



UNION

INSTITUTE & UNIVERSITY

Women in Union Scholarship Program
Supporting Moms to Lift Families Out of Poverty



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Union Institute & University created the Women in Union Scholarship (WIU) program to lift single, head-of-household women out of poverty by providing them with financial assistance to obtain a college degree.

The WIU program reflects Union's mission to serve highly motivated adults as they seek programs to engage, enlighten and empower them as they pursue professional goals and a lifetime of learning, service, and social responsibility. Scholarship support to mothers—and in some cases, even grandmothers—helps those who urgently need financial assistance to return to their education as they strive to make a better life for themselves and their families. By earning a college degree, these women are improving their children's futures, becoming change agents within their communities, and serving as role models for academic and professional success.

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, poverty is five times greater in single-parent families. Women head 80

percent of these single-parent families. Further, as of January 2009, only 27 percent of Cincinnati's adults have earned a college degree (U.S. Census), and of women who raise their children as single parents, only 16 percent have earned a degree.

Without a college degree, there are few opportunities for single-parent women to positively affect their family income through career advancement, making it difficult to better their own lives, as well as the lives of their children. One proven method to break the poverty cycle in single-parent households is to increase the single mother's level of education (Zorn, Norga). "There is (also) a clear and well-defined relationship between education and earnings..."

The women who have received Women in Union scholarships at Union Institute & University and completed their degrees tell us that their lives—and the lives of their children—have changed. This innovative and unique program supports low-income mothers financially and academically, as they seek to complete their bachelor's degree and embark on their journey to economic self-sufficiency and self-empowerment.

Meet some of the remarkable women who have benefited from the Women in Union scholarships.





Carliss Green

**Bachelor of Science
Social Work (2015)**

*Supervisor of Access, Center for
Addiction Treatment*

“Do the right thing for the
right reasons.”

- Carliss Green

What were the obstacles to completing your degree?

I was 16 when I dropped out of high school and started drinking alcohol and smoking weed. The only jobs open to me were low paying. I got my GED and watched as coworkers and friends with college degrees pursued careers that brought higher pay, benefits, self-respect, and self-confidence.

How did your life change with a college degree?

I was 23 when my first child was born and soon after, had two more children. In 1991, my life was spiraling out of control and I had to change because I didn't want my children to follow my path. I wanted to be the example that you can move forward. In 1997, I entered treatment for the third time and have over 20 years in recovery.

At the age of 51, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from Union. My degree also helped me gain an in-depth understanding of social work and improved my knowledge and skills in the social service profession.

How did the WIU scholarship help you achieve your education goals?

I had to find a college that would work with me while I worked and raised my children. I needed to be home as much as possible. Two coworkers recommended Union to me and it was a great experience. I've never seen a university do so much for women.

What are you doing to ensure that your education is making a difference in your own life and others?

I became a role model to my children. Both of my daughters have college degrees and master's degrees in social work and have followed my path to help the less fortunate. I am living proof it is never too late to follow your dreams.

If you had a check for a million dollars in your hand what would you do with it?

I would donate to the facility where I work, the Center for Addiction Treatment as well as donate to the WIU scholarship.

What do you want people to know about your experience at Union?

My experience was wonderful. The Union staff and faculty wouldn't let me fail. They understood I needed financial help and flexibility. They were there every step of the way for me. The staff and faculty made the experience so personal. Everyone rallied around me.





Joettea Rainey Miles

Student in the Union
Institute & University
Early Childhood Studies major

“Learning to be an educator
is the most compelling
knowledge that one can gain in
life. It is up to us as educators
to spread this knowledge to
make the world a better place.”

- Joettea Rainey Miles

What were the obstacles to completing your degree?

I became a young mother at the age of 20 and I dropped out of college. I have custody of my nephew and to support all of us, I work two jobs to make ends meet. Being a single mom has meant a longer road to my college degree, but I am almost there.

The need to complete my degree became even more urgent as my daughter started experiencing the same problems in grade school that I had. I knew I had to learn how to help her so she wouldn't suffer the way I had.

How did the WIU scholarship help you achieve your education goals?

The Women In Union scholarship has lifted the financial burden. My professors work with me on my dyslexia and ADHD challenges. They encourage me to call and email with problems and questions. The Writing Center has helped me to master and improve my writing skills.

I graduate in the spring with a 4.0 GPA and then will enroll in Union's History & Culture major in the Master of Arts degree program. My ultimate goal is to obtain my Ph.D. in Educational Studies at Union.

How will your life change with a college degree?

My long term goal is to open my own childcare center, a place where children feel they belong. In order for children to grow, a seed must first be planted. They require careful care. I learn from my daughter every day. I want to help children who are suffering from labels and overcome these labels. I chose this major because I experienced personal difficulties in school and I wanted to draw upon those struggles and experiences to help other children in their school-experiences.

What are you doing to ensure that your education is making a difference in your own life and others?

I want to be the teacher that children remember.

If you had a check for a million dollars in your hand what would you do with it?

