



PHOTO COURTESY OF FIELD

FIELD grads from left to right are Alisha E. Trujillo, Samantha Strong, Ashley A. Pitts, Russell N. Krafthefer, Shawn P. Flynn, Rocio Carrasco and Valedictorian, Aaron A. Warren

FIELD successfully graduates seven in their first class

Seven local residents received high school diplomas from the recently accredited local high school within the Farmworker Institute for Leadership and Development (FIELD) Learning Center in Tehachapi. The theme of the graduation ceremony was "Go forth and Serve."

The inaugural commencement exercise took place on the evening of June 14, as family and friends, and classmates gathered at FIELD's Learning Center.

Instructor, and Tehachapi native, Yvonne Lara, an accredited teacher who holds a Master's degree in Education from the University of Southern California, led the exercises and handed out diplomas from FIELD's education partner John Muir Charter School, to each of the seven graduating students.

The graduates included class Valedictorian Aaron Anthony Warren, Rocio Carrasco, Shawn P. Flynn, Russell N. Krafthefer, Ashley Pitts, Samantha Strong, and Alisha Trujillo. The graduates wore green and gold robes, smiles on their faces and exuded a sense

of confidence.

The invocation was led by a prayer from Father Michael Cox, Pastor of St. Malachy's Catholic Church. The keynote speaker was Lisa Gilbert, Superintendent for Tehachapi Unified School District. The evening's graduates and guests were entertained with a musical number by Michelle Arsenault — a FIELD high school student currently enrolled in the charter school.

"If you will help fund us, we will mobilize our intellectual resources to address society's most pressing needs. We will educate your students and contribute to the social, economic, political and cultural life of this nation," said FIELD President and CEO David Villarino before he introduced Gilbert.

She delivered an encouraging speech about rising above challenges to the realization of one's potential to the center's first graduates.

They were part of FIELD's 25 students who are currently enrolled in the local high school diploma program which totals

close to 200 countywide. The Tehachapi Learning Center opened in November of 2011 and will increase enrollment this coming academic year.

In addition, next year's students will have the opportunity to complete paid work experience and learn valuable skills as part of FIELD's newest county wide program entitled — the Kern Service and Conservation Corps (KSACC.) KSACC partners include many local Tehachapi agencies in need of various types of community service related work to environmental conservation. FIELD's programs are based on the Core Values of Opportunity, Excellence, Integrity, Innovation and Si Se Puede.

FIELD is currently on year-round Tri-mester schedule with Tehachapi classes resuming on July 23. Individuals aged 18 to 25 are interested in more information or to enroll, may contact Instructor Yvonne Lara at 661-972-4523 or visit FIELD's Learning Center at 410 West J. St., Suite A, in Tehachapi.