



## Bonner Center for Character Education and Citizenship

### **2007 BONNER CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

**Green Acres Middle School (1048 Students 7th and 8th Grades)**

**Visalia Unified School District, Visalia, Ca. 93291**

**Tel: 559-730-7671**

**Principal: David Tonini**

The staff at Green Acres Middle School believes that student success must be based on a partnership between home, school and community; student learning is directly linked to high expectations of students, staff and parents; developing student character is essential to our democratic society; each student must receive a core curriculum and technology based instruction and that additional assistance during or after school, is essential for student success; and, a strong extracurricular and elective program is needed to promote the development of the well-rounded student.

With this vision and framework of beliefs, our staff, working with parents and students, has crafted a character education program based on the Six Pillars of Character Counts! that teaches, promotes, and recognizes students of good character. To make sure there is on-going education in these beliefs, staff will be in-serviced yearly and given a school handbook, "Character Counts!", to encourage character education into daily teacher lessons. We believe these values and traits are essential to the development of good citizens not only for Green Acres Middle School but our community as well. Green Acres Middle School has developed its character education program through the establishment of a Character Counts! Committee and a site coordinator, assistant principal Andrew Vasquez.

The coordinator shares information with staff regularly from the Tulare County Office of Education, and its character coordinator. The coordinator is a national Character Counts! Trainer, certified by the Josephson Institute of ethics. Our program is reviewed for ongoing input by our staff committee and student Leadership Class, as well as our parent/teacher/student organization.

To promote and recognize good character, our school has created the "Character Counts! Pass". Every teacher each month is given these passes to catch students practicing the six pillars of character. To reward students for this character behavior, students sign their name on the pass back and place it into the Character Counts! container in the library. At the end of the month, recognized students have their names shown at lunch as "Students of Character" and receive a free ice cream bar.

Each month a Character Counts! pillar word is highlighted, then staff nominate students for recognition at the school wide Student of the Month breakfast. Besides their picture proudly displayed in the office, they are also recognized as part of the school's Character Counts! Hall of Fame, whose picture is displayed specifically for Character Counts! in the school office. When new display cases are set up in our new multi-purpose room, their pictures will proudly be displayed there too.

Any visitor to campus can quickly see that Green Acres is committed to promoting good character. Banners announcing the Pillar of the Month fly daily in front of the campus. Our character education school slogan, "Character Counts! ... 7 Days a Week" is displayed prominently on a banner flown below our school marquee. This slogan was the result of a student slogan contest.

The monthly "Charger Award", recognizes two students, picked by very teacher, who exemplify the Character Counts! Pillars, and work hard, get involved, and do the right thing.

Students who participated in our Leadership class activities each semester, must have a GPA of 2.6 and good citizenship, and are rewarded with an off campus activity. At the end of the school year, students are again recognized for participating in school activities (earning 100 plus activity points) and having good citizenship. Each earns a block "GA" award. Every student is eligible to win one of these awards.

Students are encouraged to participate in their school community as well as the larger community in a variety of ways at Green Acres. Our school has a very large leadership class and student government. These two groups provide weekly fun activities at lunchtime. "Fun Fridays" correspond with good citizenship for the week in the cafeteria and a willingness to keep their table areas clean. This is a big help to our custodian staff. "Fun Friday" activities are opened to everyone, and many times require a teacher teammate.

Green Acres annually shows its commitment to the community and the need to eradicate cancer by participating in the annual "American Cancer Society Fun Run". Students, teachers and parents form teams to raise money for this worthy event. Students on campus contribute pennies and loose change in a school wide competition. For the 15th straight year Green Acres participated in this October event and has raised over \$11,000.

Our character education program has been active for the last ten years and we believe we are reaping the benefits on a daily basis. Our average attendance is 95%, and our suspension rate is down. More importantly, we continue to see our students treat each other with civility and respect. A major contributor to this trend has been a partnership with the Character Counts! program and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. We believe that by continuing to emulate and promote our pillars of character, enforce no bullying on campus, and provide a campus of civility, our students will become productive members of society that will have a long lasting, positive effect in our community.

