

# DESERT EDGE

## UFCW LOCAL 1167

a VOICE for working America

Official Publication of Local 1167, United Food and Commercial Workers Union

January 2011

## UNION CONTRACT SOLIDARITY NEGOTIATIONS



### Here's what you can say when customers ask about your 'March 2011' button:

- "March 2011 is when my current contract expires."
- "This button reminds me that customers like you helped protect my job so I can provide for my family and keep my health care coverage."
- "Thank you for supporting us during our last contract negotiations. Without your support, we might have lost our entire health care coverage."
- "We may need your support again when our contract expires in March 2011."
- If customers want to help, they can send letters to the company or tell the store manager that they will support the workers in the event of a labor dispute.

### The next Quarterly Membership Meeting Wednesday, March 23, 2011

The meeting will start at 7 p.m. in the UFCW Local 1167 Auditorium,  
855 W. San Bernardino Ave., Bloomington

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## Negotiations 2011: Union solidarity is our greatest asset

The yellow buttons tell the story with understated simplicity: "March 2011."

Everyone who works in the stores knows what that means: March 2011 is when our current contract with the major supermarket chains expires. It also means that the Southern California local unions of the UFCW are about to begin the long, complicated and tedious task of negotiating a new agreement to replace the old one.

The contract that emerges from this process will determine the wages, benefits and working conditions for tens of thousands of union members in the supermarket industry.



By Bill Lathrop

It's always important to negotiate the best possible deal for our members. In times like these, when unemployment in California is higher than 12 percent, our task becomes even more crucial — and more difficult.

When we sit across the bargaining table with the company representatives, you can bet they will use the slow economy as an excuse to hold your wages down, shift more of the burden of health care costs onto your shoulders and erode the contract language that guarantees your minimum working hours.

You can also bet they will use the real and imagined threats of competition from non-union retailers — companies like Walmart, WinCo and Fresh & Easy — to justify their demands.

Good times or bad, the employers remain profitable and they can afford to pay you good wages and provide the health and pension benefits you deserve. After all, your skills and hard work are responsible for their success.

### The most important factor

We will explain these facts to the employers when we sit with them at the table. We will use all of the best tactics from the union negotiator's handbook. But let's be honest: the most important factor in winning a successful contract will be you.

Your union solidarity is our main asset in this bargaining process. The employers need to know that, should they make unreasonable

(Please see page 5)

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## Your dues are now payable!

If you are one of the few members of the local who are not yet signed up for dues checkoff: JANUARY DUES ARE NOW DUE AND PAYABLE. IF YOUR DUES ARE NOT PAID ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1, 2011, YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY SUSPEND YOURSELF.

With dues checkoff, all future dues can be deducted automatically from your pay check. If you do not have an authorization form, call the local and one will be sent to you immediately.

Non-payment or payment of the incorrect amount will automatically suspend you — a costly and inconvenient mistake. Although not required, the local, as a courtesy, normally sends billing notices by first-class mail to those not on dues checkoff. It is the member's obligation to pay dues in a timely manner. Not receiving a notice is not an excuse for failure to pay dues on time.

**Avoid suspension. Authorize dues checkoff today!**

# MAP

## Membership Assistance Program

Eligible active or retired Food and Meat participants can call the toll-free MAP number at the Health Management Center at any time,  
24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK.  
Food Division, call (800) 461-9179  
Drug Division, call (866) 268-2510  
(All calls are confidential.)



## JUST RETIRED

The month of December brought us several new retirees. **Christine Abshier** worked for Albertsons and Lucky for 34 years. **Carolyn Bowerman** worked for Stater Bros. for 13 years. **John Correia** retired after 32 years at Albertsons, the Vons meat plant and the Albertsons meat plant. **Patricia England-Kline** worked for Albertsons for 33 years. **Suzanne Grant** worked in the industry for 33 years with Stater Bros. and Safeway. **Michele Holland** worked for Ralphs for 35 years. **Susan Pearson** worked for Stater Bros. for 24 years. **Ferdinand Van Haastert** worked for Safeway, Vons and Market Basket for a total of 38 years.

