

Senior Betty Solomon's is one of 25 recipients of a Student Peace Award. Betty's parents were born and raised in Eritrea, a small country in East-Africa with a population of 3.5 million and a 65% poverty rate. There have been no elections since 2002, and Betty says that dissenters are threatened with imprisonment and attempts to escape are punishable by death. For additional information on the history and crises in Eritrea, Betty suggests [the Amnesty International site on Eritrea](#).

As an Eritrean-American, Betty is keenly aware of the sharp contrast between the rights she enjoys in the United States and the rigid censorship and human rights violations her extended family endures in Eritrea. Learning about the experiences of her family currently living in Eritrea encouraged Betty to become involved with Eritrean human rights causes here in the US.

Betty is active with the youth-led [One Day Seyoum Organization](#), whose goals are to end human rights abuses in Eritrea and to support Eritrean refugees worldwide. She participated in their 2019 protest and has worked to spread awareness of their causes. She says, "Eritrean cultural values of compassion, fraternity, and perseverance inspire me daily, so offering a voice to the voiceless and galvanizing pressure on a regime complicit in their suffering is one of my proudest achievements." Besides raising awareness, Betty worked with members of her church to organize two donation drives to supply disadvantaged families in Eritrea with hygiene products and clothing.

Betty is also President of her school's Humanities Society, Secretary and Founding Member of the Social Awareness Club, and Founding Member of Hayfield's Best Buddies Club. In addition, she is the Diversity Director of the Virginia High School Democrats of America and an [Inaugural Fellow of the Global Leaders of Fairfax County](#).

College and Career Specialist Amy Ferguson says, "From hosting school-wide discussions on the war on asylum and DACA immigrants, the Black Lives Matter movement, the Uyghur crisis, and gun violence, Betty has led and continues to lead the Hayfield community in taking steps to actualize what it truly means to be a global citizen and scholar."

Betty hopes to enter the field of foreign diplomacy, and to continue to work to protect the human rights of marginalized groups around the world.