

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Two Cabrillo students win national scholarship

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APTOS — For many students, the relation of earning acceptance to the four-year university of their choice is often accompanied with the dread of seeing the first tuition bill.

Two Cabrillo College students in that position, Theo Offei and Sophia Forde, received uplifting news in May when they were awarded scholarships from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. The scholarships will provide up to \$30,000 a year for four years to cover tuition and student expenses.

"I was completely flabbergasted," Forde said. "I was so excited. I could have gotten into any school in the country and I wouldn't have been as excited as I was to get this scholarship."

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is a national, independent, private organization founded in 2000 to help exceptional students with demonstrated financial need pay for their education.



CABRILLO COLLEGE/CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cabrillo students Sophia Forde and Theo Offei have been awarded the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation scholarship for undergraduate transfers.

Each year the highly competitive undergraduate transfer scholarship that Offei and Forde won goes

to up to 50 community college students nationwide who are planning on attending a four-year university.

Each applicant must first be nominated by their community college.

"Both Theo and Sophia met all the criteria for the scholarship in that they are exceptional students who are involved in campus activities and are reliant on financial aid," Cabrillo computer science instructor Steve Hodges said.

Forde, who grew up in the Santa Cruz Mountains, started taking classes at Cabrillo when she was 14. A home-school student, she was never one for the traditional path. While enrolled in the San Lorenzo Valley Home School program, she attended Cabrillo full time, earning both her high school diploma and associate's degree in history at the same time. She has yet to decide which university she will attend in the fall, but she has been accepted to UCLA and plans to study urban planning.

Forde, 18, rode the bus three hours a day so she could take classes at Cabrillo, and paid her own way with jobs as nanny.

"It's such a huge relief," Forde said. "There are so many things that

if you are a low-income student you have to think about. I don't have a computer, and the foundation provides money for computers and all the little things."

Offei, who grew up in Reggio Emilia, Italy, always dreamed of attending a U.S. college. But his parents could not afford tuition at four-year schools. During a two-week exchange program he visited Cabrillo and realized it was a good fit for him, and carried a smaller price tag. Shortly after his initial visit, Offei started at Cabrillo in spring 2009.

"Just the other day I was looking at a paper I wrote when I first came to Cabrillo," said Offei, who served as Cabrillo's student senate president this year. "I compared my current writing to that paper, and it's been a tremendous and dramatic change. I feel prepared for the new challenge. I know it will be hard work, but anything worth it is hard work."

Offei, 23, will attend USC in the fall, and plans to major in political science and public policy with a focus on pre-law.