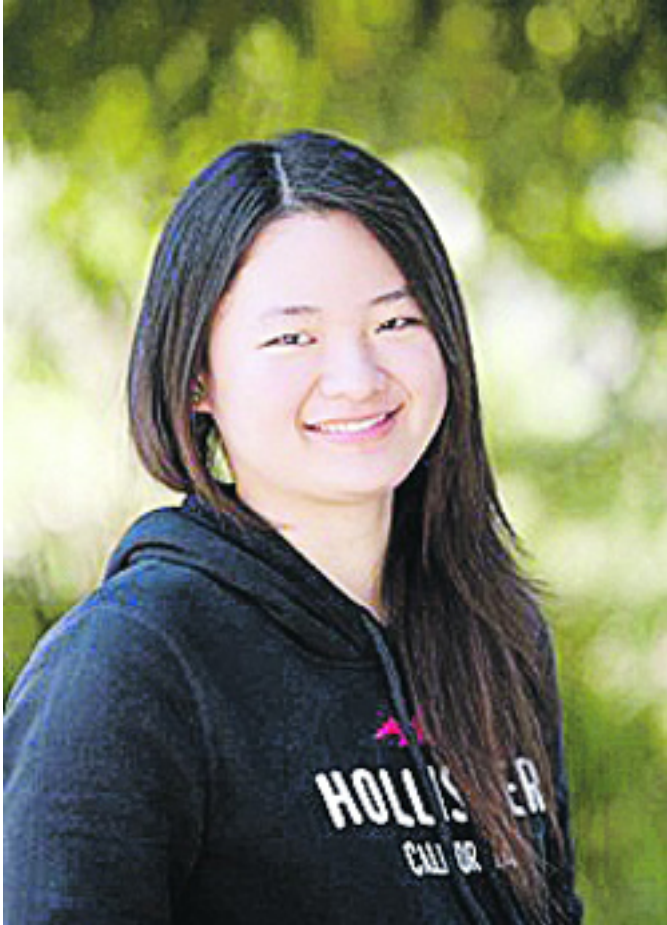


Published June 5th, 2013

OA Student Wins Awards

Submitted by Miriam Schaffer



YingYu Ren Photo provided

Orinda Academy junior YingYu Ren, 17, recently received three awards recognizing her academic achievement, service and leadership. Ren is one of only 10 students in the nation to win "A Better Chance Award for Excellence" for academic distinction, contributions to the school community and demonstrated ability to achieve. The award is from the organization, A Better Chance, which works to increase the number of well-educated young people of color who are capable of assuming positions of responsibility and leadership in American society. The 2013 Alexander Hamilton Citizenship Achievement Award was also awarded to Ren. It recognizes youth who demonstrate leadership abilities, academic excellence and a passion for public service.

Ren's writing talent earned her the 2013 Friends of the Orinda Library Poul Anderson Writing Contest in the Essay/Memoir category. Her entry titled, "The Inspiring Ocean," details how her experience with the ocean impacted and parallels her life, from the time she was an infant in China to today as she looks toward her future.

"These awards encourage me to go further, keep challenging myself, be a better person, do my best and give back to the community," says Ren.

"YingYu is one of the most impressive, extraordinary students I have encountered in my 38 years of teaching and administration," says Ron Graydon, founder and head of Orinda Academy. "She has prospered in spite of being an English language learner and has maintained a straight-A average in Orinda Academy's rigorous college preparatory curriculum."

In addition to her academic achievements, Ren has been a driving force on the student council in organizing the most successful toy drive in Orinda Academy's history. She is on the yearbook staff (her cover design was chosen in

2012 and 2013), is a math TA, a tour guide for prospective students, and has served as an interpreter for visiting Chinese recruiters and families.

Ren has logged hundreds of hours of community service, including work with the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation helping people prepare tax returns. She has also taught students study skills, time management and social media through A Better Chance's West Coast Orientation Program.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA