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## Making the right choices for success

### Brian Ibanez already has had to make tough decisions in his life

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It often is said that the choices we make determine who we are, and if that is indeed the case, then Petaluma High School freshman Brian Ibanez is on the right track toward future success.

Ibanez already has had to make tough choices in his life, and they have steered him in the right direction, and for some of his efforts, he has been named as the Youth of the Month for November by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Marin and Southern Sonoma Counties.

As a third-grader, he joined the Boys & Girls Clubs' Washington Creek Clubhouse. While some of his friends pressured him into joining gangs and doing drugs, Ibanez remained strong by making the positive choices to do well in school and help younger kids at the clubhouse.

"I had to stop hanging out with a few friends," Ibanez said. "Having the club to go to, as well as the support of my parents, really helped me."

During the recent summer programs at the Washington Creek Clubhouse, Ibanez started a soccer club, coaching younger kids in the fundamentals of the sport as well as modeling good sportsmanship. Every day, he set up the fields, helped pick the teams, got the games going, shouted out encouragement and made corrections and adjustments to players' techniques.

"The younger kids look up to me because many of their brothers and sisters are my friends," said Ibanez, who is interested in becoming an architect or mechanic when he graduates from college. He also has an interest in coaching.

During the school year, Ibanez has remained connected with the club, helping out mostly on Wednesdays. His main focus is his school work and his favorite subjects are math and physical education. He hopes to attend the University of California, Berkeley when he graduates, but that is still a few years down the road.

For now, Ibanez is enjoying high school, hanging out with his friends, playing soccer and other outdoor activities.

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