## The Skye Scholarship

Most people draw on their personal experiences when they make decisions about giving. This is very true for an anonymous donor (referred to here as "Ann") who, with her husband, created the Skye Scholarship Fund at the Community Foundation. The purpose of the scholarship is to provide support for students who might not necessarily consider college. Ann remembers that she was one of those students. "I have known many families with children who have decided not to go to college because it seems out of reach. It may be a lack of money, or that they don't have fantastic grades. It's especially true for rural kids who haven't experienced the world outside of their town and may be intimidated. I feel for them, because I came from a family like that. I ended up going to college only because of the financial support and encouragement I received from a relative. It changed my life totally."

As a young woman, Ann's primary reason for considering college was that she wanted a good job. "Fortunately, my grades in high school were enough to get me admitted to a good state college. Although I was a B and C student in college, I took difficult classes and learned enough to be hired as a systems analyst. After graduation I ended up with the good job I was looking for and had the skills I needed for a career that evolved over my lifetime."

Although career goals were her primary motivation, Ann found that college changed her in more profound ways as well. "First of all, I had fun in college. But even more important were the classes that were required in physical education, the humanities, English, and sociology. Those were the courses that really opened my eyes to the world. They made me want to explore and led to travels all over the globe including Africa, Italy, Australia, and England. Travel has contributed so much to my life."

Setting up the scholarship fund at the Community Foundation made a lot of sense to Ann and her husband for many reasons. They liked the way they could personalize it and they appreciated the anonymity. "So many people already ask us for money, we didn't want to add to the list," she says. "We also appreciate that the Community Foundation takes care of everything. We can be as involved or as hands-off as we want to be. Actually we started thinking about this as a part of our estate plan, but the Community Foundation encouraged us to also "test drive" it during our lifetimes so that we could work out the details and have the satisfaction of seeing some of the students it helps. It was a great idea."

The Skye Scholarship made its first awards in 2017 to seven students from across Mendocino County. These recipients have two things in common: big dreams for the future and a desire to better themselves through higher education despite personal circumstances that could have limited their opportunities. Willits High School graduate Julia Johnstone is determined to pursue her goal of becoming a nurse at Pacific Union College, despite her long battle with cancer. Madison Hensley, Ukiah High School graduate, wants to pursue her passion for criminal justice at Sacramento State with the goal of becoming an FBI agent. After graduating from Willits High School, Colten Horger wants to explore his many interests and learn more about himself through studies at Ohio Wesleyan University. As Ann says, "We want to give these kids a chance to have dreams that they might actually bring to fruition. The goal is for the student to stay in school until graduation. This includes accredited vocational schools, community colleges and four-year colleges and universities."