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Grade 8

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Back on Board

When I was 5 years old, I crashed my bike. I scraped my knee raw, my face smacked the ground, and my teeth slammed into the sidewalk. I vowed to never get back on my bike. I was terrified I would crash again, and get hurt.

Then one night, my family watched a movie called *Soul Surfer*. It told the true story of a young girl, Bethany Hamilton, whose arm was bitten off by a shark while surfing. One month later, she was surfing again. It didn't matter to her that she only had one arm. That was just an obstacle she needed to overcome in order to reach her goal of winning a national title. And two years later, she did.

I was amazed. I thought, if Bethany can get back on her surfboard after something like that, then I could be brave enough to get back on my bike.

So I did.

I admired Bethany for years afterwards. Throughout my childhood, she was my role model. I would tell myself, "If Bethany can get through that, then I can get through this." Bethany exhibits many pillars of character. She demonstrated trustworthiness by keeping her promise to herself to never stop doing what she loved. She didn't give up on her dreams. She showed respect by staying dignified, and not letting this setback

define her. She showed responsibility by taking what happened to her, and turning it around. She didn't complain about what happened to her. Instead, she pushed through it, and continued pursuing her dream.

Bethany Hamilton is an inspiration, because she knew what she wanted, and didn't let anything stop her. She got back on her board, and showed the world that what happened wouldn't faze her. But what amazed me most was that she didn't stop surfing to show everyone *else* she could do it. She surfed because she wanted to prove to *herself* that she could do it. Surfing was her passion; she wouldn't let anything get in the way of that. And to me, that's what's most inspiring about her.