leaves a classroom is required to wear an orange vest. This allows administration the ability to visually discern students are in the appropriate location. Tardies and absents have drop significantly from 07/08 - 08/09 school year.

Positive Referral Slips Staff give positive referrals to students recognizing when students are doing the right thing and directing the focus on the positive. Students with positive referrals are put in drawing for VIP seating at Positive Recognition Assemblies.

WEB Where Everybody Belongs (Middle School version of Link Crew) Eighth grade students mentor 7th grade students. There are 35 WEB leaders. This is our first year with WEB. WEB has been incorporated in as an elective class. Students apply and must meet criteria to be selected as a WEB leader. There is a required full weeklong training camp for all selected WEB leaders. The camp is conducted a week before school begins. The WEB program has provided a positive climate for our campus.

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**Los Tules Middle School (648 Students 6th-8th Grades)
Tulare City Elementary School District, Tulare, CA 93274
Tel: 559-687-3156 Principal: Gary Yentes**

It is the mission of Los Tules Middle School to develop a social and moral conscience that will enable students to make good decisions in life.

Each morning begins with Mr. Jenkins, LT's (Los Tules) Vice Principal, speaking to the students on the importance of not only being an LT scholar, yet a respectful member of the LT community. For the message of respecting self, others and their country is unequivocally an expectation for the LT community.

Teaching of these core ethical values exists through direct curriculum alignment from the art class where expression of these values is created through a collaborative assignment. This assignment enforces the need for LT scholars to apply these definitions of respecting others, working together, and doing your part in order to create the final art piece displayed on the art room walls. Other examples of curriculum alignment are evidenced through various genres in Language Arts. A recent Language Arts highlighted assignment utilized the You-Tube technology to produce a two minutes public service announcement discussing the pillar of respect and accepting cultural differences.

Enforcing good character is often the most exciting part of a school's environment. Enter into the multipurpose room at the beginning of a student recognition assembly and you will be delighted to hear upbeat music, students and staff greeting each other and see that honoring others is an important ingredient in life that can be fun and respectful all at the same time. Each month staff members choose students to be recognized at a monthly assembly based on their character and academic accomplishments and attendance.

[A sampling of] descriptions of our enforcing strategies for our LT scholars are listed below. These efforts ultimately round out the intentional and comprehensive approach to character education:

- Kids of Character: Throughout the year each grade level is given a deadline in which to nominate a student for each of the 6 pillars of character. Those students have their pictures taken and sent to the community paper. Included with the student's photo is a short explanation of why that particular student was chosen.
- Parent Education Program: This is a four-part parent information institute. The resource teacher and the counselor teach the sessions. CHARACTER COUNTS! Philosophy is shared during the first session in order to support the root of our mission.
- Pillar of Responsibility: Monthly Responsibility Certificate to our Student of the Month assemblies. Students are recognized if they have completed all their classroom work and homework for the month.
- Tag a Tiger Program: Two "Tag a Tiger" wristbands are given to a scholar of character caught showing Tiger Pride. They wear one and the other they give to a scholar they see exhibiting a pillar of character as well.
- Tel-A-Parent: Any LT Scholar knows a phone call home could also be a good call! Thanks to the "Teleparent" Phone Messaging System. Teachers are able to record a positive message for parents and have it automatically sent to the home.
- Los Tules MVT (Most Valuable Tiger): Los Tules teachers choose scholars randomly to be recognized. The counselor then prints the student's picture and attaches it to the MVP form, which is then displayed in the office.

Modeling the pillar of citizenship is evident when you see that the classrooms are clean and orderly and provide a safe learning environment. The school grounds are kept clean and are well maintained for student play, recreation, and athletic activities. Our school community takes pride in our well-maintained buildings and landscaping.

Our school band consists of approximately 140 students from grades 5-8. Parents assist at our band events, such as the Los Tules Jazz Festival, band concerts, and band parades. Our School Site Council, English Language Advisory Committee, and Migrant Parent Advisory Committee have active parent boards.

