Scholarships Honor Family's History

As we are preparing for our annual review of scholarship applications at the Community Foundation, I had a chance to catch up with Marilyn Herzog, the niece of Alma and August ("Gus") Mendosa. The Mendosa scholarship has been awarded to graduates of Mendocino High School for the past 8 years, with 19 four-year scholarships awarded.

The importance of family and history is something that Marilyn imparts to her children and grandchildren. She told me, "I want them to understand how hard their relatives worked and how little they had. I especially want my grandchildren to know where they come from and appreciate the fact that they can enjoy certain things today because other people before them went without.

"My aunt and uncle had no children and they were very industrious people and very frugal. They saved every penny that they earned, so over the years they were able to accumulate some money after starting out from very, very poor families. Mr. Mendosa senior, my Uncle Gus's dad, lost his arm in a lumber mill accident and had 8 children to raise, so he started the Mendosa's Market. My grandfather, Mr. Jacobs, had ridden a mule all the way from Iowa, and had \$30 in his pocket when he arrived in California. He worked for Paul Dimmick in the lumber industry for many, many years in order to be able save enough to buy a small piece of property. There was not huge money in these families at all, but it was through their thrift and their vision that they were able to save. And now young people in Mendocino are benefiting from their hard work."

The Alma and August Mendosa Scholarship at the Community Foundation is an important way that Marilyn continues her family's legacy. "Mendocino has some great kids," Marilyn told me. "It is really wonderful to be able to use money my aunt and uncle's saved in order to help kids that are so deserving. I know it is what they would have wanted."

Looking at the recipients of the four-year Mendosa scholarship, it is easy to see why Marilyn is proud of these young people. Phillip Kling, who is at the CSU Maritime Academy in Vallejo, spent last summer on a commercial merchant vessel traveling to Japan, Korea, Saipan, and beyond. At school, he founded the first lacrosse team and excels in his studies. Another student with an international focus is Serena Acker, who has been studying in Quito, Ecuador through a Pitzer College program in advanced Spanish and Andean studies. While there she is living with local families and working in a preschool as a community service project. The most recent recipient, Hannah Daniels, is at UC Berkeley where she is getting all A's and enthusiastic about classes in Greek, Linguistics and Astronomy.

Opening a fund at the Community Foundation is a way that people honor the hard work of past generations by allowing the money to be stewarded for future generations. If you want to find out more about scholarship programs or opening a fund, visit www.communityfound.org.