Congratulations to all of our new retirees! We wish you many healthy, happy years ahead to enjoy your well-earned retirements.

## JUST MARRIED

**Erica Lewis**, Albertsons, married Steven Walter on May 20, 2010, on an Avalon yacht charter. The happy couple honeymooned in Newport Beach. ...

**Michele Ramirez**, Food 4 Less, said "I do" to Javier Coronado on Oct. 10 in Fontana. The newlyweds celebrated with a weekend cruise. ... **Alissa Podlewski**, Stater Bros., became the bride of Randal Taylor Saucedo on Oct. 22 at the Riverside County Courthouse. ... **Ernie Timothy Williams**, Stater Bros., married Laura on Nov. 5. ... **Michele Lynn Reyes**, Stater Bros., became the bride of Juan Enriquez on Nov. 13 at Wildwood Park.

Congratulations to all of our newlyweds!

## JUST BORN

**Brian Bernal**, Stater Bros., and his wife Heather are pleased to announce the birth of Daniel Albert on Aug. 22. Daniel weighed 6 lbs. 3 oz. ... **Kori Madeza**, Vons, welcomed Aniyah Alenah Bowman on Aug. 23. Aniyah weighed 5 lbs. 12 oz. She joins sister Patience Amya, who was born on July 23, 2009. ... **Frank Esparza III**, Rite-Aid, has a new daughter. Izabella Renee LaFramboise was born on Oct. 21, weighing 7 lbs. ... **John Jones III**, Stater

Bros., proudly announces the arrival of his "fourth and final son." **Avery Jared** was born on Oct. 30, weighing 7 lbs. 15 oz. and measuring 21½ inches long. ... **James Williams**, Stater Bros., welcomed Ethan Lee on Nov. 4. Ethan weighed 6 lbs. 8 oz. and measured 18½ inches long. ... **Cristina Faragoza**, Rite Aid, gave birth to Larissa LeeAnn on Nov. 4. Larissa weighed 8 lbs. ... **Jacqueline Penalzoza and Boris Gonzalez**, both of Stater Bros. proudly announce the birth of their son. Liam Alexander Gonzalez was born on Nov. 7, weighing 6 lbs. 9 oz. ... **Daniel Pina**, Ralphs, has a new daughter. Aubree Elizabeth was born on Nov. 9, weighing 8 lbs. 6 oz. We're told "Dad and Mom are very happy to have one more little blessing." ... **Krystle Palomino**, Stater Bros., gave birth to Lily Angelica Orosco on Nov. 9. Lily weighed 6 lbs. 6 oz. ... **Alicia Acevedo**, Stater Bros., has a new son. Giovanni Pena was born on Nov. 10, weighing 7 lbs. 5 oz. ... **Faith Holmes**, Stater Bros., welcomed Xander Antonio Martinez on Nov. 15. Xander weighed 8 lbs. 15.3 oz. and measured 19½ inches long. ... **Marissa Esquibel**, Stater Bros., is pleased to announce the arrival of Aubrey Marie on Nov. 16. Aubrey weighed 7 lbs. 13 oz. Marissa writes that she is enjoying "welcoming my precious little angel." ... **Robert Binnie**, Stater Bros., proudly announces the arrival of Bayley Gene on Nov. 19. Bayley weighed 9 lbs. and measured 21 inches. ... **Saihana Saleem**, Food 4 Less, has a new daughter. Kulson Rasidan was born on Nov. 21 and weighed 7 lbs. 6 oz. ... **Rebecca and Sergio Lozano**, both of Stater Bros., proudly announce the birth of their son, Brandon, on Nov. 26. Brandon weighed 7 lbs. 12 oz. ... **Cynthia Escobedo**, Stater Bros., gave birth to Brandon Alexander Osorio on Nov. 30. Brandon weighed 6 lbs. 6 oz. Congratulations to all of our new moms and dads!



## DESERT EDGE

**Bill Lathrop**  
Editor

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## You are interesting! Tell us about yourself.

You are the most interesting thing about our union! If there is something unusual or newsworthy about your life, hobbies, abilities or talents, call us at the office and tell us about it so that we may consider doing a feature about you in the *Desert Edge*. Just ask for Kathleen Franks or your Union Representative.  
**President Bill Lathrop**



**40-year man:** Rourke Johnson, Albertsons 6728, holds his 40-year Service Award Certificate.

# Vacation scheduling 2011

In the early months of the New Year, many of us take the time to look back on the past 12 months and think about how we can make 2011 happier, healthier and more enjoyable.

One way to do that is to start preparing now for our hard-earned vacations.

When the weather is cold and wet at the end of a busy holiday season, some of us might be tempted to postpone planning a holiday that won't happen for several months, perhaps in the sunny days of summer.

But if you want to enjoy your vacation when you want to have it, and for the duration you need, the time to start preparing is now.

Rules about vacation requests vary from contract to contract, but it's usually a good idea to submit your vacation requests to your employer by the end of January to help ensure that you get the time off that you request.

It also helps to coordinate with your co-workers to arrange vacation times that are convenient for everyone involved.

The best vacation slots are granted on a seniority basis, so you may not get your first choice even if you submit your request early. You should decide on alternative dates for your vacation and allow for some flexibility in your plans.

Your union-negotiated vacation time allows you time to travel, spend time with family or to simply relax. Using this time wisely is key to staying healthy and maintaining focus while you are away and when you are back on the job.

— **Bill Lathrop**, President

## Go online and complete the Negotiations Survey



[www.ufcw1167.org](http://www.ufcw1167.org)

## IN MEMORIAM

**Jessica Cardenas**, a meat wrapper employed by Stater Bros. Markets, died Nov. 24, 2010, at the age of 24. She had been a member since April 2004.

**David Dresner**, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Michael's, Alamo Markets, and Lucky, died Dec. 7, 2010 at the age of 90. He had been a continuous member since July 1958.

**Adeline Morey**, a retired meat wrapper formerly employed by Stater Bros., died on Dec. 16, 2010, at the age of 51. She had been a member since January 1979.

**George Giron Valladares**, a utility clerk employed by Food 4 Less, died on Nov. 20, 2010, at the age of 19. He had been a member since Aug. 2010.

**Charlotte Wagenfeld**, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Market Basket and Super Saver, died on Nov. 10, 2010, at the age of 75. She had been a member since July 1968.

*We express our condolences to the families of these deceased members.*

### UNION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

# How you can protect your job

The holidays are over and you are probably contemplating how to pay the bills for all of those great gifts you gave to family and friends.

One way is to make sure that you keep your job. Never do anything that puts you in a position to be suspended or terminated!

At the top of the list is stealing. Did you know that even opening and snacking on food that you didn't yet pay for is considered stealing and could result in your suspension or termination?

Even something like popping a grape in your mouth — a practice called grazing — could cost you your job.



**By Jose Correa**

If you think you can get away with a little pilferage without being caught, think again! Security in the stores is tighter than ever! Cameras are everywhere and they are monitored by security personnel whose job it is to catch you.

There are other ways to lose your job, of course. Rude or disrespectful behavior toward customers, coworkers and management is one of them. Always be courteous at your workplace — even when you don't feel like it.

Insubordination is another. Never refuse to do anything a manager asks you to do, unless you believe it is unsafe or illegal. Do what management says and then call your union representative if you have any issues to discuss.

Being late is another frequent cause for discipline. Companies keep records and excessive lateness can get you suspended or worse.

Never engage in horseplay on the job. Horseplay is defined as any rough or rowdy play or prank that does not contribute to a productive and safe work environment. It can include joking around, playing around with or without physical contact, racing, grabbing, foolish vehicle operation, social pressure to participate in unsafe acts, harassment and unauthorized contests.

While some people might think it is harmless fun, horseplay on the job can hurt you. Each year, hundreds of workers in the United States are injured because of pranks at work. In some cases, horseplay that results in injury has led to legal action.