To further ensure fairness and equity at Los Tules our students are counseled frequently on how to best display the six pillars of the character when disciplinary actions occur. All staff members implement discipline procedures to assist students both inside and outside the classroom. The disciplinary action that is taken is firm, fair, and consistent. Students are held accountable for their actions at all times. Another popular component to Los Tules Middle School Tigers is the successful after school sports program, which allows students to stay involved in athletic programs throughout the school year. Additional tutorial assistance for our LT scholars is made available before school, during the school day, and after school.

Relationships best describe another attempt to maintain a safe and caring environment on LT's campus. Take notice of the paper made buckets located pinned to the office and classroom walls. Students are taught the importance of "filling someone's bucket" instead of being a "bucket dipper." When you want to thank a person, or just give them positive feedback, students and teachers fill out a raindrop and give it to that person. The drop is then added to their bucket, thus "filling your bucket."

Teaching students to serve is a very important concept at Los Tules Middle School. Volunteering and helping others is also an extension into our larger community. During the past four years Los Tules has selected the Madera Children's Hospital as their focus for service learning. Proceeds of items sold on campus such as school supplies of pencils, erasers, and school snacks such as beef jerky are dedicated to annual fundraising. Spring fundraising concludes with the Kid's Day Newspaper Sales. To date, Los Tules students have contributed over \$10,000 dollars to various charities.

Our Triple-A-Cards continues to be a success. Scholars receive one at the end of each month if they did not have any absences or tardies. In the past two years we have raised the bar and added they cannot receive any referrals to the office or tardy between classes for the month. We continue to have one of the highest attendance percentages in Tulare City Schools.

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Alice G. Mulcahy Middle School (626 Students 6th-8th Grades)
Tulare City Elementary School District, Tulare, CA 93274
Tel: 559-685-7250
Principal: John Pendleton

Our school motto: "Proud, Tough, Determined" represents members of our school community, past and present, who are proud of their family and school, tough enough to do what is right, and determined to be successful in life. We believe that our motto not only describes what a Mulcahy student is all about but also acts as the bridge to character education. The adoption of the CHARACTER COUNTS! philosophy and strategies meets our character education goals by complimenting the qualities of our students and the core values held by the Mulcahy family, and fostered by our school since 1958.

The teaching of character development begins prior to the first day of school where members of the school community including parents, students and the staff participate in an orientation assembly. School policies, student behaviors, and responsibilities are discussed. The core ethical values are used as a model for expected student behavior and academic school planners are given to every student. In addition, all students participate in Advisory held on the first Friday of each month. The major goals of our advisory program are to enhance student –teacher relationships, develop interpersonal skills, discuss school related issues, build group cohesiveness and school spirit, foster affective growth and development, and present positive adult role models.

Posters are displayed in every classroom depicting the Six Pillars of Character with descriptive phrases reinforcing behaviors. All rooms display signage that further supports strong ethical development through the "Big Three" (Proud, Tough, Determined) and The "Fantastic Four" (Dignity, Class, Poise, and Respect). Advocating for the character development of our students and informing the school community about the superior work being accomplished takes place through Academic Award Nights, Academic Showcases, and Athletic Award Nights. Additional annual activities include College Awareness Week, College: Making It Happen Night, and Cool

Night. Continuing the TEAM approach, all students receive an introduction to the Six Pillars of Character during the months of August and September. Ultimately, our goal is that students embrace the virtues of the program early on and that they conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the Six Pillars of Character. We believe however, the most powerful method in which to foster the true meaning of the Pillars is to provide students with the opportunity to observe and model ethical behavior on a daily basis. Our teachers have become mentors and, as such, powerful models of strong ethical behavior.

We refer to the 2006-07 term as the "Birth of a Nation." The renewed school spirit enjoyed by members of the Mulcahy Nation continued in 2007-08, leading to an improved attendance percentage (95%) and the District's largest API increase (39 points). In addition, we experienced a sharp decrease in suspensions. Mulcahy incurred the fewest suspensions among the middle schools with 56 (in comparison to the other schools 98, 106, and 135). To date, Mulcahy still maintains the fewest suspensions, has increased its attendance rate to 95.85% (an increase of 1.71% over last year during the same period of time), and recently drew over 300 parents and guests to the Academic Awards Night. In total, 386 awards were distributed.

