On Sept. 11, 2001, a national tragedy struck America. The stories told by two Ohlone students show that echoes of that event continue to affect Americans today.

Abdullah Khan Niazi, an Ohlone student and a Muslim, was 7 years old when the attack happened. He was subsequently bullied and the victim of racial slurs targeting his cultural and ethnic background.

Niazi and Thant M. Thini experienced this hate- and fear-filled fallout from different perspectives. Thini, an Ohlone biotech major, was also a child in 2001, but she grew up in a Christian household. She had many Muslim friends. In the aftermath of 9/11, Thini’s family forbade her from being friends with Muslims.

“I didn’t care what my family had to say,” Thini said. “I know my friends, and I know they would never do anything to hurt me.”

Both Thini and Niazi suffered constant harassment from people who generalize that all Muslims are terrorists. Every time someone insensitively accused Niazi of being a terrorist, it made going to class less and less tolerable for him. He knew he wasn’t the one at fault, but he still needed to find the strength to realize who he really was as a person.

Thini knew that a person being Muslim did not mean they were associated with the attack, but it took a lot of courage to go against her family’s wishes and act on what she believed to be right.

“America needs to be more open-minded,” she said.

About 30 portable classrooms are sitting unused this semester on the Fremont campus after there was a delay obtaining permits.

In addition to occupying 455 sorely needed parking spots, the decision not to use the portable classrooms and offices caused confusion for students looking for classes that had been moved last-minute, and frustration for faculty forced out of offices or shuffled around.

Heidi Birch, a program manager with Gilbane Building Co., said the plan was to use the buildings this semester, but in the end, teachers would not have had adequate time to set up classes and offices.

The problem was a delay in obtaining the necessary permits from the Division of State Architect, officials said. The classrooms are leased from Mobile Modular. A contractor is then hired to connect all the power, data, plumbing and sewage. The DSA oversees construction on state-funded schools, ensuring it is done according to applicable building codes.

Ron Little, Ohlone’s vice president of finance, said the portable classrooms, or “swing space,” were being rolled out in two phases. The first phase included the general classrooms and several offices. The second phase will include the specialized classrooms and the remaining offices.