

# Middle Class Tax Cuts

## Katie's Story: College Tuition Tax Deduction

The Zuzeks of Hastings, Minnesota, were born to be teachers.

“From a young age, I always knew I wanted to be a teacher,” said Katie Zuzek, a senior at St. Mary’s University in Winona. “And in order to realize that dream, I knew I had to go to college – there wasn’t any other option.”

In May of this year, Katie will graduate from St. Mary’s University with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education, and pursue her dream of becoming a teacher. Two years later, her sister Abbie will graduate from SMU with a bachelor’s degree in music education. And next fall, her brother Alex will enroll as a freshman at St. Mary’s to pursue his degree in secondary education.

These siblings’ shared aspiration to pursue careers in public education would be amazing enough on its own. But when you consider the fact that their father Mark has been a public school principal for 18 years, and their mom Janet has been a teacher for 26 years, it is clear there is something special about the Zuzeks.

But like more than 70,000 public school teachers statewide, each of the Zuzek siblings have to pay their way through college in order to have the necessary qualifications to teach in Minnesota schools. And tuition is not cheap.

After loans and scholarships, Katie Zuzek and her family pay about \$14,500 in tuition each year. Her sister Abbie faces those same costs. And their father Mark is currently enrolled in graduate school at St. Mary’s University, pursuing his E.D.D in Leadership.

Altogether the Zuzeks are paying tens of thousands of dollars in tuition each year. And with 18-year-old Alex set to graduate from Hastings High School this spring, and enter college next fall, the Zuzek family still faces several more years with multiple family members enrolled in college.

But thanks to new tax cuts enacted this session by Governor Mark Dayton and the Minnesota Legislature, making those tuition payments will be just a little easier this year. The new college tuition tax deduction effective in tax year 2013 will save the Zuzeks \$160 this year alone.

And because Governor Dayton and the Legislature eliminated the marriage penalty effective next year, Mark and Janet will save another \$220 on their state taxes in 2014.

Katie and Abbie are just two of the more than 40,000 Minnesota college students who will benefit this tax filing season from the college tuition tax deduction. Putting a few hundred dollars more in their pockets will make it just a little easier for the Zuzeks to finance their educations, so they can put their focus where they want it to be: on improving the education of others. That is an investment in the middle class worth making.



*Katie Zuzek and her sister Abbie are two of 40,000 Minnesota students and families expected to benefit from the immediate tax relief provided by the state’s new College Tuition Tax Deduction. The average family will save \$140 per year on their state taxes.*

