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PRESS RELEASE

AFSCME Members, Family Members Awarded 2019 Union Plus Scholarships

Winners Honored for Achievement and Union Values

Washington, D.C. – Union Plus recently awarded \$170,000 in scholarships to 108 students representing 34 unions, including 12 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 31 states plus the District of Columbia. The AFSCME winners are:

- **Kim Adam of Santa Cruz, California.** Adam, whose father, Detlef Adam, is a member of AFSCME Local 101 (Council 57), has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Bailey Caskey of Ankeny, Iowa.** Caskey, whose father, Mark Caskey, is a member of AFSCME Local 3861 (Council 61), has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Katherine Curtis of Twinsburg, Ohio.** Curtis, whose mother, Eileen Curtis, is a member of the Ohio Association of Public School Employees (OAPSE/AFSCME Local 4), has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Deaira Dorsey Brown of Palo Alto, California.** Dorsey Brown, whose mother, Denise Dorsey, is a member of AFSCME Local 2620 (Council 57), has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Melissa Ertl of Albany, New York.** Ertl, whose mother, Mary Ertl, is a member of AFSCME Local 6 (Council 32), has been awarded a \$2,000 scholarship.
- **Ginger Noble of Williamsport, Maryland.** Noble, who is a member of AFSCME Local 354 (Council 3), and whose husband, Brad Noble, is a member of AFSCME Local 1772 (Council 3), has been awarded a \$1,500 scholarship.
- **Keelan Rice of Seneca, Illinois.** Rice, whose mother, Mary Rice, is a member of AFSCME Local 2794 (Council 31), has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Connor Sibley of Ogdensburg, New York.** Sibley, whose mother, Stacy Sibley, is a member of the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA/AFSCME Local 1000), has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Madeline Springate of Versailles, Kentucky.** Springate, whose mother, Sherri Springate, is a member of AFSCME Local 1169 (Council 962), has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Christopher Unruh of Honolulu, Hawaii.** Unruh, whose father, William Unruh, is a member of Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA/AFSCME Local 152), has been awarded a \$3,000 scholarship.
- **Paul Vernier of Spokane Valley, Washington.** Vernier, whose father, Rick Vernier, is a member of AFSCME Local 1553 (Council 2), has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

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- **Tyler Willis of Enumclaw, Washington.** Willis, who is a member of AFSCME Local 3488 (Council 28), has been awarded a \$1,500 scholarship.

“The entire team here at Union Plus is so proud to be able to offer this scholarship program to help union family members offset the high cost of college education,” Union Plus President Mitch Stevens said. “This year’s group of 108 winners are all incredibly talented, motivated and deserving students taking an important step to further their education and build the foundation for future success.”

Meet the 2019 AFSCME Honorees

Kim Adam

Kim is a nursing major at San Diego State University (SDSU). She expects to complete her Bachelor of Science in 2021, after which she plans to specialize as an emergency room nurse before pursuing a master’s degree to become a nurse practitioner. Kim completed the two-year pre-nursing program at Long Beach State University (LBSU), where she interned at St. Mary Medical Center as a health scholar. She is a 2016 graduate of Santa Cruz [California] High School. Kim’s mother, Monika Adam, is an American Federation of Teachers (AFT) member. Her father, who immigrated from Germany, is an AFSCME member who worked with the union to help negotiate better wages and benefits for his colleagues as well as contract a state holiday that honors Cesar Chavez’s birthday. “My father’s mission is to protect his co-workers from unfair treatment, and he works relentlessly for more social justice,” Kim said. “My goal is to be a shop steward like my father and fight for our rights, just as Cesar Chavez did.”

Activities and honors: LBSU High Scholastic Achievement Certificate of Excellence; LBSU President’s Honor Roll; St. Mary Medical Center Certificate of Exemplary Service

Volunteerism: California Nursing Students’ Association

Bailey Caskey

Bailey is a public relations and Spanish major at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) whose career goal is to help Spanish-speaking immigrants and refugees make connections and get the resources they need for a successful new life. She expects to graduate in May 2020, completing her degrees in three years thanks to entering college with 47 credits from AP and dual-enrollment classes. Bailey works for *North American Review*, the nation’s oldest literary magazine. She is a 2017 graduate of Ankeny [Iowa] Centennial High School (ACHS). She came to understand the value of her father’s AFSCME membership in 2017 when a collective bargaining bill was before the Iowa Legislature. “AFSCME fought for my father and his co-workers,” Bailey said. “I have become a great advocate for unions in understanding how important they are to the security of so many people and their families.”

Activities and honors: UNI Honors Student Advisory Board; Sigma Delta Pi National Spanish Honor Society; Iowa State Bar Association American Citizenship Award; National Council of Youth Leadership; ACHS student council

Volunteerism: UNI Dance Marathon (University of Iowa Stead Family Children’s Hospital fundraiser); Waterloo [Iowa] School District Spanish interpreter; ACHS Silver Cord

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Katherine Curtis

Katherine is a biological sciences major at the University of Cincinnati (UC) with a concentration in animal studies. She aspires to work in ecology, researching animals and their adaptations to their environments. Katherine was homeschooled, completing her high school studies in 2017. Dr. Theresa M. Culley, professor and biological sciences department head at UC, has worked with Katherine in the department's laboratory. "Katherine is very inquisitive and eager to learn new techniques," Culley said. "She is intellectually astute, very organized, and always on time — traits which are critical in the laboratory environment. I believe Katherine has great potential to go far and excel in her future career."