Your union is here to represent you. We will do whatever we can to protect your livelihood. But we need your cooperation.

Don't put your valuable union job in jeopardy.

## It PAYS to be UNION!

	DECEMBER 2010	2010 TOTAL
Back pay and benefits restored to members	\$3,722.19	\$96,884.05
Members reinstated	11	272
Grievances settled	37	1,149

# 'Saving the world' one person at a time

**A** great philosopher once said that anyone who saves a single life saves an entire world. Patty Hernandez saved a world.

Hernandez is a Seafood Supervisor at Albertsons 6519 in Redlands. She has been at the store for six years and has worked in the industry for 25 years.

Throughout her career, Hernandez has made it a point to get to know her customers. So when one of her regular "Sunday shoppers" came to her counter in February looking especially sad, she asked him why.

"He told me his daughter was home from college because she was very ill," Hernandez recalled. "I told him I would keep her in my prayers and asked him her name.

"He said her name is Juliana."

Two weeks later, the customer, Leo Schouest, returned to the seafood counter and Hernandez asked him how Juliana was doing.

"This time he was more specific," she said. "He told me Juliana was diagnosed with end-stage kidney failure and was about to undergo tests to get on the list for a kidney transplant."

"I was floored. I couldn't believe what I was hearing."

Just a week earlier she had a conversation about kidney transplants with her husband, Mario, an assistant manager at Albertsons 6512 in Banning. She told him of her desire to donate a kidney to honor the memory of Mario's brother, Hector, who died in 2009 while waiting for a kidney.

"I told my husband I really feel I need to donate a kidney," Hernandez recalled. "And that's what I also said to Leo when he described his daughter's condition."

Leo and his wife, Ellen, could not donate a kidney because they did not meet the requirements. Other family and friends either did not qualify or chose not to be tested.

## Survival

Hernandez's offer represented Juliana's best chance for survival.

"I truly believe God put us together so I could help save a life and be able honor the memory of my brother-in-law," she said.

Hernandez was tested and found to be a match.

The surgery took place in October at Loma Linda University Medical Center.



Patty Hernandez



Juliana Schouest

**'When she thanks me for saving her life, I turn right around and thank her for saving mine.'**

"There was some post-operative pain," Hernandez said, "but it wasn't anything more than I had when I gave birth to each of my three children. And it dissipated quickly."

The surgery was a success. Both Hernandez and Juliana were released from the hospital in less than a week. And with her new kidney functioning properly, Juliana no longer needs the daily dialysis treatments she had to endure prior to the transplant.

Hernandez is back at work and Juliana, who works as a librarian, will return to her job in January.

"She's doing great," Hernandez said. "We talk and text each other all the time. She is still on immunosuppressant drugs to keep her body from rejecting her new kidney, so we can't see each other yet, but as soon as she gets off them, we plan to get together for a celebratory dinner."

Hernandez said her doctors tell her that her remaining kidney is doing "just fine" and they anticipate no problems or changes to her lifestyle.

## Support

Hernandez said she has received "incredible support" from her family, friends and customers.

"I don't consider myself a hero or anything," she said. "The real heroes are the ones who have to undergo dialysis every day and who have to fight to stay alive."

She said that, in a way, Juliana also helped to save her own life.

"Since the surgery, I watch what I eat and exercise more," Hernandez said. "My cholesterol has been cut in

half, so that I no longer need to take medication for it. And I've lost 20 pounds!

"When she thanks me for saving her life, I turn right around and thank her for saving mine."

Hernandez said that if anything comes out of the publicity surrounding her donation, she hopes that people understand the importance of being a kidney donor.

"I read in our union paper that a member's daughter is in a similar situation waiting for a kidney transplant," Hernandez said.

"I hope reading about my experience will encourage someone to be tested and consider donating a kidney to save her life.

"As union members, we are all for one and one for all, so I pray someone out there will do what is right and come forward."

She concluded: "I can tell you the satisfaction you feel will far outweigh the temporary physical discomfort from surgery."

