



WALMARTWATCH



Enilda



Enilda moved back to her hometown of Bonao to work at TOS so that she could be with her family, but she barely gets to see them because she has to work six twelve hour shifts in order to pay for her basic costs. For a 72 hours of work a week she makes 3,800 pesos (\$116.00), just enough to support her son and mother. She says she is a leader in an effort to organize a union at the factory because she wants better conditions for pregnant workers and wages and hours that allow her to spend time with her family.

In her own words:

I used to work in the free trade zone in Santiago, but I moved back to work here because my family lives here. I live here with my mom, my sister, my brother, and his wife and kids, and my two year old son- there are seven of us. I started to work in order to take care of my son and my mother, because after my father died me and my siblings had to take care of the house. Me and my brother work to support our family.

In our house we pay at least 4,000 pesos (\$122.00) for food a week, we pay 3,000 (\$91.00) pesos for electricity and water a month. I make 2,190 pesos (\$67.00) a week. I have to pay for insurance for me, my son and my mother so in a week they take out at almost 400 pesos (\$12.00) out of my wages. And then just for food at work I have to pay 500 pesos (\$15.00). What I have left over at the end of the week after paying for food at work and insurance, is only 1,000 pesos (\$30.00) to pay for household costs and pay for childcare. It's not enough. I don't think even 2,000 pesos (\$61.00) would be enough to cover the costs, because even though the father of my son helps pay for diapers and milk, I have to pay for medicines if he has to go to the doctor and for clothes when he needs them and whatever else he needs, and what I make just isn't enough.

I try to make due with what I have or work extra days. I have been working six days a week. I work the day shift from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm for four days, and then the two extra days I work the night shift from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am. Last week I worked six days and I made 3,800.

With this I can scrape by, but my body can't put up with working six days a every week because by the end my body is totally worn out, with extreme back pain. I feel totally drained and tired. I have two days off, but it isn't the same because after working two night shifts I spend most of my day off sleeping. In reality I don't get to spend time with my son in my day off because the time I am home I am exhausted or sleeping.

From working at TOS I developed a disease I never had before, which is Asthma due to the fabric dust in the air. I got it after six months of working there. When I have asthma attacks I have to go to the doctor

because I am unable to breathe. Monday at work I felt terrible but I had to work anyway, because my day off wasn't until Tuesday. They said that the fabric dust doesn't hurt us, but I am twenty four years old and have never had problems like this, and when I'm at home I don't have any problems, it's only when I am at work.

The only thing they care about is that you do your work, it doesn't matter to them if you get sick or what happens to you. They just want us to do our work and they don't care about our health.

I began to work with the union to get more respect for employees, because at least now that we are standing up for ourselves it has improved a little bit, but they still do not respect us as employees. It is especially bad for pregnant workers. For example, there are people who have fallen at work and broken their legs. There was one person who fell because of the grease that the machine was expelling; can you imagine if this happened to a pregnant worker? They don't make accommodations for pregnant women; they say if women can't do the work that they should just go home. Even though it is dangerous women keep doing the work because they are afraid of losing their jobs. There are women that have miscarried because of the workload. This is something that needs to get better. I also got involved because what we make is just not enough, especially for those of us that have family to support.