Students actively participate in a number of valuable community service projects designed to promote social development while fostering the principles of character development and strengthening community partnerships. Since 1994, Mulcahy has become a major contributor to Children's Hospital of Central California, having sold over 50,000 special edition "Kid's Day" newspapers. In addition Mulcahy students and staff work together organizing and collecting food items to be donated to local aid agencies. Students also participate in "bell-ringing" for the Salvation Army during the Christmas season. Staff and students are proud of the fact that Mulcahy has been recognized as the top K-8 school participant in "bell-ringing" for the past five years.

Mulcahy has the prestigious honor of being an AVID School Certified with Distinction. It is our belief that by utilizing peer tutoring, we are able to teach our students the value of working collaboratively, making personal connections with members of the community, and capitalizing on our own personal strengths.

The following opportunities exist throughout the school year and for students in an effort to promote and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect for others:

- Poetry and Prose Festival - Spelling Bee - Math Super Bowl - Art Exhibitions
- Band and Auxiliary Performances - College Awareness Week - Athletic Teams
- Pride Dances - DARE/GREAT Graduation - Red Ribbon Week Activities
- Academic Showcase

Mulcahy is also home to an active Student Council. In order to be eligible to run for Student Council, students must demonstrate behavior consistent with the Six Pillars of Character and be in good academic standing. This year, the Student Council will induct an individual(s) into its CHARACTER COUNTS! Hall of Fame. The inductee will represent the qualities of citizenship and community service so valued by Mrs. Mulcahy.

In August of 2007, Mulcahy initiated its Advisory program. Designed to provide group guidance and foster a strong trusting relationship between staff and students, Advisory has allowed teachers to move beyond their role as instructors to that of mentors. Our school has taken the initial steps needed to develop a true balance between academics and social development.

On August 16, 2009, Mulcahy Middle School celebrated its 50th Anniversary with an assembly that featured guest speakers, all graduates who have gone on to accomplish great things within our community. As a school, members of the Mulcahy Nation celebrated the true belief that they not only share the same character and values as those who came before them, but equally as important, they believe that they can be just as successful and contribute to their community in a positive manner.

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Rio Vista Middle School (1280 Students 7th and 8th Grades)
Central Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93722
Tel: 559-276-3185
Principal: Tim Swain

Rio Vista Middle School employs the Character Counts! education program which focuses on the six pillars of character. Students often make mistakes and it is the goal of our Character Counts! program to assist students in learning from their mistakes and to become better citizens in the process. Rio Vista employs a firm, fair, and consistent assertive discipline model with students. Behavior expectations are clearly stated. It is important for students to understand the "why" of their mistakes and to emphasize the feelings and rights of others and how their behaviors may have a negative impact on others within the school and outside community.

At the beginning of each school year, teachers, administrators and staff review and reinforce with students and parents our expectations for student behavior. Students utilize a daily planner with the Character Counts! monthly pillar displayed as well as examples of how to display aspects of the monthly pillar. In addition, each week the agenda focuses on "People of Character", individuals who have shown qualities of the pillar of the month.

Rio Vista Middle School employs a variety of methods to promote Character Counts! values throughout all aspects of our school. These methods include:

- Titan of the Month Luncheon-to recognize students who display character qualities.
- Leadership in the Movies-movie clips from recent popular movies are shown and discussed that focus one the CC! pillars.
- Pursuing Victory With Honor--athletes attend a session with coaches and administrators that focus on the six pillars. One 8th grade athlete is selected by teammates and coaches to receive the athletic Titan Award for each sport season. One female and one male athlete, per team are given the Titan Award.

- Character Counts! banners-banners promoting the six pillars are displayed around our quad area.

