



Stories in support of paid family or medical leave

Angela Allyn – Angela is an Evanston mother of three children. Her husband is a freelance photographer, and when her first child was born she had to return to work when her daughter was three weeks old so the family could eat. By the time her third child was born Angela was working for an agency that provided short-term disability, which provided her with partial salary when she needed to stay home after the baby was born. Her healthcare practitioner told her she would have lingering problems if she'd returned to work right after delivery, which she would have done to pay the bills if not for the disability insurance. Angela notes how difficult it would be to find child care for an infant as most centers and home day cares do not take children under six weeks old – and the rare ones that do are very expensive.

Angela can be reached at 312-671-3200

Guadalupe (Lupe) Ramos – Lives in Oak Lawn and works for a large insurance company. Lupe is now in management, but in 2005 she had been a 25-year union employee who had earned 60 days of sick leave. However, when her husband needed surgeries for a brain tumor she learned that she could only use 3 of those sick days to care for a family member. “Who in God’s name can ever afford in this day and age to stay home without any type of pay?” Lupe asked. “When you work for a company for such a long time you would expect them to treat you the same way they would want to be treated when tragedy strikes their family also,” she said.

Lupe’s home number is 708-423-5276

Janet Schumacher – Bank employee and Evanston resident. In 1996, Janet needed monthly intermittent leave over 6 months to care for her father who had colon cancer and lived in Nebraska. She was able to take long weekends in order to do this. Janet was covered by FMLA and also had paid time off from her job, but this would have been difficult for her to do without pay, and even more difficult for a lower-wage employee.

Janet can be reached at 847-475-7823

Rachel Sobel – Rachel Sobel is an Evanston mother of two children who consciously tries to juggle career and her home life. In December, 2005, she was working full-time for a trade magazine publisher when her son broke his arm after a bad fall on the school playground. Over the next three months, he would need to go to physical therapy two afternoons per week, and Rachel would have to leave work early to take him to these appointments. Unfortunately, she had already used up the 2 sick days and 5 vacation days she was given each year and could not afford to take unpaid time off. In addition, her employer promised her flexibility but did not follow through. In fact, her boss told her that she was not committed to the job if she would leave work in the middle of the day, so he cut her salary in half, took away her benefits, and required her to work from home. So she was forced to take a part-time consulting position elsewhere and forfeit her family’s health insurance at a time when they needed it the most.

Rachel lives in Evanston and can be reached at 773-742-5134

The Illinois Paid Leave Coalition is comprised of local and statewide partners that support the creation of a paid leave program for workers who have a health or family need that requires time off from work. For a list of coalition members go to www.womenemployed.org For more information contact: Melissa Josephs at 312-782-3902 X234 or mjosephs@womenemployed.org.