

10. Restaurant Server

Madison, 19, is a server in a restaurant in a vacation resort. During the summer season, work can be fast-paced. She may spend her whole shift on her feet, with very few breaks. Madison likes being around people. Her work ethic and cheerful demeanor earn her large tips and she counts on them to pad her low hourly wage. She doesn't look forward to the off-season, since no customers means no money.

In her senior year, Madison had a child and had to drop out. She had few practical skills, no high school diploma, a baby to care for, and no familial support. Madison had few choices for how to support herself, so she is thankful for her job. However, she struggles to find and pay for childcare in-season. In the off-season, she often doesn't have the money to provide for their basic needs. She's considered getting her GED so she can go to college, but she's not confident in herself, and regrets having had to drop out of high school.

Thankfully, her boss does what he can to help her, financially and otherwise. Just last week, he handed her a flyer for free GED prep courses offered by the same college she dreams of attending. Even better, they offer free childcare through the college's Child Development degree program; this seems like just the chance Madison was hoping for to improve her life and that of her young child.