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PRESS RELEASE

AFSCME Members, Family Members Awarded 2020 Union Plus Scholarships

Winners Honored for Achievement and Union Values

Washington, D.C. – Union Plus recently awarded \$300,000 in scholarships to 215 students representing 43 unions, including 26 winners representing the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). This year's group of scholarship recipients includes university, college, and trade or technical school students from 38 states. The AFSCME winners are:

- **Kaytlen Akau of Lihue, Hawai'i.** Akau, whose mother, Teresa Caires Nero, is a member of Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA)/AFSCME Local 152, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Claire Alarid of Bellingham, Washington.** Alarid, whose mother, Janice Castillo, is a member of Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE)/AFSCME Council 28, Local 1060, has been awarded a \$1,500 scholarship.
- **Maria Burritt of San Diego.** Burritt, whose mother, Linda Burritt, is a member of United Domestic Workers of America (UDW)/AFSCME Local 3930, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Stacie Chandler of Louisville, Kentucky.** Chandler, who is a member of AFSCME Council 962, Local 4011, has been awarded a \$2,000 scholarship.
- **Sanaa Davis-McClain of Freeport, New York.** Davis-McClain, whose mother, Tiffani Davis, is a member of Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local 1000, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Shakira Florence Fangonilo of Sacramento, California.** Fangonilo, whose mother, Maribel Harris, is a member of University of California Employees/AFSCME Local 3299, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Zakiya Helm of Newburgh, New York.** Helm, whose mother, Carol Flood-Helm, is a member of Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local 1000, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Brontë Lacey of Burlington, Washington.** Lacey, whose father, Steve Lacey, is a member of AFSCME Council 2, Local 176, has been awarded a \$1,500 scholarship.
- **Anastasia Langner of San Jose, California.** Langner, whose mother, Ila Langner, is a member of AFSCME Council 57, Local 101, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Esther Lee of Brooklyn, New York.** Lee, whose mother, Rachel Lee, is a member of AFSCME District Council 37, Local 1407, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Amanda Mavricos of Staten Island, New York.** Mavricos, whose mother, Joanne Mavricos, is a member of AFSCME District Council 37, Local 372, has been awarded a \$3,000 scholarship.

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- **Roxanna McNeilan of West Union, Ohio.** McNeilan, who is a member of AFSCME Council 8, Local 3211, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Katrina Mulherin of Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania.** Mulherin, whose mother, Michelle Mulherin, is a member of AFSCME Council 13, Local 8809, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Anna Poslednik of Maspeth, New York.** Poslednik, who is a member of AFSCME District Council 37, Local 461, has been awarded a \$2,000 scholarship.
- **Julius Radakovits of Florida, New York.** Radakovits, whose mother, Michele Radakovits, is a member of Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local 1000, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Brian Rogers of Los Alamitos, California.** Rogers, whose mother, Cindy Rogers, is a member of United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals (UNAC/UHCP)/AFSCME Local 1199, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Noah Salo of Joliet, Montana.** Salo, whose mother, Monica Salo, is a member of AFSCME Council 9, Local 316, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Ashley Sanders of Saginaw, Michigan.** Sanders, who is a member of AFSCME Council 25, Local 933, has been awarded a \$1,500 scholarship.
- **Maliyah Shifferly of Barberton, Ohio.** Shifferly, whose mother, Melissa Shifferly, is a member of AFSCME Council 8, Local 265, has been awarded a \$1,500 scholarship.
- **Coletrane Sipes of Columbus Junction, Iowa.** Sipes, whose father, Justin Sipes, is a member of AFSCME Council 61, Local 2995, has been awarded a \$2,000 scholarship.
- **Mackenzie Skinner of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.** Skinner, whose mother, Cathy Skinner, is a member of AFSCME Council 90, Local 2800, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Laryssa Takiue of Hilo, Hawai`i.** Takiue, whose father, Harry Takiue, and mother, Winter Takiue, are members of Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA)/AFSCME Local 152, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Phoebe Tran of La Puente, California.** Tran, whose stepfather, Johnny Ly, is a member of AFSCME Council 36, Local 3634, has been awarded a \$3,000 scholarship.
- **Nicholas Vicinanza of Southold, New York.** Vicinanza, whose mother, Lisa Vicinanza, is a member of Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local 1000, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Dylan Williams of Baldwinsville, New York.** Williams, whose mother, Stephanie Parker, is a member of Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)/AFSCME Local 1000, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **James Young of Peshastin, Washington.** Young, whose father, Martin Young, is a member of Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE)/AFSCME Council 28, Local 1299, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

“Union Plus is proud to be able to increase our scholarship award amount this year and help more union families than ever before,” Union Plus President Mitch Stevens said. “At a time when many families have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are especially glad to support this year’s group of 215 hardworking students as they further their educations and pave the path for future success.”

