



# Community Foundation of Wabash County

## Press Release

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*We're here for giving. We're here for good.*

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### **Foundation announces Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship recipients**

Two Wabash County students will receive full, four-year scholarships as the Community Foundation of Wabash County, Inc. 2006 Lilly Endowment Community Scholars.

Wabash High School (WHS) students Yi (Calvin) Dong and Erica Steele will receive full tuition to the Indiana college of their choice and an \$800 yearly stipend for required books and equipment.

Dong, who is the son of Yu Zheng ranks fifth out of 98 students in his class. Born in China, Dong taught himself to speak English in only two years and has taken on major business responsibilities at Asian Buffet, the restaurant his family owns and runs in Wabash. In addition to his schoolwork, he works countless hours at the restaurant each week ordering supplies, dealing with vendors and assisting customers. Dong also has found time to participate in the concert, pep and marching bands, act as a peer counselor and speak to younger students about China through Purdue's "Passport" program.

As the first person in his family to attend college, Dong knows how important getting an education will be for his future. In his essay, he explained, "College is the only way to bring my dreams into reality. It is also the fundamental tool that I can use to make a difference in my family's, as well as in the global world."

One of Dong's references summed up his success by saying, "...everyday he breathes the American Dream."

Erica Steele, daughter of Jeffrey and Mary Jayne Steele, ranks first in her class of 98 students at WHS. She is the Senior Class President and has been co-captain of the varsity cheerleading squad for two years. She has served on the student council all four years of high school and participated in the Academic Superbowl and Academic Spellbowl in 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. She also earned membership in the National Honor Society beginning in her sophomore year. In addition, Steele has contributed her talent to WHS's Symphonic voices for the last three years and has found time to participate in several community service and church-oriented activities.

According to her essay, Steele is looking forward to broadening her horizons by studying Spanish and business, "Going to college will open me up to a more diverse environment with new people and experiences. Studying a different culture and language seems very exciting to me."

Dong and Steele were chosen from 42 eligible applicants for the Lilly Endowment Scholarship. Selections were made based on academic performance, extracurricular/work/community service activities, references and an interview. After the Foundation's scholarship committee narrowed the field to two nominees and one alternate, the finalists' names were submitted to Independent Colleges of Indiana, Inc. (ICI) for the selection of the recipients.

ICI is a nonprofit corporation that represents 31 regionally accredited degree granting, nonprofit, private colleges and universities in the state.

The scholarships are the result of a statewide Lilly Endowment initiative to help Hoosier students reach higher levels of education. Indiana ranks among the lowest states in the percentage of residents over the age of 25 with a bachelor's degree. There were 216 scholarships awarded statewide.

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