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## PRESS RELEASE

# AFSCME Members, Family Members Awarded 2022 Union Plus Scholarships

*Winners Honored for Achievement and Union Values*

**Washington, D.C.** – Union Plus recently awarded \$200,000 in scholarships to 189 students representing 38 unions, including 27 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 35 states, the District of Columbia, and one U.S. territory. The AFSCME winners are:

- **Natalia Alzate of Bogota, New Jersey.** Alzate, who is a member of AFSCME District Council 37, Local 2507, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Tiffany Ashton of Olyphant, Pennsylvania.** Ashton, who is a member of AFSCME Council 87, Local 2333, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Caleb Blair of Granite City, Illinois.** Blair, whose father, Chris Blair, is a member of AFSCME Council 31, Local 1964, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Olivia Brown of Lemont, Illinois.** Brown, whose mother, Beth Porch-Brown, is a member of AFSCME Council 31, Local 3696, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Macie Frommie of Blue Earth, Minnesota.** Frommie, whose mother, Lisa Frommie, is a member of AFSCME Council 2, Local 3953, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Caitilin Hall of Seattle.** Hall, who is a member of AFSCME Council 28, Local 795, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Maahum Hamayat of West Chicago, Illinois.** Hamayat, whose father, Hasnain Hamayat, is a member of AFSCME Council 31, Local 2258, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Isabella Hart of Amsterdam, New York.** Hart, whose mother, Marguerite Hart, is a member of CSEA/AFSCME Local 1000, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Hunter Haynes of Castalia, Ohio.** Haynes, whose father, Jason Haynes, is a member of AFSCME Council 8, Local 1519, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Laci Joseph of Washington, D.C.** Joseph, whose mother, Maria Jones, is a member of AFSCME Council 20, Local 1808, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Rachel Katkar of Blaine, Minnesota.** Katkar, who is a member of AFSCME Council 5, Local 3800, has been awarded a \$2,000 scholarship.
- **Britney Kuhn of Volant, Pennsylvania.** Kuhn, whose mother, Vonda Kuhn, is a member of AFSCME Council 84, Local 819, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Ryan Lewis of Scranton, Pennsylvania.** Lewis, whose father, Ryan D. Lewis, is a member of AFSCME Council 84, Local 2370, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.

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- **Sarah Lira of Woodson, Illinois.** Lira, whose legal guardians, Mitchell Smith and Courtney Smith, are members of AFSCME Council 31, Locals 3549 and 805, respectively, has been awarded a \$4,000 scholarship.
- **Emilee Little of Chemung, New York.** Little, whose mother, Marie Little, is a member of CSEA/AFSCME Local 1000, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Kayla Marold of Central Falls, Rhode Island.** Marold, who is a member of AFSCME Council 93, Local 1489, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Samantha Martinez of Wailuku, Hawai`i.** Martinez, whose mother, Kristy Bugtong, is a member of HGEA/AFSCME Local 152, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Tanzania Merriweather of Martinsburg, West Virginia.** Merriweather, who is a member of AFSCME Council 3, Local 3661, has been awarded a \$550 scholarship.
- **Kesiah Philpot of Stansbury Park, Utah.** Philpot, whose father, Jerry Philpot, is a member of AFSCME Local 1004, has been awarded a \$550 scholarship.
- **Gianna Pozzi of Spring Valley, Illinois.** Pozzi, whose mother, JoAnn Pozzi, is a member of AFSCME Council 31, Local 2615, has been awarded a \$550 scholarship.
- **Carson Robb of Kaysville, Utah.** Robb, who is a member of AFSCME Local 1004, has been awarded a \$4,000 scholarship.
- **Alena Scott of Hamilton, Ohio.** Scott, whose mother, Yvette Scott, is a member of OAPSE/AFSCME Local 4, has been awarded a \$550 scholarship.
- **Elise Slaughter of Arverne, New York.** Slaughter, whose mother, Michelle Louis-Juste, is a member of AFSCME District Council 37, Local 372, has been awarded a \$550 scholarship.
- **Nellani Sullivan of Carmi, Illinois.** Sullivan, whose father, James Bryan Sullivan, is a member of AFSCME Council 31, Local 3775, has been awarded a \$550 scholarship.
- **Savannah Talley of Grants Pass, Oregon.** Talley, whose mother, Sarah Talley, is a member of AFSCME Council 75, Local 2619, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Lindsay Tebeck of Walla Walla, Washington.** Tebeck, who is a member of AFSCME Council 2, Local 1191, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Giovanni Verdi of Medford, New York.** Verdi, whose mother, Jessica Verdi, is a member of CSEA/AFSCME Local 1000, has been awarded a \$550 scholarship.