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**Live Oak Middle School (698 Students 6th, 7th, and 8th Grades)**  
**Tulare City School District, Tulare, Ca 93274**  
**Tel: 559-685-7310**  
**Principal: Paula Adair**

Character is of utmost importance at Live Oak Middle School in Tulare. The well-being and development of the whole child are major focuses of every highly rigorous academic offering and myriad of social events available to students. The center of every lesson and event is character.

Every day begins with morning announcements that include a quote promoting good character. It is a way to start the day right thinking about how to spend the time we have.

In order to encourage students to become responsible and to seek academic support, Live Oak issues tutoring attendance cards, which are worth prize incentives awarded for participation in after school tutorial programs. 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 organized large group activities, which coincide with the Link Crew program. They organized 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.

Live Oak treats every incoming student as a future success story. Resource teachers and Special Education teachers, as well as the counselor, school nurse and administrator monitor every incoming Grizzly.

The behavior code is located in the Live Oak School Planner given to every student upon enrollment and used daily in class. Further, Character Counts! pillars are taught throughout the school and students understand they are expected to demonstrate appropriate behaviors.

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. The 8th grade class gift committee is a strong entity on campus that promotes good citizenship and respect. This group raises funds and purchases a class gift presented to the school each year. Past gifts included a

school flag, trophy case, six-foot Grizzly, “Home of the Grizzlies” sign, Grizzly mural, mascot costume, and a bronze California Distinguished School plaque. The committee raises funds on a fun activity called Buddy Days where teachers and 8th graders are auctioned off and then spend a day being a buddy to their purchaser.

Beginning the second trimester of the 2006-2007 year positive student deportment is encouraged through Grizzly Pride Stickers. Every two weeks if a student has not been absent, late, left early, and or sent to the office for misbehavior that student receives a Grizzly Pride Sticker. Again to reward and promote responsibility and respect, school dances are held six times throughout the year and are sponsored by different clubs on campus.

To show we care, the Live Oak student body donates toys for less fortunate children in Tulare through the Toys for Kids program sponsored b 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).

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**Los Tules Middle School (688 Students 6th, 7th, and 8th Grades)**  
**Tulare City Schools, Tulare, Ca. 93274**  
**Tel: 559-687-3156**  
**Principal: Gary Yentes**

Los Tules Middle School, though only four years old, has presented itself as a leading middle school within the Tulare City School District. The rigorous academic program offered by a highly-qualified staff sets in motion the tone of a campus that not only holds academics in high regard for each individual child, but also focuses on social and character development as these scholars continue their path into adulthood.

Staff and students work to personify Character Counts! daily. Each morning begins with Mr. Jenkins, LT’s Vice Principal, speaking to the students on the importance of not only being an LT scholar, but a respectful member of the LT community. This sense of individual and school pride encompasses all academic and social functions held at Los Tules.

Los Tules has fifty-five students that are currently enrolled in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) classes. Ms. Berg and Ms. Dennis have had extensive training in assisting our teens in the development of their personal leadership and academic goals. The 8th grade AVID uses Sean Covey’s The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens to help students set and evaluate their goals. Topics covered in the program are: responsibility for your life, defining your mission, prioritizing, attitude, listening, working together, and renewing yourself.

To further emphasize the importance of Character Counts!, a Leadership Wheel was created for the 2006-2007 school year. This trimester-long class was designed to promote additional opportunities for students to discover ways to make good choices within and outside the school community.

Los Tules also honors our students monthly that show the pillar of responsibility. For the students that are here on time every day for one month, they receive a Triple A Card (Amazing Awesome Attitude). These cards have six items on the back that can be redeemed during the month. For example, we have a hot cocoa day or snow cones. Students can also get a free homework pass as well as not having to dress out during PE. This past month, Los Tules had the highest attendance percentage throughout all middle schools.

