



**For Immediate Release  
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## **Five IATSE Family Members Win Prestigious Union Plus Scholarships**

**\$150,000 Awarded to 103 Students Representing 45 Unions**

**Washington, DC**—Five children of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) members have been selected as winners of the 2007 Union Plus Scholarship awards.

The IATSE winners are Jonathan G. Baldasare of Malverne, NY (\$1,000), whose father is a member of Local 52; Florence D’Orazi of Woodland, CA (\$2,000), whose mother is a member of Local 784; Catherine Q. O’Neill of Glendale, CA (\$1,000), whose father is a member of Local 600; Sarah Pattison of East Northport, NY (\$1,000), whose father is a member of Local 52; and Randi Scott of Philadelphia (\$1,000), whose father is a member of Local 804.

These five winners are among 103 students from 45 unions awarded a total of \$150,000 in scholarships from the Union Plus Scholarship program. The awards are being distributed to students who are from union families, or are union members themselves, attending two-year and four-year colleges as well as recognized technical or trade schools.

Winners were chosen from more than 5,500 applications received from 58 unions in all 50 states and many territories, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. The scholarships are sponsored by the Union Plus Education Foundation, which receives funding from HSBC, the issuer of the Union Plus Credit Card. Since 1992, more than \$2.4 million has been awarded through these prestigious scholarship awards.

“This program is a way to help union members and their families realize their dreams,” says Leslie Tolf, president of Union Privilege, the AFL-CIO-founded organization that administers the scholarship program. “With the rising cost of college tuition, we’re doing everything we can to help union families save money.”

### **Saving Money Every Day Helps Families Afford College**

Union Privilege offers an array of Union Plus benefits that save money for union members and their families. These include mortgage and finance benefits, education and insurance benefits and even money-saving offers on such items as computers, health services and vacations. Union members can visit [www.UnionPlus.org](http://www.UnionPlus.org) to find out what benefits their unions offer.

According to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, union benefits like these are needed more than ever. Real wages are falling and college costs continue to rise up to 10 percent each year, hitting working families the hardest.

“That’s why we’re so pleased,” says Tolf, “to offer the Union Plus Scholarship program and help make college more affordable for union families. And that’s why we’re so proud of our winners, many of whom have demonstrated great dedication, creativity and hard work in pursuing their academic and career goals.”

### **Jonathan Baldasare: It’s All in the Family**

“If it were not for the union, my father, Anthony Baldasare, would not have been able to provide for us as well as he has,” says Jonathan Baldasare.

Jonathan’s father, an IATSE member, has worked for years on the HBO series “The Sopranos,” a drama that places a great deal of emphasis on family loyalty. That’s a value he brings home, and has taught to Jonathan. “My dad is a hero and role model and I pray I’ll be as devoted a father as he is.”

But for now, there’s school to take care of. Jonathan has chosen food science as his area of study. “This scholarship will enable me to achieve my goal of enhancing the safety, flavor and availability of wholesome, nutritious foods worldwide,” he says.

### **Florence D’Orazi: A Friend in Need**

“I am fortunate to say that I have the blessing of a second family in my mother Deborah D’Orazi’s union,” says Florence D’Orazi. “My mother’s fellow union members were my mentors whose strength in supporting us will always leave an impression on my mind. Although my mother has a disability, her union continues to offer her employment and guarantee her seniority. My parents could not support my brother and me without this unwavering support.”

Florence is studying neurobiology, physiology and behavior in college, which means she’ll have a good understanding of the human mind when she graduates. Her understanding of the human heart she already has—she got it from her family and friends in the union.

### **Catherine O’Neill: Support System**

What does it mean to support a family? Is that the job of Catherine O’Neill’s mother, who is a caregiver to Catherine’s sister who requires full-time care? Or is it the responsibility of Catherine’s father, John T. O’Neill, whose union job provides for a family of six?

Of course, Catherine herself plays a part in supporting the family, working 15–20 hours per week while volunteering actively in her community and still keeping her grades up to prepare for college, where she hopes to study journalism.

When you get down to it, supporting a family is a job for everyone. And for the O’Neill family, their union pay and benefits help make it possible. Says Catherine, “My father’s union membership provided benefits that allowed my sister to receive excellent medical care and saved my mom during a string of health conditions. Unions have given me the chance to fulfill my own potential.”

### **Sarah Pattison: Creating Strong Bonds**

Sarah Pattison says she feels “connected to” her community, as well as to the union of her father, IATSE member Alfred T. Pattison—and no wonder. She makes it clear that good things happen when caring, compassionate people stick together.

“My community, my union and my extended family have helped make me who I am,” says Sarah. Together with her classmates, Sarah has helped raise thousands of dollars for ALS research. She’s helped sponsor a child in Special Olympics, and worked with her friends on a local Breast Cancer Awareness Day.

Sarah plans to study chemistry in college. She’s off to a good start, because her actions have been the catalyst for a lot of positive results.

### **Randi Scott: The Power of Observation**

Scientists do a lot of observation. They watch what’s around them carefully. They test their hypotheses. Then they reach conclusions based on everything they see and experience.

For Randi Scott, it was her volunteer work with children that first piqued her interest in neuroscience and psychiatry. She observed that many of the children were having difficulty concentrating, and she wondered what was going on in their brains that might inhibit their powers of concentration. With her intended major of neurobehavioral science, and her love of helping people, she may be the one to make significant inroads in the field.

Randi, the daughter of IATSE member Randall Scott, has made equally astute observations about the importance of union pay and benefits. “My volunteer work has shown me the detrimental effects on children whose parents are not unionized and who are unable to receive quality health care. I know that if it were not for my father’s union membership, I would not have affordable health care, time to vacation with my family and countless other luxuries I take for granted.” Randi’s theory has been proven for years: working people need to stick together.

### **How the Union Plus Scholarship Program Works**

In addition to demonstrating academic ability, applicants are required to submit essays of no more than 500 words describing their career goals, detailing their personal relationship with the union movement and explaining why they are deserving of a union scholarship.

Individuals must be accepted into an accredited college or university, community college or recognized technical or trade school at the time the award is issued. Starting with 2008, graduate school students also will be eligible for Union Plus Scholarships. There is no requirement to have participated in any Union Plus program in order to qualify.

### **2008 Applications**

Applications for next year’s awards will be available in September 2007. To download the application at that time, visit [www.UnionPlus.org/Scholarships](http://www.UnionPlus.org/Scholarships). Or, applicants may send a postcard with their name, return address, telephone number and international union name to:

Union Plus Education Foundation, c/o Union Privilege, P.O. Box 34800, Washington, DC 20043-4800.

The application deadline is January 31, 2008. Recipients of scholarships will be announced May 31, 2008. Due to the high volume of applications, only winners will receive notification.

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**Union Privilege**, founded by the AFL-CIO in 1986, develops and manages the Union Plus benefits program, which uses the combined buying power of America's union members to obtain top-quality goods and services at competitive prices. In addition to a money-saving credit card, the Union Plus programs include free and discounted legal services, education services, discounted health services, a home-buying program, travel and recreation discounts and much more. For more information, visit [www.UnionPlus.org](http://www.UnionPlus.org).