Meet Some of the 2020 AFSCME Honorees

Stacie Chandler

Eastern Gateway Community College (EGCC), Steubenville, Ohio: Associate of Arts (2020)

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Ballard High School, Louisville, Kentucky (1991)

Stacie is a special education instructional assistant at Louisville's Chenoweth Elementary School (CES), working in a self-contained classroom with children who have moderate to severe disabilities. She also works at Centerstone, a behavioral healthcare facility, where she provides one-on-one support to two individuals with disabilities. Stacie plans to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in social work, with the goal of serving the elderly or adults with mental disabilities. In addition to Stacie's AFSCME membership, her husband, Sean Chandler, is a United Auto Workers (UAW) member. They appreciate the many benefits of union membership, including the AFSCME scholarship that supported Stacie in earning her associate degree.

CES Principal Laketa Clay said education is Stacie's passion. "Working with children has a variety of challenges, especially in the area of Exceptional Childhood Education," Clay said. "Stacie meets those challenges with creativity, flexibility, and a positive attitude."

Activities and honors: EGCC Honor Roll; Certified Bourbon Steward

Volunteerism: CES Environmental Club and Kindness Club; homeless outreach

Brontë Lacey

Burlington-Edison High School (B-EHS), Burlington, Washington (2020)

Brontë, who graduated at the top of her B-EHS class, will begin college this fall as a health professions major. She aspires to become an optometrist or ophthalmologist and would like to offer vision services for those less fortunate in the community. She arranged her own job shadow with a local optometrist last summer, an experience that confirmed her choice of career paths. BEHS counselor Darcy Taylor said Brontë has an unassuming demeanor and is the first person to offer a helping hand. "The most impressive thing about Brontë is her heart and compassion," Taylor said. "I have been impressed and humbled by her quiet confidence, her nurturing heart, and her work ethic."

In addition to her father's AFSCME membership, Brontë's mother, Marilana Lacey, is a United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) member. Brontë said both her parents are grateful for the security and stability provided through their unions, and noted, "Our family is both happy and healthy thanks to AFSCME and UFCW."

Activities and honors: Associated Student Body; freshman mentor program; varsity softball, volleyball (2017 state champions); Principal's List; homecoming queen

Volunteerism: Rotary Association Interact Club

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Esther Lee

Midwood High School (MHS) at Brooklyn [New York] College (2020)

Esther plans to begin college this fall as a pharmacy major, having discovered a passion for the pharmacy profession through volunteering. Esther was a part of the MHS Medical Science Institute and has prepared for college by taking AP classes and college-credit courses through the Brooklyn College (BC) CollegeNow Program. She participated in the Bloomberg Philanthropies Arts Internship Program, and she interned at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden last summer.

In addition to her mother's AFSCME membership, Esther's father, Kent Lee, is a National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) member. She said unions have had a significant impact on her family. "Their dedication to providing the vital services that have helped my family and countless others is what has helped communities such as mine thrive," Esther said. "Many of the opportunities that we've had are notably due to union aid. Because of this, my family's future is secure financially, socially, and emotionally."

Activities, honors, and employment: National Honor Society; MHS Big Sister Little Sister program; Korean Japanese Chinese Club; MHS Excellence Award for Demonstrating Outstanding Attendance and Punctuality; Key Club Distinguished Member and Distinguished Editor awards; BC psychology lab; BC environmental science lab

Volunteerism: Brooklyn Community Christian Church summer academic kids' camp; MHS special education department monitor; MHS library

Amanda Mavricos

*Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, New Jersey
Tottenville High School (THS), Staten Island, New York (2019)*

Amanda recently completed her first year as a chemical engineering major at Stevens. Motivated by the health struggles faced by her grandparents and uncle, she plans to pursue a career in drug discovery and to research cures for diseases like diabetes and cancer. She was a member of the THS Science Institute Program and graduated in the top 1 percent of her class. THS principal Joseph Scarmato worked with Amanda through her involvement with the Principal's Consultative Council and was impressed by her perseverance and determination. "Amanda demonstrated a passion for leadership and exhibited her talent to excel," Scarmato said. "Her willingness to take suggestions, volunteer, and experiment with new methods of learning demonstrated her motivation and reflection about her education. Amanda has the potential to touch the lives of many people."