I would pay off my student loans and buy a house for my daughter and me. I would put money away for my daughter's education. I would open my own childcare center and start an organization that helps low income children as well as any child in the greater Cincinnati area—a place that will encourage reading and writing at a pace that is more convenient to their learning style. I would have tutoring and activities to help children build better fundamentals in the five subject areas: reading, mathematics, language arts, science, and history. I would create this organization to help these children develop strong reading comprehension skills, develop critical thinking skills and encourage them to explore, using their minds to be creative and authentic. I would also have scholarships to help children go to a good elementary school and college.

What do you want people to know about your experience at Union?

My experience at Union has been wonderful. Union is a great college. Because of Union, I don't have to give up on my dream to teach and work with young children.





Ariel Yisrael

Student in the Union
Institute & University Early
Childhood Studies major,
concentration in Early
Childhood Administrator

“Nothing to it but to do it.”

- Tsipporah Yisrael

What were the obstacles to completing your degree?

I didn't have a clear picture of what I wanted to do when I finished high school. I completed two semesters at Central State University in Environmental Engineering. I was still unaware of what I wanted to do and started working, then got married, started my family and realized working from home would be the best option. I enrolled in Union to further reach my goals.

How did the WIU scholarship help you achieve your education goals?

The WIU scholarship has helped me tremendously. It has funded virus repairs on my laptop so I was able to turn in work in a timely manner and enabled me to purchase this term's books.

How will your life change with a college degree?

My ultimate goal is to open a chain of daycare centers in Ohio and to also pave the way for my siblings to open their own businesses or even join my daycare center business.

What are you doing to ensure that your education is making a difference in your own life and others?

My siblings have told me that I have set an example for them. That they can work, have a

family, and complete a college degree. My degree is making a difference in my own life but also impacts my family. My sister told me I am an inspiration to her. That is a great feeling.

If you had a check for a million dollars in your hand what would you do with it?

I would hire a financial advisor. I would fund my daycare centers and help fund my siblings' college degrees to help them pursue their dreams. I also would like to start a foundation to help the poor in Cincinnati, Ohio.

What do you want people to know about your experience at Union?

My experience at Union has been awesome. My professors have answered every question and worked with me on technical issues. The Writing Center staff has helped me immeasurably. I would submit a plan about what I am writing and they would make comments and suggestions. Everyone at Union has been helpful and is invested in my success.





Elena Moton

**Bachelor of Science
Criminal Justice Management
2013, Master of Science in
Organizational Leadership
(MSOL) 2015**

*Cincinnati Police Department,
Lieutenant, Planning Section
Assistant Commander*

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

- Maya Angelou

What were the obstacles to completing your degree?

When I started at Union, I was older, I had a full time job, and I had a son still at home. I work in a profession that never closes; we are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I work crazy shifts. Yet, Union said that’s okay. We can help you.

How did the WIU scholarship help you achieve your education goals?

What I like about the Women in Union scholarship is you have to earn the scholarship. It is not just given. I had to compete for the scholarship. That extra help and knowing that other women just like me were working to get a degree was a great feeling. I tell people all the time that the WIU program is great.

How did your life change with a college degree?

I was a sergeant when I started at Union and now I am a lieutenant. My study habits from Union helped me to study for the lieutenant exam. Going to college is an enlightening experience. The process requires you to open your eyes, to think and analyze. I am now aspiring to be a captain and an assistant chief. As a police officer who works in the community, I find that people expect you to have a college degree. A college degree opens doors.

My B.S. and M.S. not only gave me knowledge but instilled in me self-confidence and positive self-image. For example, I applied for and was accepted into a Chamber women's leadership program. That is empowering. I believe my degrees have put me on a different trajectory.

What are you doing to ensure that your education is making a difference in your own life and others?

I am a community-oriented police officer and I work in the community. I sit on the board of directors of two nonprofits.

Five years ago I helped start a program named Future Leaders OTR. The program started with conversations with Over the Rhine residents who said that the kids are always getting into trouble. I checked the data and sure enough a large number of kids in that neighborhood had been talked to or detained by the police. That started a conversation with Cincinnati Police District 1, local faith leaders, and community residents about what can be done. The conclusion reached was the youth needed to be exposed to different opportunities. The Future Leaders OTR program includes a stipend in the summer for work in the neighborhood, half that has to be saved for college. We plan various learning opportunities such as career day and financial planning and exposure to cultural experiences such as Music Hall and theater performances. We recently gave them a fine dining experience and they attended their first opera. Future Leaders OTR is now in its fifth year and is making a difference.

If you had a check for a million dollars in your hand what would you do with it?

Invest the money and help my family. I was a single mom and I would set up scholarships for my grandchildren. The money would also allow me to give more generously to certain nonprofits.

What do you want people to know about your experience at Union?

My experience at Union was great. Whenever I called I was able to talk to a person. Everyone wanted to see me succeed, from financial aid to IT. My professors were always available. They gave me their email addresses and phone numbers. No questions were left unanswered. The professors understood that I was a working adult with many responsibilities. I never felt pressured. That is what I love about Union.

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Eligibility: Any Ohio female, enrolled at Union Institute & University, who is Pell Grant eligible and is also head-of-household with children.

Learn more about supporting the Women in Union Scholarship Program by contacting Carolyn Krause, VP, Advancement, Carolyn.Krause@myunion.edu.



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