## TO LEARN MORE ABOUT KIDNEY DONATIONS:

Call the **Transplant Institute of Loma Linda Hospital** at (909) 558-3636 or visit its website, [lomalindahealth.org](http://lomalindahealth.org)

...or visit these websites:

**National Kidney Foundation**  
[kidney.org](http://kidney.org)

**United Network of Organ Sharing**  
[unos.org](http://unos.org)

**American Society of Pediatric Nephrology**  
[aspneph.com](http://aspneph.com)

**American Kidney Fund**  
[kidneyfund.org](http://kidneyfund.org)

...or members are urged to ask their primary-care doctors to see if they could be a candidate to donate a kidney to someone in need.



# Activists gather support for negotiations

Volunteers from UFCW Local 1167 and other unions throughout Southern California have begun staffing tables in front of supermarkets, asking shoppers to sign cards pledging their support for union workers during the coming negotiations. The shoppers receive reusable bags with the UFCW logo and the names of participating local unions in Southern California.



## Kidney donor needed

**H**eather Gutierrez, the 16-year-old daughter of Leilani Gutierrez, a GM clerk at Albertsons 6575 in Moreno Valley, has experienced complete kidney failure and urgently needs to obtain a transplanted kidney from a compatible donor.

Heather's struggle with a rare kidney disorder called nephrotic syndrome was the subject of an article in the October 2010 issue of the *Desert Edge*.

Anyone who is interested in testing for donor compatibility is asked to contact the union office immediately at (909) 877-5000.



Heather Gutierrez

## Solidarity our greatest asset

(Continued from front page)

demands and refuse to back off, they will meet the wrath of a united work force.

Seven years ago, the employers learned this lesson the hard way when they forced our members into a strike and lockout that cost the companies an estimated \$2 billion in lost revenues.

In 2007, we returned to the bargaining table. When the supermarket companies again made unfair demands, our members stood their ground again, voting overwhelmingly to reject the employers' initial offers and authorizing the union's leadership to call a new strike, should one become necessary. Fortunately, reason prevailed and the employers soon made a new offer that our members had no problem accepting.

Who knows what's in store for us in 2011? The only thing we know for certain is that union solidarity is the best thing we have going for us.

Several months ago, we handed out those yellow buttons that say "March 2011" to help us focus our thoughts on union solidarity. But that was just the beginning. In recent weeks, union volunteers have been staffing tables in front of stores throughout our jurisdiction. They are asking shoppers to sign cards pledging their support for supermarket workers in the event of a labor dispute.

I hope you will join these volunteers in this project and other union duties that will fortify our position as the 2011 negotiations begin.

The union makes us strong!



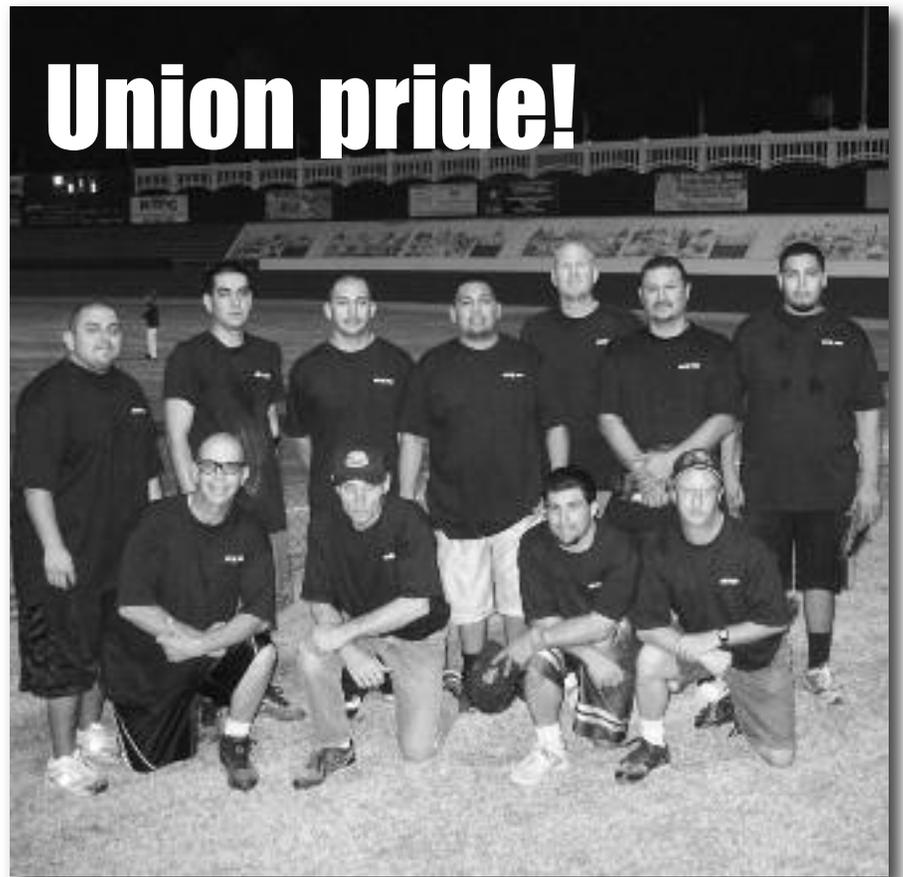
**Members  
at Work  
Stater Bros. 97  
Hesperia**



