
TCOE staff members celebrated for service milestones

This week, the Human Resources Division traditionally hosts the Longevity Awards dinner for employees who celebrated annual service milestones at the Tulare County Office of Education. While the dinner was cancelled to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19, Human Resources will still honor a total of 130 staff members who marked their 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, or 40 years of service to the organization and the children of Tulare County. Human Resources Director John Rodriguez reports that the staff members dedicated a combined 2,300 years of service.

“While it’s disappointing that we cannot gather and celebrate your service anniversaries in person, the pandemic does not diminish the deep appreciation I have for your dedication to your work and our students,” said Tim Hire, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools.

To celebrate this year’s class of Longevity Awards recipients, Human Resources staff members worked with program administrators to develop the following short biographies on the men and women who celebrated 30- and 40-year anniversaries. A link to the list of employees who completed 10, 15, 20, and 25 years of service can be found at the end of this article.

40 YEARS

Andrea "Andi" Clark Special Services AcCEL Program

Andi Clark has spent the last 40 years pouring her love into the hearts and lives of students with moderate-to-severe disabilities as a paraprofessional in the county AcCEL Program. Andi has worked 32 of those 40 years in the AcCEL Program classroom located on the Pixley Elementary campus. She has been a steadfast and valued employee who goes above and beyond the call of duty. It is no surprise to find Andi participating in after school events, fundraising opportunities, and extracurricular activities all to benefit students and families. She has been an integral part of the AcCEL Program at Pixley Union School District, which is extremely grateful for her years of dedication and service.



30 YEARS

Oleida Encinas

Early Intervention Assistant, Special Services Bright Start Program

Thirty years of service to the families of Tulare County is a tremendous accomplishment and Oleida Encinas is an amazing teacher. She brings energy, compassion, and positivity to her work and is skilled at developing trusting relationships with children in the Bright Start Parent/Infant Program. Not only is she an outstanding coworker, but she is smart, diligent, and consistently willing to offer help and support for the benefit of her early intervention team. A colleague stated, "When I was initially hired at Bright Start, I was lucky enough to be trained by Oleida. She took the time to show me how to do my job well. I was impressed with the way she built rapport with parents and the relationships she had with the kids. I am still impressed with how well she does her job to this day. She is a special person, a joy to work with, and a friend."

Norma Gomez

Instructional Assistant, Special Services Mild to Moderate Programs

Norma began working as an instructional assistant at not one, but two school sites – Columbine School and Richgrove School. At both sites, she collaborated with RSP teachers to administer curriculum and instruction to K-8 students with special needs. She has worked the last 12 years at Alta Vista School. Her supervisors say that she is passionate about the students she serves, helping them achieve academic success. She has established an excellent rapport with them and, through her creativity and support, goes the extra mile to make sure they feel

in her work. She works closely with her teacher assistants on how best to support the students every day, introducing and modeling new ideas, even in distance learning environments. Staff members also noted the

She is a warm and fuzzy person, but can also be a ferocious lion in order to get the job done and provide services for her families.”

Rhonda Souza
Employment & Benefits Specialist, SEE & Co.

Rhonda Souza is currently serving as an employment and benefits specialist with A Ticket to Success program – a national job service provider for individuals with disabilities. In her 30 years with TCOE, she has worked with programs such as Teenage Parenting Program (TAPP), Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN), Services for Education & Employment (SEE), and More Opportunity for Viable Employment (MOVE). Under these programs, Rhonda has helped many youth and adults with finding their way to success, contributing her strong knowledge of grant and proposal development, and financial and budgeting experience. In her free time, Rhonda volunteers to help individuals going through cancer treatment by putting together care packets with some

this opportunity, contact Stephanie Verners, Educational Resource Services' CVNIC: College-Ready network director, at stephanie.verners@tcoe.org.

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