Rio Vista's goal is to ensure that students and staff have a clean, safe, and secure learning environment free from drugs, alcohol, and crime. Students who provide active tips, which are investigated and result in an arrest, are monetarily rewarded. Furthermore, our liaisons are trained in conflict resolution and counsel students who have conflicts with each other and how to properly discuss and share their feelings in a non-threatening manner. Many fights and other altercations have been avoided through the use of conflict resolution.

The school utilizes information culled from the Healthy Kids Survey administered each year that addresses students' perceptions of safety on campus. Additionally, each year Rio Vista updates our Safe School Plan to ensure all students and staff has a safe working and learning environment. Rio Vista has also implemented a new program on our campus called Safe School Ambassadors. This program enlists thirty 7th grade students and ten 8th grade students to help prevent and stop cruelty among their peers. This program focuses on the power of bystanders who willingly allow mistreatment of their peers to take place on campus.

Through our Character Counts! education program, teachers and staff promote and discuss the six pillars of character with our students. When students choose to make poor choices, teachers and administrators always discuss the "why" behind a student's decision and how it applies to the six pillars.

Rio Vista's two most successful clubs on campus include the KICS club (Kids in Community Service) and the Recycle club. The KICS club has volunteered to the local organization "Tree Fresno", provided military care packages to troops stationed overseas, and offers babysitting services to the organization "Little Mended Hearts" for parents with children born with heart defects. The Recycle club promotes recycling habits and educates students, parents and staff on the importance of recycling plastic bottles and cans. Students place recycling containers around the campus as well as walk the capus collecting bottles and cans from students during break and lunch.

Each holiday season Rio Vista students and staff donate canned goods to our "Holiday Joy" campaign. Our Leadership students volunteer one Saturday in December to help pass out food boxes to Central families at God's Family Church. Additionally, Rio Vista collects coats donated by local businesses and provides them to students on campus who are in need of a warm coat over winter. This year Rio Vista passed out 40 coats to needy students.

For the past seven years, Rio Vista students volunteer to sell Kids Day newspapers to raise money for Children's Hospital of Central California.

All 7th grade students participate in completing Science Fair projects and numerous students compete in the Central Unified district Science Fair. Rio Vista students travel across the street to River Bluff elementary School to assist younger students with reading and math through our "Cross Age Tutoring Program". Many students choose this class as their elective and enjoy the benefits of working with younger children on a daily basis.

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Scandinavian Middle School (702 Students 7th and 8th Grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93726
Tel: 559-253-6510
Principal: Julie Goorabian-Raley

The mission of Scandinavian Middle School is proficiency for all students in each subject area, and development of strong character. We are committed to the Fresno Unified District Goals.

In 2007 Scandinavian Middle School opened our doors to incoming 7th grade students with the WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) Program for the first time in FUSD. WEB is a national middle school transition program that helps incoming students feel more comfortable, connect with an eighth grade leader, and develop a positive attitude toward their new campus. It is built on the belief that students want to and can help other students succeed. On the opening day of school each year 60-80 eighth grade student WEB Leaders facilitate a half day retreat and take charge with all activities for 7th grade students that culminates with a Rally and BBQ.

We start the school year with a 3 week School Success Start Up Plan. During Advisory Period students are introduced to the Parent/Teacher/Student Handbook and the Character Counts Agenda. We review and teach academic and behavioral student expectations, school procedures, and dress code. The character pillars are introduced and reviewed weekly in morning announcements. Students develop weekly goals based on the monthly character pillar and record these goals in their Character Counts Weekly Agenda.

We provide numerous incentives, student awards and activities offered to recognize students who exemplify the character pillars throughout the year. Scandinavian recognizes students of exemplary character every month through the Student of the Month Character Pillar Awards. As part of this award, students are recognized at a luncheon with the East Fresno Rotary. Our Warrior Buck Program rewards students for Random Acts of Kindness every week. Other student recognitions include quarterly academic and athletic awards assemblies and music awards. We honor students at our Annual Awards Dessert and Character Awards Dinner. We also celebrate student accomplishments through Field Trips, Rallies, Dances and Activity Days. This year we are recognizing all students staying on target to graduate and who demonstrate a positive work ethic and personal responsibility by achieving a 2.0 GPA without any "D" or "F" grades. Student achievement results have shown significant improvement and we have experienced a significant decrease in suspensions, office referrals, and student conflicts on campus.