“We are continually impressed by the resilience of our scholarship applicants as students across the United States have faced ongoing challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Union Plus President Mitch Stevens said. “This year’s 189 Union Plus Scholarship winners are as extraordinary as ever, and we are very glad to help support them as they continue their educations.”

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## Meet Some of the 2022 AFSCME Honorees

### **Natalia Alzate**

*Sister Claire Tynan School of Nursing, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey  
LaGuardia Community College, Long Island City, New York: Associate of Applied Science (2021)*

Natalia is in the Holy Name Medical Center Sister Claire Tynan School of Nursing Registered Nurse (RN) program and expects to complete her degree in June 2023. Thereafter, she plans to pursue an accelerated bachelor's degree and gain the nursing experience necessary to enter a nursing graduate degree program. Natalia has been a Fire Department of New York (FDNY) rescue paramedic since September 2015. She has received several FDNY honors, including a citation for a meritorious act from a 911 call that involved a mother and child in critical condition.

"This job has been one of the most purposeful employments to date due to the number of positive experiences I have been afforded with the public," Natalia said. "I have received extraordinary training that I have used in critical situations when seconds count. I am indebted and grateful to so many wonderful mentors that have shared their learned experiences. It is a dynamic job that requires one be proactive, self-motivated, and always willing to learn."

*Activities and honors: AFSCME Local 2507 election committee; FDNY Foundation 2020 Calendar of Heroes; FDNY save pins*

*Volunteerism: American Youth Soccer Organization*

### **Tiffany Ashton**

*Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania*

Tiffany is in Luzerne's nursing program and expects to complete her associate degree in June 2024. She is a certified nursing assistant (CNA) at the Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where she has worked for 19 years. Tiffany is pursuing her childhood dream of being a registered nurse (RN). She is a single mother of four children, two of whom have graduated college and another who has special needs. "Growing up, I dreamed of being a college-educated person," Tiffany said. "I have been so grateful for being able to have the honor of working for the Department of Veterans Affairs. I've learned from the veterans for whom I provide daily care what it truly means to be blessed."

Dawn Mead, an RN and assistant director of nursing at the Merli Veterans' Center, said Tiffany will be a dedicated nurse and an asset to her future employer. "Tiffany has shown through her work that she is dedicated and caring to her residents and meticulous in her duties as a CNA," Mead said. "She shows great knowledge and drive in her career, and I am sure that she will be a wonderful nurse. Tiffany is truly a person that wants to make a difference in people's lives."

*Other employment: Dunmore [Pennsylvania] Health Care Center; The Jewish Home of Eastern Pennsylvania, Scranton*

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## **Maci Frommie**

*Blue Earth [Minnesota] Area (BEA) High School (2022)*

Maci plans to enter the cardiac sonography associate degree program at Southeast Technical College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, this fall. She hopes to become a traveling sonographer, combining her long-held passions of working in health care and travel. Maci was a front desk receptionist at Blue Earth Clinic, part of the United Hospital District network, from November 2019 to April 2021. She said the job taught her responsibility and compassion while helping her get connected in the medical profession.

Maci's mother, Lisa Frommie, is a member of the AFSCME Local 3953 contract negotiation team and previously served as local secretary, treasurer, vice president, and president. "My mom strongly believes that being an active AFSCME member and taking on leadership roles within her union has helped her have a better understanding of how important the union is to the employees it represents," Maci said. "Another positive aspect of being an AFSCME member is the relationships my mom has formed with her coworkers and fellow union members."

*Activities and honors: National Honor Society; National FFA Organization BEA officer; BEA varsity volleyball captain*

*Volunteerism: church mission trips; homeless shelters; soup kitchens*

## **Hunter Haynes**

*Margaretta High School (MHS), Castalia, Ohio (2022)*

Hunter plans to enter the diesel and truck technology program at Lincoln College of Technology in Indianapolis this fall. His goal is to earn a master certification in diesel technology. Hunter is currently a mechanic at Erie Blacktop Inc. as part of the Jump Start program through the Erie Huron Ottawa Vocational Education (EHOVE) Career Center in Milan, Ohio. He previously was a yard laborer for a local general contractor specializing in commercial construction. Hunter is thankful for his father's AFSCME membership. "Unions are only as strong as their members and officers," Hunter said. "Unions as a whole have helped shape America."

