

January 7,

Belle Haven eighth-grader named 'scholar of the year'

A highly motivated 13-year-old girl from Ethiopia has been named the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula's scholar of the year for 2008.

Yodit Bitsuamlak, an eighth-grader at Belle Haven elementary school, arrived in the United States four years ago and swiftly set about learning English, according to Chris Canter, the clubs' director of development.

Yodit was one of the first students to sign up for the Boys & Girls Clubs' Center for a New Generation at her school when it opened in 2006. "She has never missed a day," Mauricio Marquez, the CNG program director at the school, wrote in a press release.

The scholar of the year award goes to middle school-age youth who embody qualities of leadership, community service and aca-



Yodit Bitsuamlak, an eighth-grader at Belle Haven elementary school, spoke no English four years ago and now has a 4.0 GPA.

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ademic achievement.

Yodit has a perfect 4.0 grade point average, teaches Sunday school at her church, and volunteers with Youth Community

Services through its partnership with the Boys & Girls Club, said Mr. Canter. She helps her cousins with their homework and helps her mother navigate English-language documents. Her father currently lives in Eritrea.

Yodit said she hopes to attend

Eastside Prep for high school, and that she plans to graduate with honors from Stanford University.

"I have examples all around me of people who didn't go to college, and their opportunities in life are so limited. That is not how I want my life to be," she said.