Scandinavian Middle School provides a Campus Culture Team. The team consists of a Campus Culture Director, teachers, and administrative staff. The Campus Culture Team meets monthly to plan events, review programs, and coordinate responsibilities. It is the goal of the committee to facilitate character building through activities designed to promote a positive cultural

environment at our school site. We offer a wide variety of sports and activities to meet the vast differences in cultural and individual needs.

The Scandinavian Middle School sports program follows the concept of TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More). The coaches are dedicated to facilitating the development of mind, body and spirit for all student athletes, who pass through the Warrior Sports Program. Students are encouraged to become involved from the moment they are escorted around campus as sixth graders. Through their athletic experience, which includes a daily tutorial prior to practice, students gain valuable lessons, which build their character. They also come to understand that perseverance, self-discipline and accepting responsibility are essential for success. Student athletes are rewarded for their ability as well as their spirit, through Sports Awards Assemblies and each week as Character Award medals are given to athletes who exemplify true sportsmanship..

The Peer Mediation Program has emerged as a focal point in providing a secure and caring environment for students at Scandinavian Middle School. Students involved in a dispute, agree to sit down with trained, student peer mediators and work through the process of reconciliation, in a systematic, calm matter. During the 2008-2009 school year, there have already been thirty, successful mediations. With daily access to peer mediation, students are choosing to find resolution to their relationship difficulties, through the help of their peers.

Scandinavian Middle School is participating in the Safe and Civil School Program offered by Fresno Unified School District and Dr. Randy Spricks. The goal of the program is to create a safe, civil, and productive school. With the thoughtful meaning of "STOIC" in mind, a five step systematic approach is being implemented: Structure/organize all school settings for success, Teach students how to behave responsible in those settings, Observe student behavior (supervise); Interact positively with students, Correct irresponsible behavior calmly, consistently, and immediately in the setting in which the infraction occurred. Through student and staff input, we have identified "respect" as an integral pillar to address within this program. As a result each academic department has developed and implemented lessons to teach the various elements of respect throughout the year.

Scandinavian targets the needs of "at risk" students through the STOP program (Students Targeted with Opportunities for Prevention). STOP is a school-based prevention program with a mission to provide early intervention services to at-risk youth and their families. It is designed to reduce the number of school related problems, juvenile delinquency, substance and alcohol abuse, family dysfunction and gang involvement. Services provided by staff and community organizations may include; anger management, family and individual counseling, conflict resolution, mentoring, tutoring, recreational activities, interactive theatrical productions, and gang education and intervention.

A very successful community partnership began when the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA), in conjunction with Reedley College, developed a Career Pathways program at Scandinavian. This magnet program focuses on promoting the character competencies for workplace success and student awareness of the world around them. Students have led a campus beautification program, planted garden areas, built a pond, ecosystem,

composting system and mediation maze. Students have increased their awareness of the world around them and have shared their time to make their school and community a better place.

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Sequoia Middle School (861 Students 7th and 8th Grades)
Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA 93722
Tel: 559-457-3210
Principal: Michael Ribera

One of the goals we set early on was to decrease the number of suspensions and expulsions. In analyzing our summary report of suspensions, our suspension rate dropped from 90.1 in the 2005-2006 to 51.5 for the 2007-2008 school year. In addition, the number of expulsions has fallen from 27 in the 2006-2007 school year to 21 in 2007-2008. In assessing our Character Counts! program we have also taken into account data from several sources to get a true feeling for what changes or additions we need to address. As summarized in our California Healthy Kids survey, we have jumped from 38.4%-41.9% in students that feel like they are a part of the school. Other data points we found interesting is that the number of students that responded that there is a teacher or adult who really cares about them jumped from 43.7%-49.9% and those student who feel safe or very safe at school has jumped from 47.4% to 53.3% over the course of a year.