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**Mulcahy Middle School (583 Students 6th, 7th, and 8th Grades)**  
**Tulare City Schools, Tulare, Ca 93274**  
**Tel: 559-685-7250**  
**Principal: John Pendelton**

Mulcahy Middle School is dedicated to strengthening young people through an educational program, the foundation of which is based on a blend of academics and moral and ethical development. The school community has embraced the core ethical values of responsibility, respect, trustworthiness, caring, fairness, and citizenship. Mulcahy is currently in its eighth year of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program.

Prior to their first day of school, members of the school community 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. Academic school planners are given to every student. The planners contain information supporting our character development program and are used as a tool to promote responsibility through daily use, recording class assignments, homework to be completed, and on-going communication with parents. The planners are designed to provide students with easy access to reference materials, i.e., CHARACTER COUNTS!, Mulcahy School History, School Vision Statement, and the Tree-Way School Pledge.

During the months of August and September, all students receive an introduction to the six pillars of CHARACTER COUNTS! In October, after conducting a school-wide review, each student writes an essay that is tailored to specific writing genre while reinforcing core ethical values found within CHARACTER COUNTS! At the conclusion of this assignment, our school sponsors a CHARACTER COUNTS! dance in which all who have completed their assignment are invited to attend. We believe the most powerful method to foster the meaning of the pillars is to provide opportunities to observe and model ethical behaviors.

In addition to classroom instruction, we take advantage of every opportunity to recognize students exhibiting behaviors consistent with the pillars of character:

- CHARACTER COUNTS! Trimester Student of the Month Luncheon
  - Hosted by the staff to salute exemplary examples of student behavior.
- Stallions of the Month
  - Showcases individuals who through their actions exhibit exemplary character. Selections are made in each homeroom by the teacher and class members.
- Tulare County “Kids of Character”
  - County recognition of student achievement.
- Caught Being Good- Positive Notice Postcards
  - Students receive a postcard-sized certificate recognizing good behavior.
- Mulcahy Pride T-Shirts
  - Given to students demonstrating outstanding ethical decision-making and citizenship.
- Graduation Recognition
  - CHARACTER COUNTS! lapel pins earned throughout their years at Mulcahy are worn by students who are formally recognized at the ceremony.

Community service is a priority for Mulcahy Middle School. Since 1994, Mulcahy has become a major contributor to Children’s Hospital of Central California, having sold over 39,000 “Kid’s Day” newspapers. Mulcahy students routinely volunteer to participate in civic service activities and make charitable contributions. 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.

Through AVID, the Mulcahy staff has focused on peer tutoring to develop a stronger sense of community, both academically and socially. It is our belief that utilizing peer tutoring we are able to teach our students the value of working collaboratively, making personal connections with our community and capitalizing on our own personal strengths.

A variety of opportunities are created throughout the school day and beyond for students in an effort to promote and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect for others. Such activities include our: Poetry and Prose Festival; Spelling Bee; Math Super Bow; Art Exhibitions; Band and Auxiliary Performances; College Awareness Week; Athletic Teams; Pride Dances; DARE Graduation; and, our Red Ribbon Week Activities.

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**Rafer Johnson Junior High School (465 Students 7th and 8th Grades)  
Kingsburg Elementary Charter District, Kingsburg, Ca 93631  
Tel: 559-897-1091  
Principal: Laurie Goodman**

Three years ago, our administration, staff, and School Site Council chose to adopt the Character Counts! program and its six core ethical values. As a staff we agreed to acknowledge good student behavior and citizenship by rewarding those individuals who exemplify these positive characteristics on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Along with the School Site Council, our staff and administration agreed to adopt the Six Pillars of Character and Rafer Johnson's motto "Be the best that you can be" as our core values.

