FOSTER CARE

Cabrillo program helps foster youth

Anonymous donor keeps program alive

By Kara Guzman
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APTOs » Things are finally looking up for Joey Colon, one of dozens of Cabrillo students raised in foster care and set to benefit from a $100,000 anonymous gift.

Cabrillo’s Foster Youth Inde-
pendence, a program providing scholarships, academic counseling and peer advising, received the gift in February. Since open-
ing in 2012, the program has received a yearly $100,000 gift from the anonymous donor, which provides nearly its en-
tire operating budget.

Colon is one of 112 students in the program, which is aimed at increasing graduation rates for current and former foster youth, who lack traditional forms of support.

“They’re dealing with no stab-
ility,” said Lachance, who said she knows of at least five who are homeless. Cabrillo likely has a larger population of foster youth who have not joined the program, due to stigmas associated with foster care, she said.

The program offers scholar-
ships, ranging between $500 and $750, based on the student’s course load. Students are required to par-
ticipate in community ser-
vice and program events, such as financial literacy workshops.

IMPACT » Colon studied for a semester at Cabrillo before learning of the program this fall.

“I would have to walk ev-
erywhere. It was just kind of tough. I would get up early in the morning and not really have much to eat. Sometimes it was because I couldn’t actually buy anything, but also sometimes it was because I didn’t re-
ally have the time,” he said.

Beyond a scholarship, the program also gave him a bus pass, which allowed him to attend more job interviews. He found a home base on campus, where he could get snacks, use a computer and meet others with similar stories. He also met a counselor, who gave him an academic

CABRILLO FOSTER YOUTH PROGRAM

What: Scholarships, academic counseling, peer advising and support for students who have been in foster care.

Where: Room 1008, below the Cabrillo College library in Aptos.

Details: Visit Cabrillo.edu/services/fyi, call 831-479-6150 or email calachan@ Cabrillo.edu.

Donate: Visit tinyurl.com/Cabri2015 or call 831-479-6338.

Donated items wish list: Computers, tablets, cell phones, office equipment, gift certificates.

plan he was confident in —
a first, he said.

Now Colon has two jobs, in-
cluding one as a Cabrillo writing tutor.

Colon said foster youth often have issues with trust and receiving help.

“It’s because we’ve had a lifetime of having that help forced on top of us, and a lot of the time it’s not the best thing for us,” he said.

For a long time, Colon said he felt he needed to do every-
thing on his own.

“Ever since I found out I could get help from FYI, I’ve just been really relieved,” he said.