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English 11 - Per. 6

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You may think someone who is getting paid a high wage such as a general manager is, of course, working much more and harder. That's where you may be wrong. Just because someone gets paid more doesn't mean they work harder than someone who doesn't get paid as much. Many people who work from dawn to dusk can barely manage to pay their bills, and sometimes even necessities like food or clothes are difficult to acquire. The people who work at these lower paying jobs are considered ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families. ALICE families, in fact, impact our community's resources, but fortunately there is something that we can do to turn that around.

Sad to say but families with low income hurt the community as a whole. Businesses can't perform well without a solid, well-trained workforce. The businesses that operate well in communities that have a high level of ALICE families are gas stations, cheap fast food franchises, and the dollar stores. Those businesses rely on low-cost labor instead of skilled labor. A higher skilled labor workforce will draw industries with better-paying positions and those industries often attract other industries that are suppliers.

A reason we even have ALICE families is due to many people needing the correct education to compete in today's job market. In Peru and Bunker Hill, Indiana, committed students that attend Maconaquah School Corporation and Peru School Corporation leave

sometimes during the school day in order to attend the Kokomo Area Career Center (KACC) or Wabash School Corporation for skilled trade education. Schools need to bring back a greater emphasis on skilled trade programs. Having these types of programs in schools is not enough. We need to establish similar programs outside of schools to develop jobs skills for adults in order to attain higher level jobs. Furthering the education of students and possibly even adults in skilled trade will get more families of Peru into jobs with higher pay and more benefits. Moving the skilled trade programs to Peru or Miami County will get more educated people to stay in Miami County and help their community grow.

Communities such as Peru need to find ways to provide skilled training to adults and the next generation. By investing in this training it will provide economic benefits for the community in the long run. Examples include income taxes on their higher wages, property taxes when they purchase their own home and reduce expenses to help support families that would have been ALICE families.