The RJJH administration and teachers adopted the use of daily planners for each student. Every curriculum area requires students to write their homework assignments and lessons in the planner on a daily basis. The planner follows and emphasizes the six pillars of character. Students see character quotes and prompts of good behavior and ethics every time they open their planner.

We believe RJJH fosters an intentional, proactive and comprehensive approach to its core values in all phases of school life. This is accomplished through school wide programs, rewards, classroom instruction, library projects, and safety plans. Not only does our staff intentionally and proactively address character education through our Student of the Month program, but they also watch for positive behavior or random acts of kindness on a daily basis. Our 23 teachers receive "Fast Passes" to be used as they observe students in class, or on the playground exhibiting the monthly character trait. The student may use the pass to advance to the front of any food line during the day.

Our daily bulletin also stresses good character. It highlights the Character of the Month with a unique character quote each day. Classes discuss the quote, which helps to reinforce proactive character education on a daily basis. A "Rafer Reminder" is also in our daily bulletin. The message changes daily, but reinforces good manners in regards to the six character traits. Our AVID class emphasizes the character trait of the month by having each student give examples of what the trait might look like at RJJH and in the Kingsburg community.

Our staff and School Site Council realize that teen conflict is normal and they have endorsed our Peer Mediator Program. We agree that when conflict is handled with trained peers in a positive manner, schools can empower students to help themselves.

Rafer Johnson Jr. High promotes a clean and secure learning environment by partnering with our local police department and community leaders. Signs are posted on our campus that state drugs and alcohol are not permitted. Local police officers are always available to talk with students in a proactive manner. They are willing to get to know our students on a personal level and have helped with our school safety plans. To help ensure a clean and safe learning environment, our classified support staff work together and respond quickly to repairs and clean-ups on campus.

Our teachers promote positive social development by encouraging and modeling behavioral expectations. The use of good manners, polite vocabulary, and a zero tolerance policy for bullying and put downs encourages positive social interactions. Writings and discussion of good character traits follow the English Language Arts (ELA) frameworks. The ELA department follows State Standards by teaching autobiographical writings of current or historical persons who exhibit positive character traits. Class discussions are frequent and based on the six pillars of character. Cause and effect discussions in class, along with assignments, help reinforce

healthy student behaviors and good decision-making skills. Problem solving discussions that emphasize cooperation and sharing rather than competing help promote social development. Our ELA classes use ethical standards by having students define a character trait in writing poetry.

The Math frameworks states the curriculum is to “create and maintain a classroom environment that fosters a genuine understanding and confidence in all students...” The importance of honesty on test taking is emphasized along with the respect of each other’s personal space, time, and need for working in a quiet environment.

Our Drama class role-plays different scenarios regarding various social situations, helping students learn positive ways of handling different group dynamics. The Journalism class teaches media and print ethics along with proper work and job ethics that students are expected to use while composing the school newspaper.

Science teachers reinforce positive group dynamics by expecting students to work as a team during lab instruction. Students have learned that success for the team brings success for the individual. Our library/computer lab infuses character education and group cohesion by featuring a different culture each month.

The P. E. curriculum is organized to meet the needs of all students by stressing fairness, honesty, teamwork, and respect of others on a daily basis. At the beginning of the year every student in our school participates in a hands-on-activity called “Circle of Hands”. Each student is asked to trace their hand on a large sheet of paper, and then write in their hand ways they plan to abide by the six character traits. The charts are hung on the gym walls for a month to remind our students of their commitment and pledge to each other during the year. “Circle of Hands” is routinely talked about during instruction and class activities.

Rafer Johnson Jr. High truly revolves around Character Education. Our core values are continuously reinforced through our various programs: Character Counts! , Student of the Month, Perfect Attendance, Peer Mediators, Fun Works, classroom and library instruction and discussions, daily planners, rewards for good behavior, the daily bulletin, and our service clubs on campus.

