

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

Friends of SCICON Awards Presented

Last month, the Friends of SCICON, a non-profit organization, held its annual SCICON (the Clemmie Gill School of Science and Conservation) Awards Dinner. The dinner took place at the John Muir Dining Lodge on the SCICON campus. After a brief business meeting, the following individuals and organizations were recognized for their exceptional contributions and support of the SCICON program.

Receiving the *Laurel Leaf Awards* as the top high school cabin leaders of the year were **Dysharra Romero and Marvin Lopez of Redwood High School (Visalia), and Amanda Bosman and Ezequiel Acinagua of Golden West High School(Visalia.)** They were selected out of 850 high school students as being exemplary role models for the sixth-grade students at SCICON. In addition to their awards, they also received a scholarship from the Friends of SCICON and the Association of California School Administrators Region XI, to be applied towards college expenses.

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The Friends of SCICON then presented *Awards of Merit* to the following individuals and organizations: **Doug Bartsch**, area administrator for **Visalia Unified School District**, was recognized for his many years of support and assistance in helping Visalia students attend SCICON. **Chris Reed**, retired board member for **Tulare County Board of Education**, was thanked for her many years of support of the SCICON program. **Tulare County Youth Corps** was honored for their support of the recycling education program at SCICON. **Christine Beck**, sixth-grade teacher at **St. Aloysius School**, received an award for her many years of bringing sixth-grade students to SCICON as well as taking on special projects such as making curtains for student cabins. The **Tule River Astronomy Association** was honored for their support of the astronomy program at both SCICON and the Circle J – Norris Ranch. **Duane Shamley**, a troop leader for **Boy Scout Troop #139** (Porterville), provided many years of leadership to the scouts in accomplishing projects at SCICON. **Valerie Keileber**, SCICON trail guide, was recognized for her outstanding work with the fifth-grade class visits at SCICON. **Diane Cahill**, SCICON Lead Teacher, was honored for the leadership she has brought to the SCICON program.

The following individuals were recognized for the assistance they had provided to the Circle J – Norris Ranch, a companion program to SCICON. **Deane Reed**, a first-grade teacher in **Tulare**, was one of the first teachers to bring students to the Circle J – Norris Ranch. **Mike Milanesi**, science coordinator for **Tulare City Elementary School District**, was likewise honored for his work in introducing new student programs at the Circle J – Norris Ranch.

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“There is never a shortage of people to appreciate for their support of SCICON,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “Year after year, teachers, students and community members throughout the County promote, donate and volunteer their time for this special program.”

For more information about SCICON, please contact SCICON Administrator Rick Mitchell at 539-2642. For information about Tulare County Office of Education programs, please contact Robert Herman, Public Information Officer, at 733-6606.

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