Taylor Burns, an intervention specialist at the EHOVE Career Center, has been impressed by the ways in which Hunter has overcome hardships and taken constructive criticism over the past three years. "When I first met Hunter, he was immature and didn't have much confidence in himself. Now, he is a completely different person and strives to be a positive role model for underclassmen," Burns said. "Hunter is talented, caring, intuitive, dedicated, and focused in his pursuits. He is the type of student teachers want to have in their classes."

*Activities and honors: EHOVE Drug Free Leaders; Erie Challengers 4-H officer; MHS varsity football captain; MHS varsity track and field; Lincoln Technology Scholar; EHOVE Diesel Student of the Nine Weeks*

*Volunteerism: Wightman Wieber Kids Fest; various community service projects*

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## **Rachel Katkar**

*Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota: Master of Arts in Education (2022)*

*St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota: Bachelor of Arts, biology (2006)*

*Mounds Park Academy, St. Paul, Minnesota (2002)*

Rachel plans to enter the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Writing program at the University of Minnesota (UM) Twin Cities this fall. She currently is an executive office and administrative services professional in the UM School of Dentistry. Previously, Rachel worked in undergraduate admissions and enrollment management at Hamline, and she was a science faculty member and residence hall parent at The Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, New York. Rachel's dream is to study, write, collaborate, and teach in the MFA in Creative Writing program. She has been accepted to several writing intensive programs, and she was one of 20 selected for the National Afterschool Matters Fellowship through Wellesley College in Massachusetts and the National Writing Project (2015-2017). Rachel has three writing projects underway that she hopes to complete during her time in the MFA program.

AFSCME Local 3800, which Rachel joined in March 2021, provided a path for her to get involved in the labor movement. She is a part of the member action team and chair of the education committee. "I work to engage and involve as many people as possible within our union work," Rachel said. "Many of the wins that came out of our recent bargaining were due to the actions we took. We have our AFSCME family to lift us up and support each other as we strive for better working conditions.

*Activities: Northstar Fellow, Augsburg University Center for Democracy and Citizenship (2014-15); Hamline University Orchestra guest cellist and trumpeter*

*Volunteerism: Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies; St. Paul Public Schools Community Education in Minnesota; YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities; Science Museum of Minnesota*

## **Sarah Lira**

*Glenwood High School (GHS), Chatham, Illinois (2022)*

Sarah will begin college this fall and plans to pursue a career in international affairs. Although she has not decided on an academic major, she plans to take classes that will assist her professional ambitions such as multiple language courses. Last summer, Sarah participated in First Star Summer Immersion, a college preparation program for students in foster care. "Looking back, I have been granted a multitude of opportunities along the path of my struggles, especially regarding my education," Sarah said. "Though there are not many things the system promises you, there is hope for financial support in such an unstable life where we kids have not been given the time to truly think about our futures."

GHS English department coordinator Tracy L. Altman taught Sarah's freshman honors English and junior AP English language and composition classes. She said Sarah is an exceptional student who will always help others overcome obstacles and find success. "Sarah is a leader who analyzes situations and is careful not to take action without a purpose and a plan," Altman said. "She has a way of putting people at ease and truly listens to them when they speak. She is widely recognized by students and faculty as outstanding in every sense of the word and will be successful in any field of study she chooses to embrace."

*Activities and honors: GHS Key Club; GHS Social Justice Club; GHS varsity tennis, cheerleading; First Star Summer Immersion certificate of achievement*

*Volunteerism: Light Up the Park; GHS Freshman Boot Camp*

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### **Emilee Little**

*Corning [New York] Community College (CCC)  
Waverly [New York] High School (WHS) (2021)*

Emilee is pursuing an Associate of Applied Science in Nursing and expects to complete the degree in May 2023. Thereafter, she hopes to seek licensing as a registered nurse (RN) and pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Her interest in the nursing field stems from her desire to support her community and its development. Emilee was part of a select group from six area high schools to participate in the New Visions Honors Academy Health Careers Exploration program during her senior year. She was a dietary aide at the Arnot Ogden Medical Center in Elmira, New York, last fall, and the experience confirmed her career choice.

Elizabeth Woodard, an instructor at New Visions Health Careers Honors Academy, said Emilee has been a standout student who successfully collaborates with others. “Emilee is a catalyst for change, and her commitment to be her best and give her best are commendable,” Woodard said. “Emilee demonstrates leadership, integrity, and a strong work ethic. She is focused and motivated to achieve her very best in all aspects of her life.”