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**Sequoia Middle School (820 Students 7th- 8th Grades)**  
**Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, Ca. 93702**  
**Tel: 559-457-3210**  
**Principal: Mike Ribera**

Sequoia Middle School houses a Campus Culture Committee comprised of a Campus Culture Director, several teachers and administrative staff members. The Campus Culture Committee meets to generate ideas as well as to modify our working programs. It is the goal of the committee to provide a well-rounded quality program that works for and meets the needs of our



students, staff and parents. This program is communicated to parents in many ways, including the Sequoia Parent/Student/Teacher Compact within the student agenda carried by each student at Sequoia Middle School.

We reward our students and increase participation through our weekly recognition program. Sequoia recognizes students each week who have demonstrated the individual pillars: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship, as well as additional areas, which include but are not limited to student leadership, peer mediation, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. Staff members are given tickets with the current pillar to hand out to students showing good character. This opportunity for recognition and verbal praise is proving to be one of our most powerful tools in reinforcing responsible choices and acts of kindness.

The Character Counts! Tickets are new to Sequoia this year but are proving to be a strong motivator on campus. All staff members have tickets displaying the character trait of the month to give students demonstrating good character. Students place their tickets into the Character Bucket in the front office for a chance to win prizes each Friday. Students eagerly await Friday announcements, listening for their name to be called. Students win prizes such front of the line passes for the cafeteria and snack bar coupons. All winning students are then put into an additional drawing to take place at the end of the month.

Our 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, which is new to Sequoia, is designed to help our students improve their self-image, make good choices and act responsibly. 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 students have told their teachers that it is worth the extra effort to be a part of such a fun program. Our teachers are thrilled to have such a motivating factor to use within their classrooms and are anxious to get out and help us with the events. Several teachers have mentioned that students asked, “What do I have to do to bring my grade up, I want to participate!”

The first 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. These students will be chosen based upon all six pillars, Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Students will be honored at eighth grade promotion.

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 GPA, and/or those showing improvement in their performance will be sent a letter acknowledging and

congratulating them on their successes from Mr. Ribera, principal of Sequoia Middle School. 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.

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. The AVID program helps in teaching and reinforcing Responsibility, Trustworthiness and Citizenship through workshops, fieldtrips and tutorials. In addition to reinforcing good character, the AVID classes are to help students become eligible for acceptance at a four-year college and equip them for success by encouraging them to take challenging academic classes when they enter high school.

Another program tailored to meet the needs of our students is Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning, or CORAL. CORAL is an after school program enjoyed by our students. CORAL's goal is to improve the academic achievement of children and youth by provided them with out-of-school learning opportunities. Respect, Responsibility, Caring and Trustworthiness are all reinforced through team activities, tutorials, campus beautification and enrichment activities.

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. Safety and student support procedures begin when we open the gates in the morning. Students, dressed in compliance with our site dress code, are greeted by several teachers and administrators. A follow up program offered after school is our STOP program or Students Targeted with Opportunities for Prevention. The STOP program is intended to provide early-intervention services to "at-risk" juveniles and their families. The objective of STOP is to mitigate the factors that increase the juvenile's likelihood of entering the juvenile justice system, re-offend, or require out-of-home placement. The STOP program is geared towards "at-risk" juveniles ages 10 to 14--fifth through eighth grades that are not on formal probation--and their families. Program components include parent empowerment groups, youth development groups, family empowerment, follow-up home visits, youth recreation activities, family recreation activities, tutoring/ academic enrichment, juvenile delinquency prevention, mentoring, and anger management. The skills taught through this program go hand in hand with our character study.

Sequoia is committed to strong parent involvement. Several activities are planned to strengthen family dynamics by providing pleasurable family experiences. Events such as our upcoming Multicultural Dinner and Young Authors Faire will bring families together, strengthen the community, and provide a sense of partnership between the home and school. Communication with parents is crucial and a high priority.

