COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Cabrillo student receives award

WATSONVILLE — Soroptimist International (SI) of Capitola-By-The-Sea has selected Anissa Banuelos of Watsonville, a student at Cabrillo College, as a winner of a “Live Your Dream” (LYD) Award given to a woman who is enrolled in or has been accepted to a vocational/skills training program or an undergraduate degree program, and is the primary financial support of her family.

She, along with Jessica Starkes, also of Watsonville, will be honored and $2,000 cash will be awarded to each winner at the Soroptimist International of Capitola-By-The-Sea Awards dinner in March.

Banuelos, who began working as a teenager to provide for herself and avoid her alcoholic stepfather’s abuse, became a single mother while still a teenager, but never lost her desire to be an independent and responsible person who could financially and positively support her daughter. Today, she is working 30 hours a week while maintaining straight A’s in all her human services classes at Cabrillo, as well as volunteering as part of her internship. Her goal is to be a family counselor and start a nonprofit for first-time moms, or mothers who are having a tough pregnancy.

Her cash award may be used to offset any costs associated with her efforts to attain higher education, including books, childcare and transportation.

This is the first year SI of Capitola has presented two awards in the LYD program. The LYD program is designed to help women who have faced economic and personal hardships to live their dreams and achieve their educational and career goals.