We have a yearlong school wide focus on celebrating diversity, with a focus each quarter which includes class projects, school wide contests, assemblies and lunch activities. For example, next month we will have a school wide focus on black history. All month we have many different activities in honor of Black History Month including standards based classroom enrichment activities as well as an assembly, a celebrating diversity potluck and various student incentives for participation. Lessons based on Respect, Caring and Fairness will be taught in every classroom as we connect the principles from Character Counts! to leaders in African American History.

The Character Counts Tickets which were new to Sequoia in 2006 are proving to be a strong motivator on campus. All staff members have tickets displaying the character trait of the month to give to students demonstrating good character. Students place their tickets into the Character Bucket in the front office for a chance to win prizes each Friday. All winning students are then put into an additional drawing to take place at the end of the month.

Go Agenda! is based upon "The 7 Habits of highly Effective Teens" a specialized program providing weekly character counts lessons for students in their agendas. This program is designed to help our students improve their self image, make good choices and act responsibly. Its character lessons will be completed within an advisory period and supported and reinforced throughout the school year within their agenda. A unique feature of the Go Agenda! is the parent component. Lessons for the student to complete with their family are provided and encouraged.

It is vital that citizenship, grades and attendance be interwoven into our site program. Students who have demonstrated good character, with no more than two tardies, no failing grades, and no administrative suspensions are rewarded through Sequoia's Awesome Characters (SAC PACK). These students are allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities such as dances and reward socials. As a site we have noticed a rise in the number of eligible students.

The third annual Character Counts! Award will be presented at the end of the year to one eighth grade boy and girl who demonstrated exemplary character over the year. Students will be honored at the end of the year eighth grade awards ceremony.

The Raise the Grade Challenge proved to be a huge success in motivating students to take responsibility and bring their grades up as well as empower students to set goals and learn about their GPA. At the end of each six-week period, students write goals and an action plan as to how they can raise their grades. In semesters to follow students who earn a 3.0 or higher G.P.A., and/or those showing improvement in their performance will be sent a letter acknowledging and congratulating them on their successes from Mr. Ribera. In addition to the letter from Mr. Ribera students are given tickets for the grade points raised and are entered into a drawing for prizes.

There is no one size fits all answer for our students. In meeting the needs of our students we have tailored several programs for our diverse student population. Advancement Via Independent Determination (AVID) was designed to reach our students in the middle who have potential but have not necessarily had the support system to go to college.

Another program tailored to meet the needs of our students is our new after school program. The After School Program has a goal is to improve the academic achievement of children and youth by providing them with out-of-school learning opportunities.

In further meeting the needs of our students, Sequoia's Junior Doctors Academy (JDA) was created to identify, educate, and advance annual cohorts of disadvantaged students from the middle school, through college, to health professions schools.

The number of student altercations has dropped from 250 in 2005-06 to 166 in 2007-08. We attribute this drop to the skill sets gained by our students in their Character Lessons, our peer mediation program as well as the visibility, predictability and accessibility of teachers and administration.

One of the programs we are most excited about is our growing Peer Mediation Program. Peer Mediation ties in Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Fairness and Respect and Caring as key components in taking on the role of peer mediator. It is the goal of our Peer Mediation Program to provide our students with tools to solve their own conflicts. Our program involves twenty to 30 students as mediators, who also serve as role models in the school of how to embody Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Fairness and Respect. One of our goals is to guide students towards finding responsible ways to resolve conflicts with each other.

In November and December our students brought in canned food to create Food Baskets which were donated to local families in need. Each March our students continue show the character trait

of caring as they join hundreds of other students from across the country in a school wide effort to collect pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters for Pennies for Patients.

At Sequoia, we encourage service learning by providing opportunities for students to participate in community service activities and be recognized and rewarded for doing so. If a student chooses to be a part of the Sequoia Student of Service Program they will be required to volunteer a minimum number of hours in the community and or at the school. Students who participate in this program will be recognized quarterly.