One of the programs we are most excited about is our growing Peer Mediation Program. Peer Mediation ties in Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Fairness and Respect 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 will involve twenty to thirty-five students listening to students without offering advice or solutions. One of our goals is to guide

the students towards finding their own solutions; often by talking to the student they have been in conflict with in a non-confrontational manner.

In brainstorming ideas with the teachers we have asked them to reflect upon how they promote Character Counts! and give specific examples from the curriculum as to how character is tied into their daily lessons. The team of Sequoia educators has successfully changed the culture of the campus and is in the process of creating excellent characters well equipped with tools to be life-long learners committed to the pillars of character we instill into their everyday activities here at Sequoia.

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**Toby Lawless Middle School (125 Students 7th-8th Grades)**  
**Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, Ca. 93722**  
**Tel: 559-451-4520**  
**Principal: John Maurer**

Toby Lawless K-8 School has worked hard to establish programs to encourage good character and promote core ethical values in a safe, supportive atmosphere.

One of the programs we are working on that measures observable behaviors showing good character is our Block L program. Students work to build up enough points to be able to receive the coveted Block L. Points are awarded not only for athletics but also for community service, merit list, honor roll, attendance, and school activities. Students from grades 4 through 8 are eligible for this award. Students of all ability levels, social levels, and ethnicity have a chance to earn the letter. The only requirement is to be showing effort to be a better, more concerned, productive and involved member of the Lawless community.

Monthly, students in each classroom are recognized for their hard work, for good behavior, and for exemplifying good character. They are called our “Students of the Month”. Each student selected for this honor has his/her name announced over the intercom, has a picture taken and posted on our “Super Stars” board, and receives certificates for free meals at various restaurants. A letter and a picture are sent home to the parents. The students take pride in being selected and look forward to seeing their pictures in the hallway. Other students also point with pride to the student’s picture from their classrooms that were their student of the month.

Evidence of our infusion of character education throughout all phases of the school environment can be found in numerous places and handled in a variety of ways. We are promoting the six pillars of character- trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship- with posters and bulletin boards in the cafeteria, office, and classrooms, with pillars on the school ground painted in the 6 colors, and with a special school-wide CHARACTER COUNTS! Week. Our leadership class wrote and presented an assembly on respect/anti-bullying last year to grades 2 through 8 and is working on one this year that will focus on eliminating the problem of “rumors”.

Within the classrooms, character education is infused in all aspects of the curriculum. For example, it is a natural fit in the area of history as they study the formation and development of the United States and other countries. English Language Arts teachers use the terminology of character education when discussing the core literature material. When in science, being able to participate in a lab requires knowing and following the rules of safety that incorporate the character traits. Of course, physical education classes promote “pursuing victory with honor”. Each classroom has a poster of the character traits that can be seen and referred to during the day, and all the teachers have a chart that allows them to be aware of the particular traits highlighted for each month. When students leave the rooms to go to lunch, to the bathroom, or out to recess, they see the character trait of that month posted on every exit door in the main building and in the cafeteria.

Toby Lawless is a small middle school, but it has a complete sports program. Students are encouraged to tryout for sports throughout the school year. Being a part of a team promotes sportsmanship, pride, and an avenue for positive group involvement- a positive gang, so to speak. Standards for being a member of an athletic team are upheld, requiring a 2.0 grade point average and good citizenship. Lawless believes that sports activities not only teach “pursuing victory with honor”, but also help students feel more connected to their school, develop pride in themselves and their school, and learn to work as a team along with students of various races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and ability levels.

Since not all students want to be a part of a sports team, Toby Lawless offers other ways for students to become a participating member of a school group. One of our most popular and most rewarding groups is our Livestrong Club. It proudly boasts a membership of 178 for the entire school. The club focuses on community service, involving students in a in a walk for breast cancer, collecting clothes for the needy, donating food for the less fortunate, giving gifts to a family at Christmas, “Coats for Kids”, and making Valentine cards for the patients at Children’s Hospital.

