

2021 Scholarship Awards

George C. Springer Scholarship

Shanita Hill has been a member of the Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals, Local 2221 for the past four years. Shanita will be using the scholarship to help offset her tuition of becoming a social worker. Her current position as a paraeducator in the rise program has motivated her to pursue a career in social work.

In her essay, Shanita states “Having a union during these uncertain times has been amazing. The feeling of knowing that when this is all over, we will be able to have a job to go back to is a great feeling.”

Sharon Palmer Scholarship

Yousef Masood is the child of Tonya Clark, a member of the State Vocational Federation of Teachers, Local 4200A. Yousef is in the HVAC program at Henry Abbott Technical High School, an active member of his church, Boy Scouts, and member of the Game Club. He is also a member of the Danbury Drum Corps, and a three-year winner of the Million Word Reader Award. Yousef also achieved first place in the 2020 Connecticut Science and Engineering Fair in which he presented a way for a greenhouse to generate its own electricity that is different from solar energy. With that, came a scholarship to the University of Hartford and a spot at the Genius Olympiad.

Upon graduating from Henry Abbott Technical High School, Yousef plans to pursue a degree which will let him continue working and learning ways to protect the environment and generate sustainable energy.

In his essay, Yousef states “I believe to have a more equitable society, and one where we all have the opportunity to be successful, unions are a vital key to that. This health crisis has shown all of us how important unions are not only to every worker, but to our economy.”

Sharon Palmer Scholarship

Gabriella Sohn is the child of Nancy Wallace-Sohn, a member of the West Hartford Federation of Educational Personnel, Local 3819. Gabriella has been a very active volunteer in her community, she is a member of the Habitat for

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Humanity Club, member of the field hockey team and manages the girls' lacrosse team and boys' basketball team. She has also won multiple awards in academics and sports including the National Honors Society of High School Scholars.

Upon graduating from Conrad High School, Gabriella plans to study Occupational Therapy.

In her essay, Gabriella states "Ultimately the union is the glue that is holding our society together bridging the gap between our work force and the people contained in society, making sure that all are treated just and fairly for the work that they perform. This has been the main focus and benefit of the union to society and the workers they represent during the Covid-19 pandemic."

AFT CT Scholarship

Natalia Ryan is the child of Ann Ryan, a member of VNASC Federation of Registered Nurses and Aides, Local 5119. Natalia is a member of the Marching Band, Track & Field, and the Tri-M Music Honors Society. She has also won numerous academic awards including being inducted into the National Honors Society. Natalia is also a mentor in S.T.E.P.S, an organization aimed at young women.

In her essay, Natalia states "Never before has being part of a union been so important. The union was literally fighting to save the lives of their members during this pandemic. They've significantly improved society as a whole and have given members an opportunity to see how powerful being part of a union can be."

AFT CT Scholarship

Amani Jones is the child of Katara Jones, a member of the Administrative and Residual Employees Union, Local 4200. Amani is ranked #3 in her class and has completed 27 college credits. She is also her class treasurer, a student ambassador, peer mentor, peer mediator, and an experienced community volunteer including being a member of the Teen Volunteer Network. Katara has won numerous awards and honors one of which being added to the Manchester Community College's CEO list. A list meant to recognize the academic excellence of students who earned a 4.0 or "A" grade point average in their classes.

In her essay, Amani states "The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the racial disparities in this country, but unions have helped combat this by continually advocacy for increased pay for workers. This pay has helped not only individual workers but society because it uplifts and supports marginalized communities.