## Apply for the UFCW and Food Employers Benefit Fund Scholarship!

**T**he Scholarship Award Program, jointly sponsored by the Employer and Union Trustees of the UFCW and Food Employers Benefit Fund, is one of the best offered to union members anywhere. The Scholarship Award Program can help you or your child earn a degree, certification or license and find new opportunities for prosperity and success.

Members are eligible to apply for an award if they have completed a year of service as of October 2010 and are still actively employed in the Southern California Retail Food Industry when the awards are determined. Dependent children are eligible to apply if they are unmarried and younger than 24 years of age, and if the member has had at least three years of service and has met other Fund qualifications, including employment in the industry when the awards are determined. **The deadline for Scholarship Award applications is Feb. 28, 2011.** Applications must be postmarked by this date. All members should receive an application in the mail. If you did not receive one, please call your union or the Trust Fund office at (714) 220-2297 or (562) 408-2715.



A softball team comprised of members from Ralphs stores 27, 179 and 681 pose for a portrait proudly wearing their UFCW Local 1167 shirts. Pictured above: Anthony Marienfeldt (681), Brad Durso and Mike Perrone (179) and Greg Galisin (27), Mike Silva (681), Fernando Garcia (681), Erik Castellon (681), Eric Valenzuela (681), Mike Hernandez (681) and Organizing Director Joe Duffie.

## Companies shifting health costs to workers

**E**mployers nationwide are devising new ways to shift health care costs to their workers. According to *The Kiplinger Letter*, health care premiums have increased 27 percent over the past five years. But while wages have risen only 18 percent, employee-paid health care costs have increased 47 percent. The trend is continuing, with the employees' share of overall costs climbing by 14 percent each year.

Many employers are forcing their employees to rely on health savings accounts (HSAs). Not to be confused with employer-funded health reimbursement accounts (HRAs), HSAs are "tax-favorable" accounts that are accessible in times of catastrophic medical need. Companies frequently offer two account styles, one with high deductibles and lower employee premiums and another with a low deductibles and higher employee premiums.

Some employers are requiring better-paid employees to pay higher premiums and co-pays to subsidize costs for lower-paid employees.

Other methods used by employers include setting premiums based on dependents (larger families pay higher premiums), discouraging unhealthy behavior by lowering premiums for employees who begin and complete health care programs to lose weight, stop smoking or lower cholesterol, and charging higher copays for visits to medical specialists and out-of-network providers.

## College and trade school grants available to members

**T**he Union Plus Scholarship Program offers \$150,000 in scholarships annually to union members, their spouses, and dependents. The awards range from \$500 to \$4,000.

Students who are beginning or continuing their post-secondary or graduate-level education are eligible.

