

## Top Students Honored for Academic Excellence

By Cathy Tyson

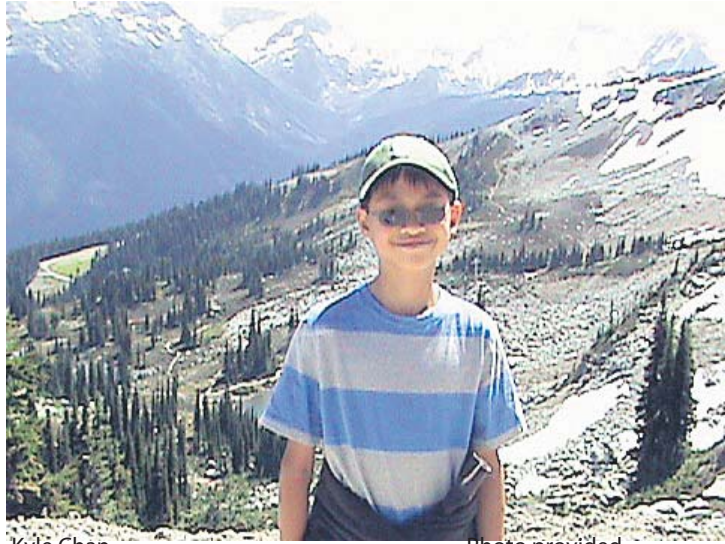
**T**hirteen Lamorinda students in seventh and eighth grade were recently honored at a Bay Area awards ceremony for gifted children held by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY) at Cal State East Bay, Hayward.

Not just anyone can get invited to participate, CTY invites students based on an exceptional performance on the SAT, the same exact test that high school juniors take.

Only 25% of the middle school students who take the test earn an invitation to the awards ceremony. In addition to being recognized, their scores may qualify them for summer programs and distance education courses.

“With our annual award ceremonies, we’re committed to giving these exceptional young people a stage on which to recognize their academic achievements, just as we celebrate achievements in athletics or the performing arts,” said CTY Executive Director Lea Ybarra. Who gets the credit for success? “The students, they possess an academic fearlessness and intellectual ability that will benefit their generation.”

“We try to provide as much exposure as possible right now,” said Keith Chan, proud father of Kyle Chan who will be entering eighth grade in the fall. Although school administrators gave him the option of skipping



Kyle Chan

Photo provided

a grade early in his academic career, his parents were concerned about him staying with his peers, and wanted him to be well-rounded socially.

It all started for Kyle when his fifth grade teacher at Los Perales, Ms. Smith, recommended that he take the test. “We were a little hesitant at the time,” said Chan, “but believe it or not he likes to take tests.”

When asked if his gifted son inherited his extraordinary smarts from mom and dad, Chan said, “My wife and I are as normal as can be.” Chan is a Network Administrator at UC Berkeley and wife, Carmen Ma stays quite busy taking care of Kyle.

Kathryn Gelston, mother of Kevin Gelston explains that children who score 97% or better on the Star 9 test qualify to

take the SAT in the CTY program. “It’s challenging to measure their intellect,” she notes of gifted students.

Since GATE the Gifted and Talented program at public schools was cancelled, she’s happy to see Odyssey of the Mind for those kids interested in science. Kevin will be busy this summer with the Blue Devil Marching band, and recently earned his black belt in karate.

Ms. Gelston encourages parents of gifted kids as young as the second grade to look into the Center for Talented Youth at [www.cty.jhu.edu](http://www.cty.jhu.edu) for more information.