

Staff May 19, 2011 [Link](#)

Tehachapi High School senior Kristen Minlschmidt was among twenty-two 2011 graduates selected by their high school principals to receive the Congressman Kevin McCarthy Merit Award for Kern County.

"I am pleased to present these merit awards to some of Kern County's most exemplary students," said Congressman McCarthy. "This award celebrates the hard work and dedication these students have put into their scholastic and community endeavors. I am proud of each of this year's merit award recipients, and am confident they will help pave a bright and successful future for our community and our nation."

Minlschmidt said it was an honor to meet the congressman at a ceremony held in Bakersfield earlier this month.

"He is such a down to earth person," she said. "I wouldn't expect someone so high up in politics to be so friendly and nice. He really seems to care for the people and especially for the education system."

After graduation, Minlschmidt plans to attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to study graphic communications.

She is a member of the THS Associated Student Body, Link Crew, a member of the National Honor Society, the California Scholarship Federation, and she is involved in activity planning for the Class of 2011.

Minlschmidt has also studied dance at Tehachapi Dance Theater, but knee surgery prevented participation this year.

As a junior, Minlschmidt was named first runner-up in the Distinguished Young Women of Tehachapi pageant.

The merit awards were created to recognize outstanding high school students who have demonstrated exemplary school citizenship, volunteerism, community service, involvement in extracurricular activities and leadership skills, and have earned a GPA of 3.5