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## **SCHOLARS TAKE SURPRISING PATH TO ELITE COLLEGES... FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Even as Harvard Closes Doors to Transfer Students,  
Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Helps 46 Community College Stars  
Transfer to Top Four-Year Institutions

***Country's Largest Undergraduate Transfer Scholarships Announced;  
Up to \$30,000 per Year to Complete Bachelor's Degrees***

Lansdowne, VA, July 8, 2008—The gateway to the top American colleges is often closed to the roughly six million students who attend America's two-year and community colleges – nearly half of all undergraduates. Just this year, Harvard University shut its doors to transfer students for the next two years, citing lack of adequate housing. Princeton University has a longstanding policy against admitting transfer students. Even Yale, which accepts transfers, admits only about 30 such students each year, very few of whom started at two-year colleges.

Yet a highly motivated, exceptionally promising group of community college students from lower-income backgrounds is pushing the doors open to some of the nation's top four-year universities, transferring to such institutions as Stanford, Cornell, and the University of Pennsylvania with the help of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, a nonprofit champion of high-achieving lower-income students.

Each year the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation works to identify the best community college students in the nation to receive its prestigious Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, which awards up to \$30,000 per year for up to three years, making it the country's largest, most competitive undergraduate transfer scholarship. This year, 46 students were chosen from an applicant pool of over 700 students.

"At the top of our community college classes is a tremendous talent pool, largely untapped by elite colleges," said Joshua Wyner, executive vice president of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. "Many of these students attend community college not because they lack the academic talent for a four-year institution, but because they lack the financial resources. While some top institutions – from Amherst College to UC-Berkeley– have caught on, others are missing out. The reality is that community college transfer students are often the most determined, high-achieving students on four-year campuses. What's more, they bring much needed diversity to our most selective higher education institutions."

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship makes it possible for the country's most promising community college students to transfer to and complete their bachelor's degrees at elite four-year colleges and universities. This year's 46 scholarship recipients will attend some of the best public and private colleges and

universities in the nation, including Columbia University, Georgetown University, and New York University.

The 2008 Undergraduate Transfer Scholars hail from 19 states and 13 foreign countries, including Belarus, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Colombia, Ghana, Kenya, Peru and Russia. More than half speak at least two languages. They range in age from 19 to 52. Some are parents returning to school after a decade or more outside the classroom. Nearly one third are the first in their family to attend college. Most are members of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society of two-year colleges.

Among the notable 2008 Undergraduate Transfer Scholars:

- **Alex Haley-Liu**, a twice-decorated Marine who completed two combat tours in Iraq and was wounded in action, will study economics and international relations at New York University.
- **Nahiris Bahamon Fernandez**, forced to interrupt her medical studies in Colombia and flee the country for her family's safety, will attend University of Wisconsin-Madison and hopes to one day join Doctors Without Borders.
- **Ahmad Ali Lewis**, a former rap star whose single, *Back in the Day*, went to #2 on the Billboard rap chart, will attend Stanford University and aspires to be a university professor.

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation awards Undergraduate Transfer Scholarships to approximately 50 deserving students annually. Each award is intended to cover a significant share of the student's educational expenses – including tuition, living expenses, books and required fees – for the final two to three years necessary to achieve a bachelor's degree. Awards vary by individual, based on the cost of tuition as well as other grants or scholarships he or she may receive. With this year's recipients, the total number of Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarships awarded now totals 295 since the inception of the program.

Through its Community College Transfer Initiative, the Foundation has also awarded grants totaling \$6.78 million to eight selective four-year institutions that will enable more than 1,100 low- to moderate-income community college students to transfer to highly selective four-year institutions. The Foundation has created partnerships with these colleges and universities that will result in a collective investment of nearly \$28 million.

The 2008 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship winners are:

Chelsea Allen, Hanceville, Alabama  
 Kiran Alvi, Pomona, California  
 Nahiris Bahamon Fernandez, Oswego, Illinois  
 Candice Bickett, El Cajon, California  
 Gerard Boucher, Worcester, Massachusetts  
 Rachel Brewer, Windsor, Canada  
 Mikal Brotnov, Kamiah, Idaho  
 Maile Burkhalter, Galveston, Texas  
 Joseph Burnett, Burien, Washington  
 Juan (Joe) Cadena, Strathmore, California  
 Tsvetelina Churalska, Midland, Texas  
 Jad Costandi, Portland, Oregon  
 Katelynn DeLuca, Riverhead, New York  
 Aaron Dowden, East Hartford, Connecticut  
 David Dutton, Bealeton, Virginia

Elizabeth Farrell, Chesterhill, Ohio  
 Grady Fox, Springvale, Maine  
 Donna Gosbee, Cheyenne, Wyoming  
 Alex Haley-Liu, Sacramento, California  
 Sarah Holland, Sanford, Florida  
 Ramona Indrebo, Colorado Springs, Colorado  
 David Kariuki, Newark, New Jersey  
 Becca Kuhn, Nottingham, Maryland  
 Amanda Lassetter, Abbott, Texas  
 Ahmad Lewis, Los Angeles, California  
 Christine Lucas, Rochester, New York  
 Candice Lynch, Trenton, Georgia  
 Rose Lynch, Tulsa, Oklahoma  
 Fidel Malena, Bronx, New York  
 Paola Mariselli, Lauderdale Lakes, Florida  
 Anton Martynenko, Irkutsk, Russia  
 Tiffany Mathis, Okeechobee, Florida  
 Erin McDonald, Osceola, Wisconsin  
 Christine McHone, Dayton, Ohio  
 Bertheleau Ngakam, Ebolowa, Cameroon  
 Nasra Nimaga, Nairobi, Kenya  
 Jessica Odell, Manchester, Connecticut  
 Candace Payne, Boca Raton, Florida  
 Katsiaryna Pleshankova, Rochester, New York  
 Deeneaus Polk, Pascagoula, Mississippi  
 Stephanie Randolph, Winston, Oregon  
 Mark Sandberg, Madison, Wisconsin  
 Sarah Santos, Coral Springs, Florida  
 Alexandra Swidergal, Valley, Washington  
 Sarah Vazquez, West Springfield, Massachusetts  
 Kojo Wallace, Bronx, New York

*Complete biographies of the 2008 Undergraduate Transfer Scholars are available at*  
[www.jackkentcookefoundation.org](http://www.jackkentcookefoundation.org).

#### **About the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation**

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is a private, independent foundation dedicated to helping young people of exceptional promise reach their full potential through education. Established in 2000 by the estate of self-made billionaire Jack Kent Cooke, the Foundation focuses on high-achieving lower-income students from middle school through graduate school. Headquartered in northern Virginia, the Foundation has helped thousands of students nationally since opening its doors through individualized direct service programs, generous scholarships, and grants to nonprofit organizations and educational institutions. With an endowment of \$700 million, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is one of the 100 largest private foundations in the US. For more information please visit [www.jackkentcookefoundation.org](http://www.jackkentcookefoundation.org).