Our school provides numerous activities to allow students opportunities for moral action. As a total student body, we have provided for 10 of our own families this year, participated in “Pennies for patients” to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and been involved with the Livestrong Community Service Club in raising money for cancer research. Middle school students are classroom aides, peer math and reading tutors, carol for a retirement home at Christmas, and do school beautification.

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**Wawona Middle School (850 Students 6th, 7th, and 8th Grades)**  
**Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, Ca. 93704**  
**Tel: 559-248-7310**  
**Principal: Mike Darling**

We believe in developing inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people to help create a more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect for others.

At Wawona we begin each school year with a two-week program we call Mission: Possible. We introduce the Parent/Teacher/Student Handbook and the Student Daily Agenda. We review and teach school rules, procedures, dress code, and behavior expectations. We concentrate on reinforcement of math facts, writing, reading and vocabulary lessons. We present the Character Counts! Pillars and provide instructions on how we can all be a learning community by living these core ethical values.

Social Studies teachers teach ethics through lessons in multicultural understanding and respect for human rights and through teachable moments in current events. Language Arts teachers teach values through core literature, development of characters, and writing to ethical themes. Physical Education teachers teach the Character Counts! traits through sportsmanship, competition, and social responsibility in movement activities. In all areas of the curriculum, in classes and offices, you will see displays of Character Counts! posters and work done by students that promote their understanding of those values. Bulletin boards in our cafeteria and gym display pillar colors, quotes, monthly character themes, and photographs of students as Kids of Character.

Wawona Middle School and our Pre-International Baccalaureate Program promote respect for multiculturalism and internationalism. We honor the diversity of our students through art, music and dance. Wawona students have performed at lunchtime to very respectful and admiring audiences of their peers. We have had Vietnamese, Hmong, Hip Hop, and Folkloric dancing. Future dance groups include Stomp, Cambodian and Native American. We have had celebrations of Black History Month, Mexican Independence, Hanukkah and coming soon, Chinese New Year. Students are taking a proactive approach to their own learning and planning activities that they enjoy and appreciate. Student Committees are planning events for Black History Month, Random Acts of Kindness, Teacher Appreciation, Farewell 8th graders and Everyone's a Star Day.

Coaches, athletes, and parents are given code of ethics forms and expectations. Winning and losing with grace and respect is part of that code. Students-athletes are rewarded at the end of the season with an assembly that includes honoring those students who competed with character. These awards are for athletes who show effort, sportsmanship and fairness, on and off the court or field.

We have challenged ourselves to 1000 hours of service, starting on the MLK Day of Service Holiday and continuing until school is out for the summer. Student volunteers work in the cafeteria, ballroom, school office and library. We have a Community Garden Project that is ongoing and productive. Students turn in service hours each week and we are keeping a Volunteer Binder and a large "thermometer" showing our hours! Students are committed to the success of the 1000-hour challenge. They are eager to help with Special Olympics, Kid's Day, Hoops for Heart, Recycling and Cesar Chavez Day of Service.

Students are encouraged to participate at lunchtime in physical activity on the playground or challenges in the library. Formal and informal intramurals are offered every day. Students know

that if they stay active with healthy activities during their lunch break, they will stay out of trouble, feel better and learn better. Basketball, jump rope, Jeopardy, board games, ping-pong, volleyball and much more is available daily. Special activities are offered each week like relays, pie-eating, guessing games, physical challenges and contests.

We celebrate scholarship each quarter by hosting high-energy rallies to honor high achieving students. Students that maintain three quarters of high grades, good character and citizenship are rewarded with a Principal's Trip near the end of the year. Quarterly Reward Dances are also special events for deserving students.

Students at Wawona are taking responsibility for their success and learning. Sometimes they make mistakes, sometimes they treat each other unkindly, but they are learning that the expectations that we have for them are important, worthwhile, and healthy.