Activities, honors, and employment: Stevens Student Government Association; Society of Women Engineers; Pinnacle Scholar; THS Academic Excellence in English Language Arts Award; THS Outstanding Academic Achievement in Mathematics Award; College Board Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction; THS Student Organization Council; Key Club; US Lacrosse High School All-American; US Lacrosse High School Academic All-American; self-employed science and math tutor

Volunteerism: Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Light the Night Walk; March of Dimes March for Babies; Treats for Troops; Special Olympics fundraising; clothing drives

Roxanna McNeilan

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Eastern Gateway Community College (EGCC), Steubenville, Ohio: Associate of Arts (2019)
North Adams High School, Seaman, Ohio (1993)

Roxanna is a residential care worker with Adams County Children's Services at Wilson Children's Home, a residential center licensed through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. She works with up to 20 children ages 10 to 18 at the facility. Roxanna attended EGCC with the help of an AFSCME scholarship and graduated *summa cum laude*. She plans to earn a bachelor's degree through online courses with the goal of becoming a children's home superintendent. Roxanna has served as a union steward, like her late father, Samuel Thomas, who was a United Auto Workers (UAW) member.

Jill M. Wright, executive director of Wilson Children's Home, said Roxanna is a rapid learner who excels in both quality and quantity of work. "Roxanna has numerous strengths, but what stands out most is her ability to be creative in providing instruction for the residents," Wright said. "Roxanna is diligent in her efforts to establish a good rapport with the residents and find ways to make learning fun."

Activities and honors: Ohio Association of Child & Youth Care Professionals child care worker certification; Wilson Children's Home Above & Beyond Award

Anna Poslednik

Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
Bard High School Early College (BHSEC) Queens, Long Island City, New York (2017)

Anna, who was a 2017 Union Plus Scholarship recipient, is an environment and sustainability major at Cornell and expects to complete her degree next May. She plans to pursue graduate degrees in marine science with an emphasis in ecology and biological oceanography. Anna would like to do research at a university or for a federal agency, with the goal of addressing issues faced by communities heavily dependent upon coastal ecosystem services. She began her collegiate studies at Stony Brook University (SBU) in New York, where she was a University Scholar, before transferring to Cornell. She graduated BHSEC Queens with a Regents Diploma and a liberal arts associate degree.

In addition to Anna's AFSCME membership, her parents, Tomasz and Malgorzata Poslednik, are both Communications Workers of America (CWA) members, and her grandmother was one of the first members of Poland's solidarity movement in the early 1980s. "From Cold War-era Poland to today, the labor movement and unions have dramatically influenced the lives of my family as well as millions across the world," Anna said. "I am beyond grateful for the role of unions in my family's life, and I hope to continue my family's legacy in the labor movement."

Activities, honors, and employment: Cornell Active Citizen; Cornell swim club; Cornell Dean's List; Cornell Academic Achievement Award; Epsilon Eta professional fraternity; Cornell teaching assistant; research assistant, Cornell Biological Field Station; distance education coordinator, Prisoner Express (Durland Alternatives Library)

Volunteerism: SBU Marine Animal Disease Laboratory; Prisoner Express traveling art exhibit

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Ashley Sanders

Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia

Michigan State University: Master of Social Work (2014)

Saginaw Valley State University, University Center, Michigan: Bachelor of Social Work (2013), Bachelor of Liberal Arts (2012)

Carl Sandburg College, Galesburg, Illinois: Associate of Science (2009)

Saginaw High School (2007)

Ashley is a counseling doctoral student at Liberty and expects to complete the program in December 2021. She hopes to open a private practice with the intent of breaking down stigma and other barriers to mental health services for African Americans. Ashley has been a Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMPH) with the State of Michigan since November 2014, working in the state prison mental health department after being employed in the juvenile system and in a psychiatric hospital. She is the oldest of 12 children and hopes to adopt six of her siblings who are in foster care. In addition to her AFSCME membership, Ashley is a member of the United Auto Workers (UAW), which today also represents employees in state and local government, among other workplaces.

