

## Slightam finds place in Middle College

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REDWOOD CITY – Cindie Slightam has always been the independent type.

Her mother took off 10 years ago, leaving her and her dad to take care of her three younger siblings.

She had to grow up fast, and high school seemed slow and a bit silly.

“I really didn’t like the social aspect of high school. I wanted to get moving really fast and high school seemed to be dragging.”

She did not care to participate in the cliques or competitions that seemed to dominate the atmosphere at Menlo Atherton High School.

“People either didn’t care or everybody was competing. You get tired of competing. I have to take care of my family. I have a job.”

She was also frustrated because she wanted to get college credit at the same time she was going to high school.

Then, Slightam found out about the Middle College program at Canada College. It allows students to take up to a full load of Canada classes while completing their high school requirements. Some even graduate with an associate’s degree and a high school degree at the same time.

In Middle College, she thrived. So this month, Slightam is getting her high school diploma. She also has a year’s worth of college credits and plans to stay on the get an associate’s degree in nursing.

Slightam will not be the first in her family to go to college, nor is she the first to overcome obstacles. Her father, who now works as a building contractor, went to work right out of high school.

“He wasn’t into it [high school] either. He kind of floated through it like a lot of people do. He went to college at night and worked in the day, so he worked hard, too.”

Her mother never went to college. But it was clear to Slightam as she was growing up that she was expected to do something with her life, “no matter what stands in your way.”