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March 30, 2007

Jim Duncan, Business Manager
AFSCME Local 52
1577 C Street
Suite 201
Anchorage, AK 99501-3534

Dear Brother Duncan:

This letter is to inform you that the thirteen winners of the 2007 AFSCME Family Scholarship have been selected. You will be pleased to know that one of the winners is Aimee McClory, a student from Ketchikan High School and the daughter of Emily Torio Saura-McClory, who is a member of Local 52.

Some of the councils and locals have expressed an interest in including information about the winner from their area in their publications. I have enclosed Aimee's essay.

I am sure that you are proud of Aimee McClory's achievements. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-429-1025.

In solidarity,

Philip Allen
Education Coordinator
Department of Education
and Leadership Training

PA:rb
Enclosure

cc: Paul Booth
Fred G. Brown, Local President
Flo Walker, Regional Director
Tam Tocher, AFSD
Don Graig, FEC

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ASEA/AFSCME LOCAL 52

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"What AFSCME Has Meant To Our Family"
Submitted by Aimee McClory

At 17, I already know much of how American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) has earned its reputation as the nation's most powerful, effective union. I know that because my mother shows me insurance statements with their insignias, and she gets excited about the occasional pay raises that helps her maintain her salary's earning power. Those benefits are due in large part to AFSCME's impact.

Mother belongs to Alaska State Employees Association, Local 52 where she's seen AFSCME earn their reputation. The decisive impact they've had upon my family alone has proven to me their desire to care for each & every member—including my mother.

By representing and supporting her, AFSCME has affected my life significantly. As a Public Health Nurse for over a decade, AFSCME has been the organization insuring her livelihood and improving her quality of life. Obviously, the most visible benefits are contracts and wage scales they negotiate. Neither their aim nor result is making millionaires, but providing the respect members feel when treated equitably demonstrated by fair contracts. While some might call these self-serving interests, it allows mom to focus on professional demands of her job more while worrying less about contractual issues that might adversely impact her family.

My father belongs to another similar organization, NEA, which aspires to provide similar representation for educators, but AFSCME seems more actively involved and actually works closely with mother to insure bills get paid. They realize most families cannot function on a single income. I'm only too aware that our family, as well, relies upon a second household income. Without everything AFSCME provides my mother, my sister and I likely wouldn't have had the benefit of dance classes, piano lessons, foreign exchange trips, and other lessons and activities some could easily take for granted.

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I've been fortunate to enjoy opportunities in which I can participate daily, and it is due to my family's ability to afford them—something AFSCME made possible. When looking around, I've seen several teenagers quit school—not making the best of their lives due to limitations when facing college costs. With scholarship programs such as AFSCME, like many teenagers, I can hope for a better education because AFSCME provided our family financial security to minimize the affects of inflation and other hardships—safeguarding essentials, such as education.

My mom aspired to be a doctor but opted for a BSN since her parents couldn't afford medical school—encouraging instead a nursing career to more easily emigrate to the US. She obliged them by moving here while sending home paychecks to put the next three younger siblings through college. Thanks to AFSCME my mother can now ensure my sister and I will also be able to go as far as we hope in our educational careers, and I'm sure many other families can say the same. AFSCME provides a quality of life for families comparable to no other union.

Besides negotiating fair contracts, AFSCME stands up for my mom's other rights with the state of Alaska. Alaska wouldn't intentionally neglect my mom on important work she provides as a local public health nurse, but I realize budgetary restraints can impact negotiations. This makes it difficult for Alaska to always make tough decisions for my mother and other state employees.

AFSCME helps remind the State that my mother and others like her are what makes this state wonderful place to work. With the union's help, my mother can focus on her job helping young families find affordable health care. Without AFSCME to provide that support, my mother would have to spend less time doing her job & more time trying to make sure she was able to do it. That's why so many family members are fortunate to be protected by this organization.

"What AFSCME Has Meant To Our Family"
Submitted by Aimee McClory

My mother also benefits from the peace of mind that comes with knowing her rights as a state public health nurse are protected. That peace of mind equates to quality of life. With all of the attorneys who advertise easy moneymaking lawsuits, my mom used to worry that a client might sue her for no practical reason. AFSCME provides insurance and legal protection that sets her mind at ease and allows her to perform at her best without the fear of unreasonable lawsuits.

My mom introduced me to AFSCME's magazine. I read it sometimes and note its impressive facts or learn about some of their programs and successes. I've read that AFSCME is unique in having a Bill of Rights. As a student taking American Government, I know the import of equality for organizations offering such leadership. As an immigrant, I think my mom sometimes worries about having equal rights in this country—something that prompted her to emigrate to the United States in the first place. According to the AFSCME Bill of Rights, all members share equality despite ethnicity. I have much respect for this policy protecting members.

Also through your magazine, I've learned about benefits affecting me directly. This is how I heard about the Family Scholarship Program. As a high school senior aspiring someday to enter the healthcare field, I see this scholarship putting me one step closer to following in mother's footsteps. I'm impressed with AFSCME's efforts to care for members' families—not just members.

In closing it's worth noting that with labor's support, my mother has people asserting her value as an employee. It's comforting to know people are watching out for her. I hope to always support unions which care about workers just as AFSCME cares for mom and stays actively involved in the type of community work it endorses in policy and practice. I hope to use that same commitment to hard work and dedication in pursuit of a medical career to make a difference in the world--the same basic value this organization exemplifies. By pursuing my dreams to graduate college and provide service in the health care industry, I feel I'm following the fine tradition AFSCME has allowed my mother the opportunity to do with her life.