Activities and honors: University Honors Program; UC Dean's List; National Merit Finalist; church youth group leadership

Volunteerism: Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Crew; Cincinnati Stray Animal Adoption Program; Humane Society of Summit County; church camp counselor

Deaira Dorsey Brown

Deaira recently finished her first year as a film/TV major at De Anza College in Cupertino, California. She expects to complete her Associate in Arts next May and plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in film/media arts with aspirations of working in the entertainment industry. Deaira is a 2018 graduate of Palo Alto [California] High School. Her mother has served as a steward, occupational chair, and executive board member with AFSCME, and Deaira has attended union meetings with her mother for years. Through most of high school, Deaira volunteered in the after-school program at Palo Alto's Opportunity Services Center, a low-income apartment building and homeless drop-in facility. Alyssa Crooke, a case manager at the center, said, "Deaira is an incredibly hard-working, kind, and intelligent young woman. She worked well with others, was always engaged and excited for the projects she participated in, and made sure that all the other young people felt comfortable and included."

Volunteerism: Girl Empowerment Day; Opportunity Services Center

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Melissa Ertl

Melissa is a fourth-year counseling psychology doctoral candidate at the State University of New York at Albany (UAlbany). She is a 2015 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Spanish and psychology. She was also a 2011 and 2012 Union Plus Scholarship recipient and is the sister of three-time Union Plus Scholarship recipient John Ertl. Melissa expects to complete her doctoral work in May 2021, after which she will pursue a career as a professor. During the past two years of her four-year research assistantship, Melissa has taught undergraduate classes at UAlbany. She is presently engaged in academic research on how intersectionality of identity connects to health-related quality of life, health risk behaviors, and health disparities among historically marginalized populations. She also oversees the student-led peer assistance program, is a group therapist at St. Peter's Addiction Recovery Center, and is a practicum training therapist at Albany Stratton VA Medical Center. Her mother (AFSCME) is not the family's lone union member. Her father, John Ertl, is a member of the United Steelworkers (USW). Melissa, who is chief steward of the UAlbany Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU), hopes to continue her work to strengthen unions within academia as a future faculty member. GSEU organizer Jessica Manry, who recommended Melissa for the position, said, "Melissa's involvement in GSEU has been passionate and sustained, and her belief in the power of unions empowers others to believe, too. It is clear that she wants her colleagues to learn about what union membership offers them and to make sure that they are educated about their voice."

Activities and honors: UAlbany President's Award for Academic Leadership; UAlbany Graduate Scholar Ambassador Award; GSEU Member of the Month

Volunteerism: Educational Opportunities Mentoring Program

Ginger Noble

Ginger will begin Liberty University's Ph.D. in Public Policy program this fall. She completed Southern New Hampshire University's Master of Business Administration (MBA) executive leadership program in December 2018 and holds a Bachelor of Science in dairy and animal science from Penn State University. Ginger has worked for the Maryland Department of Agriculture since 2001 and is currently a soil conservation planner. Through this position, she coordinates the Washington County Envirothon and is secretary for the Maryland Envirothon. Ginger is president of AFSCME Local 354, vice president of AFSCME Council 3, secretary for Central Maryland AFL-CIO, and a Committee on Public Ethics (COPE) member. Her husband, Brad Noble, serves on the AFSCME Local 1772 executive board. "I've had the honor of learning from long-serving union members and leaders in my community and across the state," Ginger said. "These positions have afforded me the opportunity to engage in activities that resolve issues and implement policy changes."

Activities and honors: Washington County Farm Bureau

Volunteerism: Williamsport Volunteer Fire Company; McConnellsburg Volunteer Fire Company

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Keelan Rice

Keelan is a 2019 graduate of Seneca [Illinois] Township High School. He plans to attend Illinois Valley Community College as a political science major. Keelan aspires to be a political consultant or to pursue a career in environmental, immigration, or labor law. His English teacher and speech coach, Marilee Applebee, said Keelan has a strong sense of who he is and what he believes in. "Keelan has a wide range of interests and hobbies that have made him a well-rounded and intelligent person," Applebee said. "He understands that issues have many sides and that understanding comes from thoughtful evaluation of the people and facts involved."