Dr. Sharron Norman is director of the Word of Faith Community Services Depot, where Ashley volunteers as assistant director. "Ashley is an outstanding young woman who works for excellence in all she does," Norman said. "She is socially aware of the needs in our community and finds time to reach out and provide assistance."

Other employment: Mental Health Technician (MHT), HealthSource White Pine Mental Health Center (2012-2014)

Volunteerism: Word of Faith Community Services Depot; Michigan Department of Corrections Employee Club; Women of Purpose and Power; Shop with a Cop; Sunday school teacher

Coletrane Sipes

University of Iowa (UI)

Columbus Community High School (CCHS), Columbus Junction, Iowa (2019)

Coletrane recently completed his first year as a history major and hopes to become a history teacher or professor. Through Boy Scouts of America he has attained the rank of Eagle Scout and held the positions of senior patrol leader, assistant scoutmaster, den chief, and quartermaster. Coletrane personally benefits from his father's AFSCME membership through quality medical insurance, which he particularly appreciated after being hospitalized last year with two surgeries. His father was laid off in 2005 from a non-union job but joined AFSCME after securing a position at an Iowa correctional facility. "Being part of AFSCME, according to my father, has helped produce a camaraderie among co-workers, bringing them together as a team to achieve a common goal," Coletrane said. "Thanks to AFSCME's diligence, it has been the best employment my father has held."

Activities, honors, and employment: UI Old Gold Scholarship; UI Chess Club; CCHS Silver Cord Award; National Honor Society; National Council on Youth Leadership; CCHS Speech & Debate Team; CCHS Student Council; CCHS varsity cross country; City of Columbus Junction Office of Community Development

Volunteerism: blood drives; community food pantry

Phoebe Tran

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*University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB)
Bassett High School, La Puente, California (2017)*

Phoebe is a sociology, Asian American Studies, and applied psychology major at UCSB and expects to graduate in June 2021. She plans to pursue graduate degrees and establish a career in social work and clinical psychology with the goal of reducing stigma around mental health services within the Asian American community. A first-generation college student, Phoebe is an Academic Communities for Excellence (ACE) tutor in the UCSB Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS) Writing Lab. CLAS writing instructor Kristen Dunkinson said Phoebe has excelled in this role. “She is a kind, caring tutor who is able to connect with students, helping them gain skills and confidence in their writing,” Dunkinson said.

Phoebe’s career goals have been shaped by her experience meeting immigrants of color through three AFSCME labor strikes. “Many of these people were facing problems with mental health due to the lack of money and quality time with their families,” Phoebe said. “This has affected my goal to become a licensed clinical social worker for underrepresented people who are demanding financial and social change.”

Activities and honors: Eva Augusta Josephi Memorial Scholarship; Certified Mental Health First Aider; UCSB residence hall media coordinator/publicity chair; UCSB Khmer Student Association; UCSB Vietnamese Student Association

Volunteerism: Think Together

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Learn More About the Union Plus Scholarship Program

The Union Plus Scholarship Program, now in its 29th year, awards scholarships based on outstanding academic achievement, personal character, financial need, and commitment to the values of organized labor. The program is offered through the Union Plus Education Foundation.

Since starting the program in 1991, Union Plus has awarded more than \$4.8 million in educational funding to more than 3,200 union members, spouses, and dependent children. Union Plus Scholarship awards are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school, or recognized technical or trade school. The selection process is very competitive, and this year over 6,300 applications were received from 68 unions and all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, two U.S. territories, and six Canadian provinces.

Visit unionplus.org/scholarship for applications and benefit eligibility.

About Union Plus

Union Plus, founded by the AFL-CIO in 1986, uses the collective buying power of America's 12.5 million union members to deliver top-quality benefits and services at competitive prices to working families. In addition to the scholarship program, Union Plus offers the Free College program, which makes it possible for union members and their families to earn an associate degree completely online at no cost. As a complement to the Free College program, Union Plus offers the new Bachelor's Degree Completion program, providing union members and their families a low-cost option to complete their bachelor's degree completely online. Union Plus also provides a wide range of money-saving programs, including discounts on wireless services from AT&T, the only nationwide unionized wireless carrier; insurance protection; savings on travel and recreation; and more. For additional information, visit unionplus.org.

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