

BEST OF THE BAY 2010

LOCAL HERO
VERNON DAVIS

“When I paint,
I focus completely
on what I’m doing
and everything
else fades.”

49ER AND ARTIST

Freshly minted Pro Bowl superstar Vernon Davis has shown immense prowess on the football field since being drafted by the San Francisco 49ers in 2006. His career is on the upswing, and last season he tied the NFL all-time record for most touchdowns as a tight end. Davis' success is the product of natural talent combined with drive and vision. He grew up in inner-city Washington, D.C., where a wise grandmother helped him dodge the environment's potential pitfalls.

That same talent, drive, and vision extend beyond the goal posts into more esoteric realms. He's an avid painter and seeks to be a role model for kids who might be afraid to explore their creativity. Earlier this year he launched the Vernon Davis Scholarship Fund, which will benefit a deserving Bay Area art student who would otherwise not be able to afford college. "I want to keep encouraging kids, especially in the inner city, to stay on track and pursue their dreams." **—D.V.**

GUARDIAN PHOTO BY PETER BOHLER