Activities and honors: Scholastic Bowl Coaches' Award; speech team Squeaker of the Week award; Conservation in Action Club; teacher's aide

Volunteerism: Row Raiser (Special Olympics fundraiser); church Bible school

Connor Sibley

Connor is a 2019 graduate of Ogdensburg [New York] Free Academy. He will begin college this fall, majoring in mathematics and business administration, and is interested in accounting, marketing, or teaching as possible career paths. Connor gained appreciation for his mother's AFSCME membership when she received union representation for unfair wages after being laid off, resulting in the reinstatement of her full-time status and benefits. "My mother was given the opportunity to stand up, speak out, and have her voice heard," Connor said. "I realize how much I benefited from the fact that my mother makes a fair wage, receives medical benefits, has job security, and is allowed sick leave to manage her work and family life. Unions are essential as they are the voice for all working people. I am proud to have grown up in a union household."

Activities and honors: National Honor Society; Business and Marketing Honor Society; Clarkson University Science Olympiad bronze medal; National Junior Honor Society; Academic All-Northern, lacrosse, soccer, track

Madeline Springate

Madeline is a 2019 graduate of Woodford County [Kentucky] High School (WCHS) and the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky, a residential early college entrance program on the campus of Western Kentucky University (WKU) where she has focused on STEM and Arabic. She plans to major in pre-law/business. Madeline, who worked in a law office throughout high school, aspires to be a judge and potentially a Supreme Court Justice. She is proud to have a family tradition of union membership. "Our family has benefited economically as well as socially because of benefits provided by the union," Madeline said. "AFSCME has led to upward mobility and worker's rights, fought for our family's health insurance, and negotiated my mom's salary. I'm thankful for AFSCME's support of working families like mine."

Activities and honors: Gatton Senator, WKU Student Government Association; Inspire U.S.; Versailles Youth Council; Woodford County Teen Court; Kentucky Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra; Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra; Prichard Committee Student Voice Team; WCHS Arabic Honor Society; WCHS cheerleader

Volunteerism: Woodford County Library

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Christopher Unruh

Chris is a 2019 graduate of Mid-Pacific Institute, a college preparatory school in Honolulu. He will begin college this fall, majoring in international relations. Chris has a passion for geopolitics and aspires to work in foreign service. He participated in Mid-Pacific's International Baccalaureate degree program, earning course credits toward his college degree. Mid-Pacific college counselor Sara McKay-Hines said Chris is an outstanding leader. "Chris is highly regarded by our faculty and by his peers for his exemplary academic performance, his strong work ethic, and his kindness toward others," McKay-Hines said. "I am confident that he will continue to put what he has learned to use for the benefit of his community."

Activities and honors: National Honor Society; Holomua Honor Society; President's Honor Roll; Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Eagle Scout Scholarship and Fred Trotter Eagle Scout Scholarship; BSA Aloha Council; Peer Mediation; Do What You Love Club; varsity swim; varsity water polo

Paul Vernier

Paul recently completed his first year as an electrical engineering and computer science major at Washington State University (WSU). He hopes to later pursue a master's degree in electrical power engineering and work in that industry. Paul is a 2018 graduate of University High School (UHS) in Spokane, Washington. He comes from a union-strong family: his father is an AFSCME member, and two uncles and a grandfather are also union members. "AFSCME allows us to be healthy and grow as individuals," Paul said. "Things like affordable healthcare mean that we do not have to worry about seeing a doctor. AFSCME has helped shape the way we as individuals work and live in the most basic ways."

Activities and honors: STARS Scholar; Graybill Engineering Scholar; Gonzaga University Startalk Language Program; UHS Chamber Orchestra; UHS varsity football Coaches Award; UHS varsity track and field

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Tyler Willis

Tyler is enrolled in the Associate Degree Registered Nurse program at Bellevue [Washington] College. He expects to finish the program in May 2020 before continuing into the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program and eventually pursuing a Doctor of Nursing Practice. Tyler has worked at Enumclaw Health and Rehabilitation Center and Expressions @ Enumclaw Memory Care, and he currently works as a hospital assistant in the float pool at the prestigious Harborview Medical Center. He is a 2010 graduate of Tahoma Senior High School in Maple Valley, Washington, and previously attended Renton [Washington] Technical College. Tyler is also a member of the Service Employees International Union, serving as Local 775 steward. Bellevue College faculty member Dianne Caraway has been impressed with Tyler's academic prowess and public service during his time in Bellevue's nursing program. "Tyler is a driven and focused individual who has a passion for helping and serving," Caraway said. "He demonstrates leadership, accountability, responsibility, and a willingness to work with others."

Activities and honors: Neville B. Crippen Award; Norm Schut Scholar; Younglove & Coker Scholar; two-time Enumclaw Health and Rehabilitation Center Employee of the Month; Bellevue Nursing Student Association; Social Business Club

Volunteerism: American Red Cross, including deployment to Texas hurricane relief; Puerto Rico disaster relief fundraising; Mom and Me Mobile Medical Clinic; Rock for Reason; Maple Valley Food Bank and Emergency Services

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Learn More About the Union Plus Scholarship Program

The Union Plus Scholarship Program, now in its 28th 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 \$4.5 million in educational funding to more than 3,000 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 7,100 applications were received from 65 unions and all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia and two U.S. territories, representing an almost 20% increase in applications from 2018.

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 14.7 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 new Free College program, which makes it possible for union members and their families to earn an associate degree completely online at no cost. 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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