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What Difference in My Life Can a Union Make?

Hello, I'm 18 year old, Maricela Raquel Miller and I am currently going to be enrolling into my second semester of my first year at Paradise Valley Community College. As of right now my goal is to graduate with a minor in kinesiology and a major in physical therapy for children.

I.B.E.W. Local Union 266 plays a huge role in supporting my family. The Union has been in my family since the 1920's. Starting with my Great Grandfather Leland Miller who was a union carpenter. Leland passed his knowledge onto his son, which is my grandfather Robert Miller, who became a union CWA worker. It did not stop there. My father Christopher Miller, the son of Robert, became a Journeyman Electrician, who works in Substation Maintenance, and is a Union Steward out of the I.B.E.W. Local Union 266. Finally Gian Miller my brother and the son of Christopher, Gian is currently an Apprentice Lineman and is a member of Union 266. The Union has been in my family for many years and the Union has done a huge part in supporting my family.

What differences, in your life, can a Union make you ask? Well, first off a Union member earns better wages and benefits than workers who are not union members. It is said that union workers make up to 30 percent more then non-union workers. Being in the Union is such a good benefit because when you have a low paying job the Union helps by raising the hourly wage and bringing low-wage workers out of poverty. Also, with the help of the Union, workers are able to have the opportunity to prosper and live comfortably in middle class. With all of the benefits that Union workers are provided with, many expenses that they may have struggled with before joining a Union are now taken care of.

One of the other benefits that the union offers is paid vacation. This is a really good benefit for families because it allows them to spend time together. For example this was a very important benefit for my father because before college I was a club softball player for about 5 years. With the paid vacation benefit, my father was able to travel with me on the many out of state tournaments I participated in. Several of my teammates did not have their parents there with them when we had out of state tournaments; this is because their parent's jobs did not offer paid vacation. I am so thankful that the Union offers paid vacation. I could not have imagined going out of state without my parents.

Health benefits are another big case that the Union has helped my family with. Union workers are more likely to be covered by very good health insurance than nonunion workers. Health insurance has been very helpful for my family with all of the extreme sports that we have participated in. There have been multiple times where members of my family have landed themselves in the hospital. If we did not have the Union health benefits paying for the hospital bills would have been a great challenge.

Lastly the Union provides their workers to have the benefits of a very good pension. This allows union workers to have a substantial amount of money saved up by the time of their retirement. This benefit allows them to still be able to support their families and live comfortably even after retirement.

Being in the Union can make your life completely different. With having family members in the Union I have learned to appreciate all the opportunities I have been given. Without the Union my living environment would be drastically different, my family support would be different, and the expenses of living would be a huge struggle.

Being in the Union can either make or break the way you live your life. From the experiences I have learned in my life so far, I choose Union.

Maricela Raquel Miller