Awards are based on academic achievement, union statements and financial need.

This is a one-time cash award sent to individual winners for study beginning in the fall of the same year at a two or four-year college, a graduate school or a recognized technical or trade school.

The deadline to return a completed application is Jan. 31, 2011. Application packets with postmarks later than Jan. 31 will not be eligible for review.

For details or to download an application, visit [www.UnionPlus.org/Scholarship](http://www.UnionPlus.org/Scholarship).



## STEWARD FEATURE

# Experiences at Sam's Club taught steward the value of a union job

**L**uis Cisneros, a steward at Stater Bros. 97 in Hesperia, learned the value of a union job on the day he got his first pay check.

"Believe it or not, I made more when I began as a courtesy clerk at Stater Bros. than I did when I left Sam's Club," Cisneros said. "And I was there nine years!"

"Sam's Club is owned by Walmart, and I can tell you from experience that everything you hear about the way the company treats its employees is true."

### Unfair Treatment

Cisneros said he regularly observed Sam's Club workers being treated unfairly.

"There were people who were there for many years and they would be disciplined or even fired for no reason," he said. "And they had no one they could call for help like we do."

Cisneros said that Sam's Club

purposely kept his hours below 40 each week so he couldn't qualify for the meager benefits that were available.

"They did that to most of their workers," Cisneros said. "We had no health insurance or pension. Nothing."

Cisneros said he was forced to work "off the clock," was often not allowed to take breaks and almost never got a pay raise.

"I saw people I knew who worked at a union market buying new cars and homes," he said. "I could never afford such things with the pay I was getting at Sam's Club."

Finally, his wife's cousin told him that Stater Bros. was hiring.

"I knew it was a union job and that it would have benefits and better pay," Cisneros recalled.

Cisneros now works as a meat cutter and has been at the store for 10 years.



Luis Cisneros

"I was always a strong union supporter," he said. "But I didn't become a steward until a few months ago when my Union Representative, Bill Collard, asked me.

"With negotiations about to begin, I felt it was time to step

up and become more active."

Cisneros' major activity is getting people in the community to sign cards pledging support to the union.

"I went all over my neighborhood," Cisneros said. "I have no problem getting people to sign because everyone is behind us.

### Pledge Cards

"It is important to show the companies that we have the community's support."

Cisneros and his wife, Lauren, who works as a counselor at a middle school, live in Hesperia and have two children, Alexis, 5, and Diego, 2.

When he isn't at work or canvassing the neighborhood to get people to sign pledge cards, he spends time with his family.

"I feel blessed to have a loving family," he said. "I work for a good company and have a union job with pay and benefits I couldn't even imagine when I was at Sam's Club."

## Apply for UFCW International Scholarship online!

14 winners will receive as much as \$8,000 in scholarships over four years

**Y**our union is about more than your pay check and benefits. The UFCW is about workers coming together to build better lives for themselves. It's about creating opportunity.

That's why each year the UFCW awards several scholarships of up to \$8,000 each to UFCW members or their dependents. Fourteen Full Scholarship winners receive \$2,000 a

year for up to four years. There are also 11 Outstanding Essay winners who will receive a one-time payment of \$2,000.

The scholarships are limited to members who have been active since Jan. 1, 2010, and their unmarried children or dependents under the age of 20.

The scholarship winners will be selected and awards made on the basis of scholastic achievements,

community involvement and completion of an essay that shows understanding of the principles of the Labor Movement.

The UFCW Scholarship Application Form must be post-marked no later than April 15, 2011.

Entrants must read the Rules and Regulations thoroughly.

Complete the UFCW Scholarship Application online at

[www.ufcw.org/scholarship](http://www.ufcw.org/scholarship) starting in January 2011. The application will require you to fill out a family profile, list school activities and awards, your work experience and completion of an essay. If you are unable to apply online, you may request an application by writing to: UFCW International Union, Attn: Scholarship Program, 1775 K St. N.W., Washington, DC 20006.

# Shop union in the New Year!