*Activities and honors: Katherine P. Kerrigan Scholar; CCC Leadership Academy; CCC dean’s list; CCC varsity volleyball; HOSA – Future Health Professionals; National Technical Honor Society; WHS varsity volleyball*

*Volunteerism: Elmira Youth Court*

### **Kayla Marold**

*Roxbury Community College (RCC), Boston  
Coventry [Rhode Island] High School (CHS) (2010)*

Kayla is a nursing student at RCC and expects to graduate in May 2023. She is an emergency room technician and certified nursing assistant (CNA) at Boston Medical Center (BMC). Kayla said working with her current colleagues inspired her to return to school in pursuit of becoming a registered nurse. “I am passionate about becoming a nurse because I know it is my true calling,” she said. “I understand that it will not be an easy career path, but the ability to make positive changes in the lives of others is worth it.”

Kayla, who previously worked at a non-unionized hospital, said being an AFSCME member is an honor and that she would no longer be comfortable working as a non-union member. “When I first started working at Boston Medical Center, I felt treated with the utmost respect by everyone,” Kayla said. “AFSCME has fought for fair and equal wages, and the insurance package is excellent. The relief of knowing your job is going to ensure you have access to quality health care is a different kind of relief. Being part of a union captures respect, camaraderie, and making sure our own are taken care of in a fair way.”

*Activities and honors: BMC Emergency Medicine Leadership Advisory Council; BMC Health Equity Committee; BMC Unit Based Council; CHS Community Service Award; CHS Most Conscientious Award*

*Volunteerism: The Humane League; American Heart Association Heart Walk; Boston Cares; Haiti earthquake relief bake sale*

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## **Carson Robb**

*Brigham Young University (BYU), Provo, Utah: Bachelor of Science, political science (2021)*  
*Davis High School (DHS), Kaysville, Utah (2017)*

Carson will be a first-year student at George Washington (GW) University Law School this fall. His experience joining, participating, and organizing with AFSCME Local 1004 motivated Carson to study labor law, and he aspires to work in the U.S. Department of Labor. Carson is a judicial assistant in the 4th District Court of Utah, and he was a finance and fundraising lead for the 2020 Utah House of Representatives campaign of Fatima Dirie. He was ordained as a high priest in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints last year. Carson was assistant to the president of the Georgia Macon Mission (2017-2019), and he has been chaplain for the Sons of the American Legion Post 27 since 2016.

Carson immediately joined AFSCME upon beginning to work as a judicial assistant despite union membership being rare in Utah. "Unionizing has given me a needed sense of empowerment within my workplace," he said. "Joining AFSCME provided me the resources and organizing skills necessary to be able to talk with my coworkers about wages in a mature and appropriate manner. Through educating, organizing, and empowering, unionizing has changed my perspective of the working world."

*Activities and honors: GW Law Scholar; Utah Society Sons of the American Revolution genealogist and historian; BYU Family History Library lead student genealogist (2019-2021); Students Against Electronic Vaping (SAEV) founder, president; U.S. Senate Youth Program 2017 Utah Senator; National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution 2021 National Excellence Award for Historic Preservation; 2020 Utah Public Health and Safety Award*

## **Savannah Talley**

*Rogue River [Oregon] Junior Senior High School (RRJSHS) (2022)*

Savannah, who was among the top students in her RRJSHS graduating class, will attend Rogue Community College in Grants Pass, Oregon, this fall. She plans to transfer to Lynn Benton Community College in Lynn County, Oregon, the following year to finish her Associate of Applied Science in medical imaging while working as a certified nursing assistant as part of an externship. Savannah aspires to be a diagnostic imaging technician. "I have done my research and have a goal for myself," she said. "I am a good student and plan to be an amazing diagnostic imaging technician."

RRJSHS teacher Kelly J. Gibson said Savannah is an intelligent and insightful scholar who is kind, persistent and determined to not let the chaos of the world slow her down. "Savannah's critical thinking skills are among the top in her class, and she is a pleasure to teach," Gibson said. "It has been inspiring to watch the rather shy, introverted girl she was emerge as a force who must be reckoned with. Her friendships with peers, the respect she has from the staff, and the relationships she has built in the community speak directly to the strength of her character."

*Activities and honors: National Honor Society; National FFA; RRJSHS softball, volleyball*

*Volunteerism: Head Start; youth soccer coach; various community outreach projects*

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## Learn More About the Union Plus Scholarship Program

The Union Plus Scholarship Program, now in its 31st 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 \$5.2 million in educational funding to more than 3,600 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 3,741 applications were received this year from 63 unions and all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, two U.S. territories, and three Canadian provinces.

Visit [unionplus.org/scholarship](http://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 Bachelor's Degree Completion program, providing union members and their families a no-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](http://unionplus.org).

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